

Extra-state Wars (Version 4.0):

Definitions and Variables by Meredith Reid Sarkees

The Correlates of War (COW) Project has utilized a classification of wars that is based upon the status of territorial entities, in particular focusing on those that are classified as members of the inter-state system (referred to as “states”). Wars have been categorized by whether they primarily take place between/among states, between/among a state(s) and a nonstate entity, and within states. This dataset encompasses wars in the middle category – wars that take place between a state(s) and a nonstate entity outside the borders of the state. For a complete description of the COW war typology and for a definition of the major variables as they apply to all wars, see “The COW Typology of War: Defining and Categorizing Wars [Version 4 of the Data]” by Meredith Reid Sarkees, also available on this website. A more detailed discussion can also be found in Chapter 2 of *Resort to War: A Data Guide to Inter-State, Extra-State, Intra-state, and Nonstate Wars, 1816-2007* by Meredith Reid Sarkees and Frank Whelon Wayman, (Washington, DC: CQ Press 2010). This volume also contains a brief historical description of each war and a discussion of the coding decisions made in each case.

An extra-state war involves fighting by a state system member outside its borders against the armed forces of an entity that is not a member of the interstate system. Within the current COW war typology, an extra-state war must meet same definitional requirements of all wars in that the war must involve sustained combat, involving organized armed forces, resulting in a minimum of 1,000 battle-related combatant fatalities within a twelve month period. The requirement for sustained combat resulting in a minimum of 1,000

battle-related deaths per year **among all parties** is a shift from the initial practice (in *Wages of War* and *Resort to Arms*) of counting only the system-member deaths.

As with all categories of war, for **a state** to be considered a war participant, the minimum requirement is that it has to either commit 1,000 troops to the war or suffer 100 battle-related deaths. Criteria for inclusion are slightly different for the nonstate entities. The nonstate participants in extra-state wars can be a variety of types of actors, including; non-system member geo-political units (NSMGPU), and non-territorial entities (NTEs) or nonstate armed groups (NSAs) that have no defined territorial base. Since nonstate entities generally have fewer resources than states, we have adopted a more minimalist requirement for them to be considered as war participants. A nonstate entity can be considered a war participant if it either commits 100 armed personnel to the war or suffers 25 battle-related deaths. Admittedly, this lower level to qualify as a war participant may make it more complicated to identify all of the participants in an extra-state war.

Relatedly, it is often more difficult to ascertain battle-related deaths in extra-state wars. Nonstate armed groups may or may not wear identifying clothing, so it may be more difficult for observers to distinguish combatant deaths from civilians who may have been killed. Consequently, historians frequently report fatality and casualty numbers that include the deaths of both noncombatants (civilians) as well as combatants. States may also have political reasons for downplaying or exaggerating the nonstate fatalities. States are also frequently only interested in the fatality and or casualty rates for their own armed

forces, and often make little or no attempt to record the deaths among their nonstate opposition. Thus as Small and Singer explained in *Resort to Arms*, “while such deaths did not go unmourned, they often went uncounted or unrecorded.”¹ This lack of reliable information contributed to the initial decision not to include nonstate deaths in the war threshold for extra-systemic wars. Nevertheless, in subsequent updates, including this one, we have attempted to add data about the battle deaths suffered by the nonstate combatants. Sometimes the judgments on fatalities are based on information concerning the reported sizes of the combatant forces, if available.

Furthermore, nonstate participants must meet an “effective resistance” criterion as well. When Correlates of War scholars Melvin Small and J. David Singer first extended their study of war to include intra-state wars in *Resort to Arms*, they established the requisite condition that for a conflict to be a war, it must involve armed forces capable of “effective resistance” on both sides. This criterion applies to extra-state wars as well. They then developed two alternative criteria for defining effective resistance: “(a) both sides had to be initially organized for violent conflict and prepared to resist the attacks of their antagonists, or (b) the weaker side, although initially unprepared, is able to inflict upon the stronger opponents at least five percent of the number of fatalities it sustains.”² The effective resistance criteria were specifically utilized to differentiate wars from massacres, one-sided state killings, or general riots by unorganized individuals. Such one-sided violence is not considered to be the same phenomenon as war and is not included here. However this distinction is sometimes difficult to make in extra-state state conflict.

¹ Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816-1980* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982), *Resort*, 56.

² Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816-1980* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982), 215.

As described by J. David Singer and Melvin Small in *Wages of War* and *Resort to Arms*, extra-state wars are of two general types: colonial and imperial. A colonial extra-state war occurs if the adversary is a “colony, dependency, or protectorate.”³ In other words, these “colonial wars” tend to occur when a colony rebels and tries to become independent. In addition, in less extreme circumstances, the colonial people may resort to war to seek relief on a policy question (for example, the “Hut Tax War”), rather than seeking full-scale independence. All of these colonial wars are now categorized as war type 2. In imperial wars the system member fights an adversary that is, “an independent political entity that did not qualify for system membership because of serious limitations on its independence, a population insufficiency, or a failure of other states to recognize it as a legitimate member.”⁴ These wars are now categorized as war type 3. In practice, most of our imperial wars involved a state’s attempt to colonize a previously independent geographic area, though extra-state wars can also be fought against non-territorially based entities.

In *Resort to Arms*, Small and Singer identified 51 extra-systemic wars. In the current version of the data, there are 163 extra-state wars. The changes in numbers are the result of a number of factors, including: the change in the counting of battle deaths (noted above); the addition of extra-state wars from new historical research; the addition of wars that occurred since *Resort to Arms*; and the elimination of the “metropole-periphery” distinction (also discussed in the intra-state war variable descriptions). Originally Singer

³ Ibid.

⁴ Melvin Small and J. David Singer, *Resort to Arms: International and Civil War, 1816-1980* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982), 52.

and Small had included wars that took place within a state, but in the state's periphery (or outside its metropole) as extra-systemic wars. This metropole distinction has been eliminated (as described in Chapter 2 of *Resort to War*), with the result that 14 (of the original 51 extra-systemic wars) were reclassified as intra-state civil wars, (along with another 16 extra-state wars that had been added to the data set since 1982 see Table 1 below for a list). Two additional extra-systemic wars were reclassified or subdivided, and one was removed. However, an additional 129 wars have been added to the extra-state category.

Table 1 Extra-state Wars re-classified as Intra-state Wars

1992 Extra-systemic war number	1992 Extra-systemic war name	Current intra-state war number	Start year
304	Greek	506	1821
312	Albanian	512	1830
315	Belgian Independence	515	1830
316	First Polish	517	1831
319	First Syrian	518	1831
322	Texan	527	1835
323	First Bosnian	528	1836
328	Second Syrian	533	1839
333	Second Bosnian	540	1841
340	Hungarian	554	1848
346	First Turco-Montenegrin	556	1852
352	Second Turco-Montenegrin	562	1858
354	Second Buenos Aires	573	1861
355	Second Polish	580	1863
360	First Cretan	583	1866
366	Mitre Rebellion	600	1874
367	Balkan	601	1875
395	Third Cretan	631	1896
396	Druze-Turkish	630	1895
406	Ilinden	640	1903

408	Yunnan	675	1916
416	Chinese Muslim	703	1928
417	Soviet-Turkistani	711	1931
436	Tibetan	741	1956
437	First Kurdish	752	1961
439	Philippine-MNLF	786	1972
442	Ethiopian-Eritrean	798	1975
443	Kurdish Autonomy	797	1974
451	Ogaden	805	1976
454	Tigrean	808	1978

The variable layout for this version of the data is listed below. In general there is one record for a war that identifies that primary state actor (Side A) and the nonstate participant(s) (Side B), and summarizes the war experience (in terms of dates, initiator, outcome, transformations, and state and nonstate combatant deaths). Separate records are included for each additional **state** war participant that describes the experience of that actor (dates, on which side it intervenes, and its battle deaths).

The variables of the war's initiator and outcome are generally the same as for all war types, though in terms of extra-state wars, it is interesting to note that the party that initiated the war can be either the state or the nonstate entity, even in an imperial war. For instance, if an empire is spreading across an area and is suddenly attacked by the local people, the locals have initiated the war, even though it is an imperial war and may result in a defeat for the local people and a further expansion of the empire.

Another new feature of this version of the dataset is the explicit inclusion of the data on war transformations. Wars are classified by the types of actors involved (states or nonstate actors) and which actors are doing “the bulk of the fighting”; thus if either of those elements change, so must the category of the war “transform” into something different. This frequently happens when a state enters or leaves a war. If a state merely enters an extra-state war on the side of another state, this does not change the fundamental character of the war, and it the war will be coded as having an intervention. Similarly, if a state enters the war on the side of the nonstate actor and plays a minor role, the war is coded as having an intervention. However, if a state enters an extra-state war on the side of the nonstate actor, but then the intervener takes over the bulk of the fighting, the war ceases to be an extra-state war and is transformed into a war of a different classification (an inter-state war). Conversely, a war can also be transformed into an extra-state war, for example when a state withdraws from an inter-state war in which it had been doing the bulk of the fighting in cooperation with a nonstate entity.

Variables Layout

WarNum - the number assigned to the war

WarName - the name given to the war

WarType – 2= Colonial War; 3= Imperial War

Ccode1 – the System Membership number (or Country Code) for the participant on Side A of the war; -8 = Not Applicable (the participant is not a state) or there is no additional state on Side A

SideA - the name of the participant on Side A of the war: -8=Not Applicable (no additional party on this side)

Ccode2– the System Membership number (or Country Code) for the participant on Side B of the war; -8 = Not Applicable (the participant is not a state) or there is no additional state on Side B

SideB - the name of the participant(s) (state or nonstate) fighting on the other side of the war (Side B): -8=Not Applicable (no additional party on this side)

StartMonth1 - the month in which sustained combat began: -9 = month unknown

StartDay1- the day on which sustained combat began: -9 = day unknown

StartYear1 - the year in which sustained combat began: -9 = year is unknown
 EndMonth1 - the month in which sustained combat ended, or the month of the last major engagement after which fatalities declined below the war fatality threshold: -7 = war ongoing as if 12/31/2007, -9 = month unknown
 EndDay1- the day on which sustained combat ended, or the day after the last major engagement after which fatalities declined below the war fatality threshold: -7 = war ongoing as if 12/31/2007, -9 = day unknown
 EndYear1 - the year in which sustained combat ended, or the year of the last major engagement after which fatalities declined below the war fatality threshold: -7 = war ongoing as if 12/31/2007, -9 = year unknown
 StartMonth2 - after a break in the fighting, the month in which sustained combat resumes: -8= not applicable (no break in the fighting), -9 = month unknown
 StartDay2- after a break in the fighting, the day on which sustained combat resumes: -8= not applicable (no break in the fighting), -9 = month unknown
 StartYear2 - after a break in the fighting, the year in which sustained combat resumes: -8= not applicable (no break in the fighting), -9 = year unknown
 EndMonth2 - after fighting resumes, the month in which sustained combat ended, or the month of the last major engagement after which fatalities declined below the war fatality threshold: -7 = war ongoing as if 12/31/2007, -8= not applicable (no break in the fighting), -9 = month unknown
 EndDay2- after fighting resumes, the day on which sustained combat ended, or the day after the last major engagement after which fatalities declined below the war fatality threshold: -7 = war ongoing as if 12/31/2007, -8= not applicable (no break in the fighting), -9 = day unknown
 EndYear2 - after fighting resumes, the year in which sustained combat ended, or the year of the last major engagement after which fatalities declined below the war fatality threshold: -7 = war ongoing as if 12/31/2007, -8= not applicable (no break in the fighting), -9 = year unknown
 Initiator – Did the participant on Side A initiate the war? 0=no, 1=yes
 Intervenor – was there an additional state that intervened in the war? 0=no, 1=yes
 TransFrom - the War# of a preceding war that was transformed into this extra-state war: -8 = Not applicable
 Outcome: coded as:
 1 – Side A wins
 2 - Side B wins
 3 - Compromise
 4 - The war was transformed into another type of war
 5 - The war is ongoing as of 12/31/2007
 6 - Stalemate
 7 - Conflict continues at below war level
 TransTo - the War# of the war that this war transformed into, -8=Not applicable
 WhereFought - Region where combat occurred. Values are:
 1 = W. Hemisphere
 2 = Europe
 4 = Africa
 6 = Middle East

7 = Asia

9 = Oceania

BatDeaths - the battle-related combatant fatalities suffered by the state participant: -9= data unknown

NonState Deaths - the battle-related combatant fatalities suffered by the nonstate participant: -8 = not applicable (deaths reported only in the record for the initial state participant, not in the record for the intervening state(s), -9= data unknown

Version - Version of the data = 4.0