Warfare, 1500-1816:

Codebook

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This codebook explains the coding, and comments upon how the coding decisions were made, for the Early-Modern War Dataset.

CONFLICT NAME

Ordinal naming is generally avoided, unless there is precedent or convention. Names include years for war names which, although a bit clumsy perhaps, avoids confusion.

TYPE

While there are many ways to classify war type, this database employs a simple dichotomous classification:

      1 – Internal
      2 – International

"Internal" denotes a struggle for control over leadership of a polity. "International" employs the broadest sense of that term – a fight between nations, or imagined communities, or peoples who consider themselves different from one another. The COW dataset and others recognize other categories, such as recognized members of the international system, nonstate actors, substate actors, etc. Such distinctions have little meaning for most polities of the early-modern era.

REGION

Conflicts are organized into the following regions (some took place in more than one):

      1 – Africa
      2 – Americas
      3 – East Asia
      4 – Europe
      5 – Central Asia
      6 – Middle East/North Africa (MENA)
      7 – South Asia
      8 – Southeast Asia

Conflicts that occurred primarily in Muscovy or Russia are coded as 5 (Central Asia). Wars that take place on the Mediterranean Sea are coded as 6 (MENA). And, although this is regrettable,

two conflicts in Hawai'i are coded as East Asia, since having a "Pacific" region for only two cases seemed like an even worse choice.

INTENSITY

This variable reflects estimates regarding the relative size and intensity of wars to the closest order of magnitude.

> 1 – 1000-10,000 KIA per year on average
> 2 – 10,000-100,000 KIA per year on average
> 3 – 100,000-1,000,000 KIA per year on average
> 4 – Over 1,000,000 KIA per year on average

As a general rule, this database is constructed with these guidelines in mind: when sources provide estimates of the size of armies engaged but not casualties, of which there are many, KIA are estimated at under five percent. If sources mention heavy or one-sided casualties, estimates rise to ten percent of those engaged. Rarely in such cases do estimates for purposes of this data collection go beyond ten percent of the total engaged, but there are exceptions.

In all cases, the database errs on the side of lower estimates. It reflects an under-count of early-modern killed-in-action, or a minimum number of people who died on its battlefields.

DURATION

Reported in years. Those less than one year long are rounded up. Some conflicts began prior to 1500, as recorded in the descriptions.

UNCERTAINTY

This category is a confidence measure, a rough assessment of the reliability of the source material and extent to which the intensity of the conflict was based on estimation.

> 3 – (HIGH) – Almost all information about the conflict is based on author estimates. No numbers regarding casualties or armies, or details about the fighting, have survived.

> 2 – (MED) – Primary sources exist, but their reliability is in some question, or there is uncertainty/discrepancy in the primary or secondary sources. At minimum *some* numbers exist upon which to base estimates.

> 1 – (LOW) – Multiple credible sources exist, or particularly reliable secondary analyses.

CIVILIANS

This variable denotes significant civilian casualties. If sources mention substantial civilian suffering, with rough estimates of over 1000 killed, or if civilian casualties were greater than those of combatants, then this is coded 1. This does not include civilian casualties due to

secondary effects of conflict, like famine and disease, unless those effects were wielded as weapons of war, as in a siege. Extended or intense sieges of cities almost always make this score a 1.

EXTENDED CONFLICT

If the war was part of a conflict that carried on for more than 20 years, this is coded 1. Most such conflicts experienced periods of decreased activity where battle casualty levels dropped below 1000/year, but hostility did not end. This is related to the commonly used "enduring rivalry," which for some studies involved combatants in three or more wars within a twenty-five year period.

CONQUEST

This variable captures the death, absorption or annexation of a polity, even if that outcome is fated to be temporary.

INTERVENTION

This captures the presence of external or opportunistic third-party intervention. If actors uninvolved in the conflict at its outset join the fighting, whether welcomed by the original combatants or not, this is coded 1.

BORDERS

If borders or frontiers shift during the conflict, and are different at its end than they were at the beginning, this is coded 1. Early-modern borders were not, as a rule, fixed; territorial control of some regions was often either vague or disputed. This variable errs on the side of exclusion – in other words, if sources do not note specific territorial transfers, then it is coded 0.

RELIGIOUS COMPONENT

If a religious difference between the combatants was a central or contributing cause of the conflict, this is coded 1. Not all instances where the combatants were of different faiths qualify.

SUCCESSION

If the war was caused, inspired by or included a struggle over succession, this is coded 1.

COLONIAL/IMPERIAL

If the war involved either attempted colonial conquest OR an anti-imperial independence struggle, this is coded 1. Wars between colonial powers do not qualify. The default setting for some polities, such as the Mughals and Portuguese, is 1, though not all their conflicts satisfied the criteria.

GUERRILLAS

If the war involves a significant guerrilla component on either side – defined as fighters not representing a recognized/official government, using irregular tactics – this is coded 1. Wars involving certain belligerents that commonly employed irregular tactics – such as the Cossacks and Marathas – are coded 1 as a general rule, though there are exceptions.

PEASANT REVOLT

If the conflict involved an uprising by the poorest members of the agricultural class, this is coded 1. In order to qualify, the peasants have to be rising as an economic class, not as an ethnic or national group.

PREDATORY RAIDING

If the conflict involved temporary attacks on civilians by external actors – usually but exclusively on horseback – this is coded 1.

NAVAL COMPONENT

If the war included fighting at sea or on rivers, this is coded 1.

DESCRIPTION

An idiosyncratic and often too-brief description of the conflict that mentions details from the sources when possible and historical controversies when appropriate. It often includes alternate names, modern location of hostilities, and persisting uncertainties. Occasionally the names of major battles are included, in order to help the reader differentiate between similar wars in the same region.

This section also notes instances where smaller conflicts that are sometimes considered independent have been recorded as part of a larger war. This often requires judgments that could generate disagreement – the Napoleonic Wars could presumably be lumped together, for example, and many of the smaller offshoots of the Thirty Years War and/or Qing-to-Ming transitions could be separated into many different conflicts – but to the extent possible the database follows existing historical convention.

VICTOR

Those wars without clear winners are also noted here.

SOURCES

When no citations are listed, Wikipedia is the primary source.

OTHER NOTES

Extending these criteria into the years covered by the COW and PRIO databases necessitated some changes. For example, when wars evolve and move from one COW category to the next, they are recoded as new conflicts. The Early-Modern War Database eliminates such distinctions and merges the cases. Thus these cases – which are not separate wars – disappear from the list:

COW WARS OMITTED FROM THE ANALYSIS

1840	1840	Second Syrian, Phase 2	1967	1968	Cultural Revolution Phase 2
1841	1842	First Argentina War, Phase 2	1968	1973	Second Laotian, Phase 2
1848	1855	Mayan Caste War, Phase 2	1975	1976	East Timorese, Phase 2
1860	1872	Miao Revolt Phase 2	1976	1979	East Timorese War Phase 3
1860	1866	Taiping Rebellion, Phase 2	1976	1991	Angolan Control
1860	1872	Panthay Rebellion Phase 2	1977	1978	Second Ogaden War, Phase 2
1965	1973	Vietnam War, Phase 2	1978	1980	Second Ogaden War, Phase 3

As with any large dataset like this one, there will no doubt be mistakes and oversights, despite my best efforts. One day there will be a version 2.0, updated with expertise and corrections from the universe of scholars, which is a group that is rarely reticent.

Please direct all such corrections/questions/comments/critiques to fettweis@tulane.edu.