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Battle Deaths Dataset 1946–2005¹

Codebook for Version 2.0

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A Note to Users

This document serves as the codebook for the Dataset of Battle Deaths. To obtain the journal article presenting these datasets, the data files, and materials documenting the sources used and coding decisions made, please visit www.prio.no/cscw/datasets.

Users of the battle deaths dataset should cite the article in which the data are presented:

Bethany Lacina & and Nils Petter Gleditsch, 2005. 'Monitoring Trends in Global Combat: A New Dataset of Battle Deaths', *European Journal of Population* 21(2–3): 145–116.

Users of this data should contact Bethany Lacina (blacina@stanford.edu) with comments or corrections so that this dataset may be improved in further versions. This work has been funded mainly by the Research Council of Norway, with additional contributions from the Centre for Human Security.

For Use with the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset

UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File

This dataset provides information on annual battle deaths in conflicts recorded in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al., 2002; Harbom, Högbladh & Wallensteen, 2006).

All variables in the Conflict-Year Data File not described here were imported from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset. The codebook for that dataset can be found at: www.prio.no/cscw/datasets.

Variables Added:

1. bdeadlow: Low estimate of annual battle fatalities. Battle fatalities are defined as civilians and combatants killed in the course of combat in the following manner:

According to the codebook for the UCDP/PRIO dataset (Harbom et al., 2006):

‘An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths.

The separate elements of the definition are operationalized as follows:

- (1) Use of armed force: use of arms in order to promote the parties’ general position in the conflict, resulting in deaths.
 - (1.1) Arms: any material means, e.g. manufactured weapons but also sticks, stones, fire, water, etc.
- (2) 25 deaths: A minimum of 25 battle-related deaths per year and per incompatibility.
- (3) Party: A government of a state or any opposition organization or alliance of opposition organizations.
 - (3.1) Government: The party controlling the capital of the state.
 - (3.2) Opposition organization: Any non-governmental group of people having announced a name for their group and using armed force.
- (4) State: A state is:
 - (4.1) an internationally recognized sovereign government controlling a specified territory, or
 - (4.2) an internationally unrecognized government controlling a specified territory whose sovereignty is not disputed by another internationally recognized sovereign government previously controlling the same territory.
- (5) Incompatibility concerning government and/or territory: The incompatibility, as stated by the parties, must concern government and/or territory.
 - (5.1) Incompatibility: the stated generally incompatible positions.
 - (5.2) Incompatibility concerning government: Incompatibility concerning type of political system, the replacement of the central government, or the change of its composition.

- (5.3) Incompatibility concerning territory: Incompatibility concerning the status of a territory, e.g. the change of the state in control of a certain territory (interstate conflict), secession, or autonomy (internal conflict).'

The Battle Deaths Dataset defines *battle deaths* as deaths resulting directly from violence inflicted through the use of armed force by a party to an armed conflict during *contested combat*. *Contested combat* is use of armed force by a party to an armed conflict against any person or target during which the perpetrator faces the immediate threat of lethal force being used by another party to the conflict against him/her and/or allied fighters. Contested combat excludes the sustained destruction of soldiers or civilians outside of the context of any reciprocal threat of lethal force (e.g. execution of prisoners of war).

Timeframe: We have collected annual battle deaths data which includes both deaths during combat and deaths from wounds received in combat. Some of those considered dead of wounds may have died in a year following that in which combat actually took place, especially in the case of battles taking place late in the calendar year. These deaths were included, however, if they were the direct and immediate result of injuries sustained during combat violence. Long term reduction in life expectancy because of wounds or disability was not included.

2. bdeadhigh: High estimate of annual battle fatalities.

3. bdeadbest: Best estimate of annual battle fatalities.

4. yrlydata: Coded as a 0 or 1, according to the categories below:

0: Estimated based on battle-deaths data that was not specific to the conflict year. This could occur for two reasons:

- In some cases, annual figures on battle deaths were obtained by dividing an estimate over several years of a conflict. This division was done according to information on the yrlydata in violence from UCDP/PRIO's intensity scores and from secondary sources. In cases where the total estimate was simply averaged across years, integers were used and put in ascending order in cases where the total number of deaths was not evenly divisible.
- Occasionally, battle-deaths data for conflicts occurring simultaneously in the same state were not available in disaggregated form. In this case, annual battle deaths estimates were obtained by dividing the total estimate between the conflicts according to UCDP/PRIO's intensity coding. Aggregating these conflicts will provide the user with more accurate information and is recommended. All cases where this occurs are noted in the documentation of the dataset.

1: Estimated based on battle-deaths data specific to the conflict-year.

5. intenseonly: Coded as a 0 or 1, according to the categories below:

0: Data on battle deaths are based on secondary sources.

1: Data on battle deaths have been estimated based on only UCDP/PRIO intensity codings, as follows:

UCDP/PRIO codes 25–999 battle deaths: Conflict-years are coded with a low estimate of 25 battle deaths, a high estimate of 999 battle deaths and the best estimate is marked as unknown. If UCDP/PRIO intensity codings indicate <1,000 battle-related deaths in the entire conflict, high estimates are adjusted so that the entire conflict does not total more than 999 battle deaths.

UCDP/PRIO codes at least 1,000 battle deaths: Conflict-years are coded with a low estimate of 1,000 battle deaths, a high estimate of 9,999 battle deaths, and the best estimate is marked as unknown.

For use with the Correlates of War Dataset

Correlates of War Conflict Lists (Extra-, Inter-, and Intra-State War)

Provides information on total battle deaths in Correlates of War (COW) extra-state, inter-state and intra-state wars (Sarkees, 2000).

All variables in the Correlates of War Conflict Lists that are not described here were imported from the COW Datasets on extra-systemic, intra-state, and inter-state war. The codebook for that dataset can be found at: <http://cow2.la.psu.edu/>.

Documentation of coding decisions for COW conflicts that do not appear in the UCDP/PRIO dataset, and notes on the adaptation of Battle Deaths Data to the COW conflict list, can be found at www.prio.no/cscw/datasets. The last year of COW data available is 1997. For additional information on conflicts that ended after that date or were ongoing in 2002 see the UCDP/PRIO conflict data.

Variables Added:

1. bdeadlow: Low estimate of total battle fatalities. Battle fatalities are defined as civilians and combatants killed in the course of combat (see above).
2. bdeadhigh: High estimate of total battle fatalities.
3. bdeadbest: Best estimate of total battle fatalities.
4. yrlydata: Defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above).

Correlates of War Conflict-Year Files (Extra-, Inter-, and Intra-state War)

Provides information on annual battle deaths in Correlates of War (COW) armed conflicts.

Variables Added:

1. bdeadlow: Low estimate of annual battle fatalities. Battle fatalities are defined as civilians and combatants killed in the course of combat (see above).
2. bdeadhigh: High estimate of annual battle fatalities.
3. bdeadbest: Best estimate of annual battle fatalities.
4. yrlydata: Defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above).

Correlates of War Participant Files (Extra-, Inter-, and Intra-state War)

Only states are recorded by COW as participants in wars. In extrasystemic and inter-state conflict, the battle deaths marked for each participant includes losses among all combatants fighting in the state's armed forces, including those drawn from imperial territories (e.g. Senegalese soldiers fighting for the French), and all civilian citizens of

the metropole. In intra-state conflicts, losses suffered by the entire state population – insurgents and their supporters as well as the government forces and their supporters and other civilians – are included in the total for participant deaths.

Variables Added:

1. tbdeadlow: Low estimate of total battle deaths in the conflict among all participants. Battle fatalities are defined as civilians and combatants (see above).
2. tbdeadhigh: High estimate of total battle deaths in the conflict among all participants.
3. tbdeadbest: Best estimate of total battle deaths in the conflict among all participants.
4. pbdeadlow: Low estimate of total battle deaths in the conflict for COW participant.
5. pbdeadhigh: High estimate of total battle deaths in the conflict for COW participant.
6. pbdeadbest: Best estimate of total battle deaths in the conflict for COW participant.

For use with the Fearon and Laitin Civil Wars Dataset

Fearon and Laitin Conflict List

Provides information on total battle deaths for Fearon and Laitin's list of civil conflicts (Fearon & Laitin, 2001).

All variables in the Fearon and Laitin Conflict List that are not described here were imported from the Fearon and Laitin data on civil wars. The codebook for that dataset can be found at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/>.

Documentation of coding decisions for Fearon and Laitin conflicts that do not appear in the UCDP/PRIO dataset and notes on the adaptation of the Battle Deaths Data to the Fearon and Laitin conflict list can be found at www.prio.no/cscw/datasets. The last year for which the Fearon and Laitin data are available is 1999; for additional information on conflicts that ended after that date or conflicts that were ongoing in 2002 see the UCDP/PRIO conflict data.

Variables Added:

1. begin: First year of the conflict (based on Fearon and Laitin coding).
2. end: Last year of conflict recorded (based on Fearon and Laitin coding).
3. bdeadlow: Low estimate of total battle deaths in conflict one. Battle fatalities are defined as civilians and combatants killed in the course of combat (see above).
4. bdeadhigh: High estimate of total battle deaths.
5. bdeadbest: Best estimate of total battle deaths.
6. yrlydata: Defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above).

Fearon and Laitin Country-Year File

Provides information on annual battle deaths for Fearon and Laitin's list of civil conflicts.

The Fearon and Laitin data are contained in a country-year based dataset that notes from zero to four simultaneous civil conflicts within a single country. Each conflict has a case name provided by Fearon and Laitin; I have numbered the cases from 1 to 4 for clarity.

Variables Added:

1. casename_1: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict one.
2. durest_1: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict one.

3. ended_1: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict one.
4. waryrs_1: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict one.
5. bdeadlow_1: Low estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict one. Battle fatalities are defined as civilians and combatants killed in the course of combat (see above).
6. bdeadhigh_1: High estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict one.
7. bdeadbest_1: Best estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict one.
8. yrlydata_1: Yrlydata dummy, defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above), for conflict 1. Coded as unknown if no conflict is ongoing.
9. casename_2: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict two.
10. durest_2: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict two.
11. ended_2: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict two.
12. waryrs_2: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict two.
13. bdeadlow_2: Low estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict two.
14. bdeadhigh_2: High estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict two.
15. bdeadbest_2: Best estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict two.
16. yrlydata_2: Yrlydata dummy, defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above), for conflict 2. Coded as unknown if no second conflict is ongoing.
17. casename_3: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict three.
18. durest_3: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict three.
19. ended_3: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict three.
20. waryrs_3: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict three.
21. bdeadlow_3: Low estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict three.
22. bdeadhigh_3: High estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict three.
23. bdeadbest_3: Best estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict three.

24. yrlydata_3: Yrlydata dummy, defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above), for conflict 3. Coded as unknown if no third conflict is ongoing.
25. casename_4: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict four.
26. durest_4: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict four.
27. ended_4: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict four.
28. waryrs_4: Data from Fearon and Laitin for conflict four.
29. bdeadlow_4: Low estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict four.
30. bdeadhigh_4: High estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict four.
31. bdeadbest_4: Best estimate of annual battle deaths in conflict four.
32. yrlydata_4: Yrlydata dummy, defined as in the UCDP/PRIO Conflict-Year Data File (see above), for conflict 4. Coded as unknown if no fourth conflict is ongoing.

References

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