

COMPARATIVE CONSTITUTIONS PROJECT

Chronology of Constitutional Events

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Overview and Citation

This codebook describes the variables contained in the *Chronology of Constitutional Events*, a comprehensive listing of the year of constitutional adoption, replacement, and amendment for all independent states since 1789. The data are contained in `ccpcce_v1_3.txt`, a tab-delimited text file, and have been analyzed in Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton (2009), and serve as the baseline census for most of the data collected as part of the Comparative Constitutions Project (CCP). Notably, this dataset on the chronology of constitutional events complements the CCP's core dataset on the characteristics of national constitutions, which is released in a separate file with separate documentation. Please cite the chronology data as follows:

Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. 2020. "Chronology of Constitutional Events, Version 1.3." *Comparative Constitutions Project*. Last modified: April 28, 2020 [first edition published 2009]. Available at: <http://www.comparativeconstitutionsproject.org>.

Concepts

The chronology is described in detail on the Comparative Constitutions Project's [website](#) and in Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton (2009); this document provides summary information for users. The authors utilize two concepts to categorize constitutional texts. A *constitutional system* encompasses the period in which a constitution is in force, a period bracketed by the year of adoption and that of any replacement or suspension. A *constitutional event* is any change to a country's constitution, including adoption, amendment, suspension, or reinstatement. Therefore, within constitutional systems, there can be (and often are) multiple events. The United States, for example, has had two constitutional systems: 1781-89, and 1789-present. The present US constitutional system has included multiple events, including one for each year in which an amendment is promulgated.

Sample

The unit of analysis is the country-year. Thus, when coding the characteristics of constitutions, for years in which there are multiple events, the authors code the content of the constitution as it stood in force at the end of the year. For example, if a constitution was amended the same year as it was adopted, the authors will code the content of the constitution in its amended form rather than as originally adopted. The chronology file, however, identifies the event type of such years with the event that occurred first chronologically (most commonly a 'new' event).

The sample included in this release of the chronology consists of all years from 1789 to 2019 for all independent countries. The year refers to the year the constitutional event was promulgated. The list of independent countries is based on that of Ward and Gleditsch (2020 [1999]) and, in some cases, is supplemented by the Correlates of War project's "State System Membership List." This sample includes 20,429 country-years, from which we identified 1,026 constitutional systems and 3,913 constitutional events. As of 2019, every independent state in the world had a constitution in force by our definition, though as discussed in Elkins, Ginsburg, and Melton (2009) some countries, including Israel and Saudi Arabia, have unconventional forms. Notably, there are a number of countries in our sample that had a constitution in place when they achieved independence; these cases also have system numbers, even though the start date precedes the observation time.

Errors and Omissions

The writing and promulgation of formal constitutions frequently occurs during periods of crisis and the historical record of events is not always clear. The authors continually update the event data, as information emerges. We kindly ask users of these data to help improve the data's reliability by reporting any mistakes and/or differences in interpretation to us via the contact form on the CCP website (<http://www.comparativeconstitutionsproject.org/contact>).

List of Variables

COWCODE – Correlates of War country code (www.correlatesofwar.org)

COUNTRY – Country name

YEAR – Year

SYSTID – Unique identification number for the constitutional system

EVNTID – Unique identification number for the constitutional event

EVNTTYPE – Event type (e.g. amendment, new, etc.)

Works Cited

Correlates of War Project. 2017. “State System Membership List, v2016.”
<http://correlatesofwar.org>

Elkins, Zachary, Tom Ginsburg, and James Melton. 2009. *The Endurance of National Constitutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gleditsch, Kristian S. and Michael D. Ward. 2020 (1999). *List of Independent States*. Last modified: December 14, 2013. <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/statelist.html>.

Hensel, Paul R. 2006. *International Correlates of War: Colonial History Data Set, Version 0.4*. Last Modified: June 13, 2006. <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~phensel/icow.html>.

Appendix – Version Differences

Version 1.0 to Version 1.1

- Changed the names of several identification variables to make the variables names the same between the chronology and characteristics data sets. Specifically, system_num is now systid; docid is now evtid; eventtype is now evnttype.
- Added 1 observation: Cameroon 1960 (systid – 618; evtid – 179; evnttype – new)
- Changed the type of event for 16 observations:

Country	Year	Systid	Evtid	Evnttype
Argentina	1956	305	37	amendment
Argentina	1966	987	1949	interim
Argentina	1970	987	3718	amendment
Argentina	1971	987	3710	Amendment
Argentina	1972	984	1279	reinstated
Argentina	1976	985	3711	interim
Argentina	1979	985	3712	Amendment
Argentina	1982	985	3713	Amendment
Argentina	1983	306	3714	reinstated
France	1870	339	3709	Amendment
Greece	2002	478	457	Amendment
Turkey/Ottoman Empire	1912	765	-	non-event
Turkey/Ottoman Empire	1914	765	3086	Amendment
Turkey/Ottoman Empire	1915	765	-	non-event
Turkey/Ottoman Empire	1918	765	3087	Amendment
Turkey/Ottoman Empire	1927	767	3715	Amendment

- Changed the evtid for Argentina 1817 (new evtid – 3717)
- Switched the systids and evtids for Uganda 1966 (new systid – 667; new evtid – 1020) and Uganda 1967 (new systid – 666; new evtid – 1019)

Version 1.1 to Version 1.2

- Added years from 2007-2013
- Added events for the United Kingdom from 1789 to 2013
- Remove events for San Marino because it is not categorized as an independent state by Ward and Gleditsch (2013)
- Changed the treatment of Yugoslavia and Serbia to reflect the fact that the two states share a common history. This is now reflected by a common Correlates of War country code and country name: Yugoslavia (Serbia)

- Added observations for France 1815 (systid – 336; evtid – 3833; evttype – reinstated) and Poland 1791 (systid – 1014; evtid – 4012; evttype – new) through 1795
- Deleted observations for Greece 1827 and Slovenia 1991 to reflect changes to the years of independence for these states listed by Ward and Gleditsch (2013)
- Changed the type of event for 151 observations (see list in v1.2 download)
- Changed the evtid for 10 observations:

Country	Year	Old Evtid	New Evtid
Greece	2001	2347	457
Honduras	1951	3605	3604
Honduras	1990	2399	2398
Liberia	1847	1898	3702
Liberia	1934	3702	1898
Mexico	1965	2624	2623
South Africa	1996	901	902
South Africa	1997	902	901
Uruguay	1934	1045	1047
Uruguay	1942	1047	1045

- Changed the systid for the Netherlands 1815 (new systid – 323)

Version 1.2 to Version 1.3

- Added years from 2014-2019
- Added an observation for Czechoslovakia 1918 (systid – 422; evtid – 3257; evttype – interim) to reflect changes to the years of independence listed by Ward and Gleditsch (2020 [1999]).
- Deleted an observation for Croatia 1991 to reflect changes to the years of independence listed by Ward and Gleditsch (2020 [1999]).
- Changed the type of event for 335 observations (see attached list), including:
 - Significant updates to New Zealand’s chronology of events to include the following constituent documents and all amendments thereto:
 - Constitution Act; Demise of the Crown Act; Legislature Act; Judicature Act; Letters Patent Constituting the Office of Governor-General; Bill of Rights Act; Human Rights Act; Electoral Act; Supreme Court Act; Senior Courts Act
 - Significant updates to Israel’s chronology of events to include the following constituent Basic Laws and all amendments thereto:
 - The Knesset; Israel Lands; The President of the State; The State Economy; The Military; Jerusalem, Capital of Israel; The Judiciary; The State Comptroller; Human Dignity and Liberty; Freedom of Occupation; The Government; Referendum; State Budget 2017 and 2018 (Temporary Provision); Israel - The Nation State of the Jewish People

- Eliminated reference to Afghanistan 1985, which further research has indicated was not a promulgated constitutional event.
- Changed date of promulgation of Netherlands first Constitution from 1815 to 1814, as per Professor Wim Voermans, who documents the promulgation of a constitution for the northern Netherlands on 29 March 1814.
- Changed the treatment of Yugoslavia and Serbia to reflect the renaming of the country to Serbia and Montenegro from 2003 to 2006. After Montenegrin independence in 2006, the country was renamed Serbia.
- Changed the evntid for 3 observations:

Country	Year	Old Evntid	New Evntid
Norway	1995	749	4275
Philippines	1947	2765	3688
Senegal	1962	1675	4382