Abstract
The paper examines the correlates of executions of officers during the Spanish Civil War. This is an under-explored form of violence in civil war, in comparison with battle deaths and with executions of civilians. Beyond violence against military personnel as a new dependent variable, the research aims at improving our understanding of the use of a category marker to target victims for violence. We take a micro-comparative perspective on this question, examining the times and places in which mistrust of a category of people (in this case, officers) translates into violence. In other words, it examines when it becomes understandable, given actors’ interests in civil wars, to loosen criteria for killing. Historical data, with a long delay, offers a particularly important opportunity to study these questions, given the high degree of sensitivity of the subject. In our case, we use a unique dataset of the civil war biographies of officers in the Spanish armed forces, compiled from a wealth of archival material by the late Carlos Engel.