DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this dataset is to catalog the varying forms of challenger-incumbent interaction in the 2011 Syrian uprising between February 1, 2011, and August 1, 2012. It draws on three news sources, the Associated Press newswire, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and the official state newspaper, *al-Thawra*. The level of analysis is the town (the Syrian Census Bureau's fourth administrative level[1]). The dataset was constructed by Kevin Mazur. Please contact me at kevin.a.mazur@gmail.com with any questions or criticism. The remainder of this document explains the contents of the database and coding procedures.

CONTENTS

This dataset contains the following files:

(1) syriaeventdb_explanation_5jul20.pdf – Identifying information for the dataset, a description of the discrete variable data, and the codebook used to construct the dataset.
(2) eventdb_discretecoding_l4.csv – Discrete coding of challenger, state, and ally actions, organized by town-day.
(3) eventdb_allvars_l4.csv – All variables in the event catalog, including the original article text and subject-verb-object strings that form the basis for discrete codings.

[1] Syrian administrative categorizations are as follows: the first level is the governorate (*muhafaza*, n=14), the second level is the district (*mantiqa*, n=61), the third level is the sub-district (*nahiya*, n=270), and the fourth level is the town (*qarya*, n=5251). Official administrative categories and maps are taken from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2013. "OCHA's Common Operational Datasets for Syria." https://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/dataset/syrian-arab-republic-admin-level-1-boundaries-admin-level-2-boundaries-admin-level-3-0 (January 12, 2014).

DESCRIPTION OF DISCRETE VARIABLE CODINGS DATA (eventdb_discretecoding_l4.csv)

The event dataset is based on three news sources coded over the entire period covered by the study, from February 1, 2011, until August 1, 2012. It follows the structure of Charles Tilly's[2] dataset on contention in nineteenth century Great Britain in coding a set of subject-verb-object sequences for actions taken by the state, its challengers, and the state's allies. The unit of analysis is the town-day, with 4424 events occurring in 449 different localities (of 5204 localities total). The dataset is based on multiple, diverse sources selected to cover the spectrum of views of the conflict. It draws on all relevant articles from the Associated Press Newswire (obtained via Lexis-Nexis), the daily digests of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (http://www.syriahro.org/), an opposition-leaning activist organization, and *al-Thawra* (http://www.thawra.sy/), the political daily newspaper of the official Syrian Baʿth Party.

To create the discrete event coding, I reduced the subject-verb-object strings to nine types of action, carried out by the state, social actors engaging in challenge, or social actors allied to the state. The typology of actions was developed inductively, based upon descriptions of contention gathered from secondary sources, the newspaper articles themselves, and personal interviews. The codebook for reading the newspapers, entering subject-verb-object strings into the database, and reducing those strings to the discrete outcomes is described in the next section of this document.

The **state** strategies are as follow:

(1) crowd control. This action involves state officials dispersing demonstrators without inflicting high levels of damage on protesters or monitoring them extensively. It encompasses actions of far more force than one would expect from crowd control in an industrialized democracy, ranging from barricading, non-violently dispersing protests and arresting demonstrators to tear gassing and beating demonstrators and firing into the air when doing so causes fewer than two casualties.

(2) tactical control of cities. This action involves an organized form of violence and surveillance directed at a specific segment of a city or town's population, but not the whole town or major neighborhood of a large city. These tactics appear to be geared at separating a contentious population from the rest of the town/city or punishing a specific subset of the city's residents. Examples include raiding a neighborhood to make arrests, encircling a neighborhood and cutting power and water for several days, storming a neighborhood, opening fire randomly on demonstrations or using snipers to kill people out on the street.

(3) confront. This action is a security or military force clashing with an armed opposition group, whether as a formal battle between armies, skirmishes with army defectors, or scrambling attacks following an ambush.

(4) destroy. These actions target entire towns or major neighborhoods of large cities indiscriminately. They inflict heavy damage, either mass property destruction or the killing of 20 or more people. Actions in this category include the siege of entire cities, shelling of a neighborhood, and burning of homes.

Distinctions among the three **challenger** actions are:

(1) non-violent action, meaning simply that a group gathered to make demands on the regime and no violent action was reported

(2) spontaneous violent action, where crowds initially amassed to demonstrate non-violently and shifted towards the use of violence, such as throwing rocks or beating state allies

[2] Tilly, Charles. 1995. *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

(3) coordinated violent action, involving groups such as "rebels" or "defectors" engaging in coordinated attacks on state forces.

Allies are any actors without an official affiliation to the state that act to support the incumbent or harm its challengers. They can take two sorts of actions in the coding scheme: *(1) violent action* or *(2) non-violent action*. When gathered to voice support the state, whether as a counter demonstration or on its own, ally actions count as non-violent. Any sustained physical attack—from throwing stones at and using knives against anti-incumbent demonstrators to organized militias destroying villages assisting challengers—counts as ally violent action.

Using multiple sources with conflicting agendas requires the researcher to make coding decisions sometimes based upon explicitly contradictory reports. These decisions often involved rejecting obvious government fabrications (e.g., "terrorists are using smoke bombs to make it look like the government is shelling the city center" when the government is clearly shelling the city center). In these and more ambiguous situations, I consulted of third-party reports, including the scholarly monographs of Jamal Barout[3] and Azmi Bishara[4] and the reports of international organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Following the procedure suggested by Weidmann and Rød,[5] I address issues arising from coding based upon multiple sources by coding events in view of all relevant reports and make the original reports available in the database.

VARIABLES

Identifying information
l4_pcode – P-code for town in which event took place (see the Syria Town Database[6] for further detail and demographic covariates).
date_start – The day on which a single-day event occurred, or the first day of a multi-day event.

Discrete actions taken in contention
ch_pcfl – challenger non-violent action
ch_sviol – challenger spontaneous violent action
ch_cviol – challenger coordinated violent action
st_crctrl – state crowd control action
st_tactrl – state tactical control of cities action
st_confront – state confront challenger action
st_destroy – state destruction action
al_nviol – ally non-violent action
al_viol – ally violent action

[3] Barout, Muhammad Jamal. 2012. *al-ʿAqd al-Akhir fi Tarikh Suriya: Jadaliyyat al-Jumud wa-l-Islah*. Beirut: al-Markaz al-ʿArabi lil-Abhath wa-Dirasat al-Siyasat.
[4] Bishara, Azmi. 2013. *Suriya, Darb al-Alam Nahwa al-Hurriya: Muhawala fi al-Tarikh al-Rahin*. Beirut: al-Markaz al-ʿArabi lil-Abhath wa-Dirasat al-Siyasat.
[5] Weidmann, Nils B., and Espen Geelmuyden Rød. 2015. "Making Uncertainty Explicit Separating Reports and Events in the Coding of Violence and Contention." *Journal of Peace Research* 52(1): 125–28.
[6] Khaddour, Kheder, and Kevin Mazur. 2018. "Syria Town Database." https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/YQQ07L.

GENERAL CODEBOOK (eventdb_allvars_l4.RData)

The coding of newspapers into subject-verb-object strings and storage of those data were done in a database developed in Microsoft Access software. Coding subject-verb-object strings into the discrete action variables was done in Microsoft Excel (the procedure for this discrete coding is described in section III below).

I. SOURCES AND DEFINITION OF EVENTS

Article selection and processing

For the AP, I performed the following LexisNexis search for the entire time period under observation: ((((syria W/p (protest OR demonstration OR violence OR attack) AND DATE AFT(2/4/2011) AND DATE BEF(7/20/2011))))). I read each article returned in these searches and coded subject-verb-object strings for the pro- and anti-regime societal actors (termed here challenger and ally, respectively) and state action according to the criteria detailed below. For the Syrian Observatory and *al-Thawra*,[7] I scanned the headlines of all articles published over the period and read all those that appeared potentially related to state, challenger, or ally action. This procedure yielded 797 records from the AP, 1418 from the Syrian Observatory, and 1676 from *al-Thawra*. In addition to the subject-verb-object strings and counts of deaths/injuries, I copied all relevant verbiage from the article into the database. In total, the procedure produced 3295 unique town-day records and 4424 events (a single town-day could contain state, ally, and challenger actions).

To process the subject-verb-object strings into events, I looked at all sources for each town-day-actor and made a judgment about how the subject-verb-object string fit into the categorization scheme. Because the government newspaper, *al-Thawra*, was likely to produce false reports, I cross-referenced all of its reports of large-scale challenger violence nor corroborated in the AP or SOHR with secondary sources, including the Arabic language online print reports of *al-Jazeera*, Bishara,[8] and other online newspaper sources identified through timelines maintained on wikipedia. If these reports did not corroborate government reports, I did not include the event in the final coding. For each town-day-actor, I coded the highest level of violence employed (e.g., if the state used *crowd control* and *tactical control* at the same event, I coded the state action as *tactical control*).

Events in the SOHR source material that rely on Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reports are not coded because those reports are same reports form the basis for events described in *al-Thawra.*

Event identifying information

ID: automatically assigned by Access, unique record number based on the unit of observation, the town-day.
coded_by: initials of coder (all coding in the present version performed by Kevin Mazur).
init_code_date: the date the record was created, assigned automatically when the town-day record is generated in the database.

[7] *al-Thawra* was not available from the paper's website on major holidays or Saturdays, but generally available otherwise (suggesting that it was just not published on those days). The following days are missing from the data: Feb 2011: 19, 20, 26, 29, Mar 2011: 5, 12, 19, 20, May 2011: 1, 22, 29, June 2011: 5, 12, 19, 26, July 2011: 3, 10, 17, 24, August 2011: 5, 12, 19, 26, 31, Sept 2011: 1, 2, 9, 16, 23, October 2011: 14, 21, 28, November 2011: 4, 9, 10, 11, 18, 25, December 2011: 2, 4, 9, 16, 23, 30, Jan 2012: 6, 13, 20, Feb 2012: 3, 10, 17, 24, Mar 2012: 2, 9, 23, Apr 2012: 6, 13, 16, 17, 20, 27, May 2012: 3, 18, June 2012: 1, 8, 15, 21, 29, July 2012: 5, 13, 27.
[8] Bishara. 2013. *Suriya, Darb al-Alam.*

Record identifiers
AP_date: refers to the date of the AP article in lexis-nexis searches.
SO_date: url for article on SOHR website.
ST_date: url for article on *al-Thawra* website.

Verbiage copied directly from article that forms the basis for subject-verb-object event coding
AP_event_descr, SO_event_descr, ST_event_descr

Event location
loc_name, loc_detail: place where event occurred. Taken from description in article, *loc_name* should contain name of town in the UN OCHA Census Gazetteer. If the town in the article is a hamlet below the level of the Gazeteer, the name of the town in the Gazeteer to which it is nearest (located via Google Maps or a Google search) should be listed first, with the actual town name in parentheses. *loc_detail* should be sub-city information (e.g., neighborhood) or clarifying notes about how to translate *loc_name* into census p-code.
loc_ID: UN OCHA p-code for location, assigned manually based on *loc_name* field

Additional rules:
(1) Actions described as occurring in a region (e.g., Jabal al-Zawiya) or the countryside of a given governorate (e.g., Rif Idlib) should not be recorded unless there is a town location given.[9]
(2) Events are coded to where action takes place, not where actors are from.[10]

Event date
date_start, date_end: Days on which event starts and ends. Date_end left blank when event is one-day only or no clear information. Because of the large number of events going on in the country at one time, newspaper reports do not systematically state how long each protest has been going on. For this reason, consecutive day reports are coded to the first day of their occurrence. If no date is mentioned in an article, it is coded as occurring on the day before publishing for SOHR and Thawra. For AP, which has a time stamp, events in articles published before 5pm are coded as having occurred the previous day, and those after 5pm are coded as having occurred in the same day.

[9] The following is an example for Jabal al-Zawiya in the SOHR:
قتل ثمانية اشخاص بينهم طفل في سوريا الاربعاء خلال عمليات نفذتها قوات الامن، كما افاد ناشطون حقوقيون. واكد المرصد السوري لحقوق الانسان لوكالة فرانس برس ان اربعة اشخاص قتلوا في محافظة ادلب، واثنين في حماة، وشخص في حمص، في حين قتل طفل في قرية قريبة من جسر الشغور على الحدود مع تركيا. حيث تشن قوى الامن السورية اعتبارا من صباح الاربعاء عمليات واسعة النطاق في عدد من قرى جبل الزاوية في شمال غرب سوريا، على ما اكد المرصد السوري لحقوق الانسان
www.syriahro.org/14-9-2011-syrian%20observatory10.htm
Similarly, *al-Thawra* reports a raid and arrests and in the Jebel al-Zawiya region and the countryside around the city of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿman that cannot be coded to a location:
وكانت الجهات المختصة قد نفذت في محافظة ادلب فجر أمس عميلة نوعية تم خلالها القاء القبض على أكثر من 140 مطلوبا في مناطق متفرقة من جبل الزاوية وريف معرة النعمان بينهم 60 في كفر نبل وكفر روما.
وأوضح مراسل سانا أن العملية نفذت بدقة متناهية بعد مداهمة عدد من المواقع التابعة لعناصر المجموعات الارهابية بناء على تحريات ومعلومات متقاطعة.
http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=962709829201111210343 27
[10] For example, the following event would be coded as occurring in ʿArbin, not Saqba:
من جانب اخر قال المرصد ان "شابا من مدينة سقبا يبلغ من العمر 26 عاما استشهد فجر اليوم الاثنين متأثرا بجروح اصيب بها مساء امس خلال تشييع شهيد في بلدة عربين" في ريف دمشق .
www.syriahro.org/19-9-2011-syrian%20observatory.htm

Event definition

Because challengers, allies and the state have different resources and goals, coding procedures vary slightly among actors for what counts as an event. For the challenger, any organized gathering of more than thirty people aimed at gaining concessions from the regime or toppling the regime is counted as an event.

Some actions against challengers mentioned in newspapers are not explicitly identified as the work of the state and not described as following an incident of popular challenge. For these reports, events with no clear strategy or coordination that kill fewer than five people are not counted as events. However, those that evince some a strategy for containing challenging populations or finding challengers within a broader population are coded as state *tactical control* actions. An example of two events listed together is illustrative; a raid that killed 2 in al-Rihjan (Rif Hama) would be coded because it evinces organized state action, whereas a sniper killing one in Duma (Rif Damascus) would not be because it is not clear there is any coordination among state authorities, nor that state personnel did the shooting.[11] Similarly, the killing of six in an attempt to disperse demonstrators would be counted, but the killing of two by snipers of unknown provenance would not be counted.[12]

al-Thawra reports many demonstrations in support of the government, but these must be non-routine to be recorded in the database. For example, an annual arts exhibition in the capital, Damascus, or a dance exhibition such as the one in Sweida described in the article below do not count as events.[13] Similarly, al-Thawra's listing of towns supporting the regime in fanciful language that gives no specifics on the actions or number of participants should not be coded.[14] Similarly, many

[11] The text describing these events is as follows:
وفي محافظة ريف دمشق استشهد مواطن في مدينة دوما اثر اصابته برصاص قناصة ،وفي محافظة حماة استشهد مواطنان اثنان اثر اصابتهما باطلاق رصاص خلال حملة مداهمات في الريهجان بريف حماة الشرقي بحثا عن مطلوبين للسلطات السورية
www.syriahro.org/24-3-2012-syrian%20observatory1.htm

[12] The event in Muhayn would be counted but the one in al-Qusayr would not:
استشهد ستة مواطنين في بلدة مهين اثر اطلاق الرصاص لتفريق مظاهرة وفي مدينة القصير استشهدت سيدة وشاب برصاص قناصة ورجل متاثرا بجراح اصيب بها قبل ايام
www.syriahro.org/10-3-2012-syrian%20observatory2.htm

[13] The text is as follows:
معرض خاص بأطفال السويداء بعنوان : مع أطفالنا يداً بيد لنبني سورية
كذلك تضمن المعرض السنوي الخاص بالاطفال الذي اقيم امس في مبنى القصر البلدي بمدينة السويداء بعنوان مع أطفالنا يدا بيد لنبني سورية الغد أحدث المناهج التعليمية لرياض الاطفال وعددا من وسائل الايضاح المرئية والمسموعة والالات موسيقية ووسائل ثقافية وتربوية والعابا لتنمية المدارك العقلية للاطفال ولوازم مدرسية.
وقال وائل نصر مدير المعرض ان الهدف من الفعالية توفير تربة خصبة للاطفال والمربين للانطلاق نحو مستقبل أفضل في مجال وسائل الايضاح والتعليم بحيث يتحول المعرض الى نافذة للاطفال لتحقيق ما يجول في أذهانهم من أفكار وتحفيز الابداع لديهم باعتبارهم يشكلون أمل الحياة وجيل المستقبل.
ورافق المعرض اقامة خيمة وطن تأكيدا على محبة سورية ودعم أبناء المحافظة لمسيرة الاصلاحات الشاملة فيها والمضي قدما نحو مستقبل أفضل حيث شملت فعاليات الخيمة فقرات غنائية وقصائد شعرية ولوحات وطنية من تراث وفلكلور المحافظة.
http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=303410706201108020158 15

[14] For example:
كما أفاد الزميلان هيثم محمد ومحمد حسين أن طرطوس خرجت عن بكرة أبيها شيبها وشبابها عمّالها وفلاحيها ... من أقاصي الجرد في مدن وريف بانياس وصافيتا والدريكيش والشيخ بدر والقدموس ومشتى الحلو إلى قرى السهل في عكار والصفصافة ومدن وقرى الشريط الساحلي وجزيرة أرواد .. أصواتهم ملأت الساحات والشوارع ، رددت صدى حناجرهم وهي تردد الهتافات والأهازيج من كل الشوارع .. قدموا حتى ضاق بهم كورنيش طرطوس البحري .. العلم السوري العظيم يخفق بنسيم البحر وأمواج القادمين تهدر بصوت واحد « سورية الله حاميها » ، « الله.. سورية .. بشار وبس » , « يا أصوات الفتنة موتي موتي .. الشعب السوري إيدو وحدة » ، « الشعب يريد بشار الحبيب بشار الرئيس » , « الشعب يريد إسقاط شاهد العيان » , « حط المي بالكاسة بشار أسد ألماسة » , « بالروح بالدم نفديك يا بشار » , « غير ثلاثة ما منختار الله وسورية وبشار» .
http://thawra.alwehda.gov.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=23863548420110330023019

communities of clan background organized “national loyalty tent” (خيمة وفاء للوطن) demonstrations to support the state; these tent demonstrations are only recorded in the database if they have more than fifty participants, judged from the text or accompanying pictures, or have another non-routine event, such as a pro-regime demonstration, connected to them.[15]

Prior to October 15, 2011, deaths for unknown reasons (assuming they have an identifiable date and locale) can be recorded as being done by the state to challengers, but after this date, which is when military defections begin in earnest, this assumption is not justified; the dead could be protesters, members of the army still fighting for the regime, defectors, or regime allied militants.[16]

Additional types of action reported in newspaper sources that do not count as events:
(1) gunfire or other violence done by unspecified actors towards unspecified targets,[17] or gunfire described as random,[18] even when the location is known
(2) seizure of weapons caches without specific interaction of conflicting actors, even if a specific place is mentioned
(3) reports of bodies located from a killing that occurred several days prior
(4) an explosion described only by its geographic area, not the actor causing it or its target,[19] or an improvised explosive device (IED) placed by an unknown actor[20]
(5) events taking place on a national border and not located in any town, such as a rebel attack on a government border post[21]

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[15] For example:

دعماً للإصلاح ورفضاً للتدخل الخـــــارجي ... عشيرة البقارة تقيم خيمة وفاء للوطن في الحسكة

أقامت عشيرة البقارة في الحسكة خيمة وفاء للوطن دعماً لمسيرة الاصلاح التي يقودها السيد الرئيس بشار الأسد ورفضا للتدخل الغربي بشؤون سورية الداخلية.

وأكد الشيخ طلاع كعود الطلاع شيخ عشيرة البقارة في الحسكة وحدة وتماسك أبناء المحافظة والعشائر ووقوفهم صفا منيعا خلف قيادة الرئيس الأسد معاهدين سيادته على أن يكونوا الحجارة الصلبة في قلعة الممانعة السورية.

من جهته قال فاضل اليونس احد وجهاء عشيرة البومعيش ان خيمة اليوم ما هي الا دليل آخر على سلامة الوطن وتكذيب للمغرضين ورد على قنوات الفتنة والتضليل الاعلامي.

بدوره قال حامد جاسم الكركو نحن هنا اليوم لنستنكر الهجمة الشرسة مؤكدا أن هذا التناغم والتنوع الذي ضمته خيمة اليوم ما هو الا إسفين آخر يدق في نعش المؤامرة.

http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=30104833720110720001329

[16] For example:

واضاف المرصد الذي يتخذ من لندن مقرا له ان ثلاثة من القتلى سقطوا في مدينة حمص (وسط) واثنان في بلدة الحارة بمحافظة درعا (جنوب)، وواحد في طيب الامام بريف حماة (وسط) وطفل في بلدة كفرومة وشاب في خان شيخون اللتين تقعان في محافظة ادلب (شمال غرب).

www.syriahro.org/16-11-2011-syrian%20observatory2.htm

[17] For example:

وافاد المرصد فجر الخميس ان "احراجا في محيط بلدتي البارة واحسم في جبل الزاوية بمحافظة ادلب (شمال غرب) تعرضت لقصف بالرشاشات الثقيلة، في حين هزت انفجارات بلدتي ابلين وابديتا المجاورتين، كما افاد المرصد .

www.syriahro.org/24-11-2011-syrian%20observatory4.htm

[18] For example:

وقال ناشطون إن ثلاثة أشخاص لقوا حتفهم في إطلاق نار عشوائي قرب نقطة ببلدة تلبيسة بمحافظة حمص .

www.syriahro.org/4-10-2011-syrian%20observatory.htm

[19] For example: “The Observatory also reported government shelling and raids in Idlib and southern Daraa provinces as well as an explosion in Beit Saham near Damascus that killed seven people. The Syrian government reported seven dead and blamed the blast on "terrorists" preparing explosives” (AP 4/4/12).

[20] For example:

ففي محافظة حماة استشهد 8 مواطنين بينهم سبعة عثر على جثامينهم في ريف حماة بينهم خمسة اطفال وامهم وسائق تكسي كانوا قد اختطفوا قبل يومين على طريق الغاب حماة وشهيد اثر انفجار عبوة ناسفة في قرية قمحانة بريف حماة

www.syriahro.org/25-5-2012-syrian%20observatory3.htm

[21] “Rebels attacked Syrian forces Thursday on two spots along the nation's porous border with Iraq, killing 21 soldiers and seizing control of one of the four major border posts, a senior Iraqi army official said.

(6) accounts of arrests of less than 10 people disconnected—at least in what is reported in the article—from any challenger or state action (such as storm (اقتحام), raid (غارة), strike (مداهمة), etc.)[22]
(7) death of less than five persons if not connected with coordinated action by challenger or incumbent (e.g., single miscalculation at a checkpoint resulting in one death that does not escalate)[23]
(8) when conflicting accounts of who caused damage with no resolution (occurring most in AP), record nothing[24]

In addition, reports in *al-Thawra* flattering to the regime and highly inconsistent with the interests of the challengers (though consistent with the regime account that any challenge is part of a Zionist or Western or Gulf conspiracy bent on the destruction of Syria) were not recorded, such as claims of destruction and attacks on non-military/police/security government employees unconnected to any other form of action. Reports of armed gangs destroying a fire engine and injuring firefighters, and state "competent authorities" defusing improvised explosive devices set to attack protestors outside mosques on Fridays, were similarly not recorded, though a protest following prayers or state forces or allies opening fire on people leaving a mosque would be recorded.[25]

The assaults against Syria's government unfolded throughout the day, putting the Iraqi army on high alert to prevent any violence from spilling across the border.

"We have security concerns because the border crossing now is out of the Syria government's control, and nobody can anticipate what will happen," said Iraqi Army Brig. General Qassim al-Dulaimi.

Al-Duliami said about a half-dozen rebels stormed the Syrian border crossing near the Iraqi town of Qaim on Thursday morning. He said the rebels forced the border guards from their posts but did not cross into Iraq" (AP 7/19/12).

[22] For example:

وتابع أن أجهزة الأمن السورية اعتقلت 5 طلاب في مدينة داعل بمحافظة درعا، و3 مواطنين من مدينة اللاذقية و5 من مدينة الحفة التابعة لها، و7من مدينة بانياس وقرى مجاورة لها، في حين لم يحدد هوية أي من المعتقلين .

www.syriahro.org/22-9-2011-syrian%20observatory8.htm

[23] For example, the first incident would be included because it is attached to a demonstration, but the second would not be included.

وفي مظاهرة جرت في قرية المسيفرة بمحافظة درعا استشهد شاب خلال إطلاق الرصاص لفض المظاهرة ،وفي قرية تابعة لمدينة القصير بمحافظة حمص استشهد رجل على حاجز للجيش

www.syriahro.org/6-9-2011-syrian%20observatory9.htm

[24] For example: "U.N. observers on Thursday inspected the site of an explosion that flattened a block of houses in the central Syrian city of Hama and killed at least 16 people, while the government and the opposition traded blame over the cause of the blast.

Syrian state-run media said rebel bomb-makers accidentally set off the explosives. Anti-regime activists said intense shelling by government forces caused the extensive damage. It was impossible to independently verify the conflicting accounts because President Bashar Assad's regime, facing a 13-month-old uprising, has restricted access for journalists and other outside witnesses.

(…) The state-run Syrian news agency SANA said rebels mishandling explosives triggered a blast that killed at least 16 people and severely damaged at least six houses.

The Local Coordination Committees, a network of activists, denied that and said it was intense shelling from govern-ment tanks that caused the damage. The group put the death toll as high as 70, but that estimate was not confirmed by others." AP 4/26/12

[25] Events like this one, in which the actor responsible is not stated and is attacking demonstrators (rather than the state and its allies), were repeatedly reported by al-Thawra newspaper. They are not recorded because the actor is unknown and because of the implausibility of challengers attacking other challengers and the incentive for the government to present challengers in an unflattering light. The article describes the events as follow:

من جانب آخر فككت الجهات المختصة ثلاث عبوات ناسفة معدة للتفجير اثنتان منها قرب جامعين في مدينة درعا وثالثة في دير الزور.

ففي مدينة درعا فككت وحدات الهندسة عبوة بالقرب من الجامع العمري وباتجاه جامع أبو بكر في حي درعا البلد كانت المجموعات الارهابية المسلحة تخطط لتفجيرها عند خروج المصلين لقتل أكبر عدد منهم.

http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=3141102392011100100562 5

II. CODING RULES FOR GENERATING SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT STRINGS

Classification of actions – general

For a list of related actions in one newspaper for an event-day, only the most violent one for each actor was recorded. For example, if the report held that state forces raided a neighborhood and later sealed it off and shelled it, killing 25, the event would be coded as shelling[26] (and, therefore a *state destroy* action when the subject-verb-object string is converted into discrete event levels of violence).

Classification of actions – challenger

Actions of the challenger (as well as the state and state allies) are all recorded in the database as subject-verb-object strings based upon the text. For example, see the following text from SHRO[27]:
"The Syrian regime forces carried out a raid operation and arrests in the city of al-Quriya, Dayr al-Zur governorate, searching for persons wanted by the Syrian authorities. The operation led to the arrest of 20 Syrians, among them four from one family."
This string would be coded as *security forces-raid-town*, with the number of arrests recorded in the relevant box (discussed below). These strings were recorded into the database, with up to two actions from each source.

AP
c_subj_AP1, c_subj_AP2, c_verb_AP1, c_verb_AP2, c_obj_AP1, c_obj_AP2
SOHR
c_subj_SO1, c_subj_SO2, c_verb_SO1, c_verb_SO2, c_obj_SO1, c_obj_SO2
al-Thawra
c_subj_ST1, c_subj_ST2, c_verb_ST1, c_verb_ST2, c_obj_ST1, c_obj_ST2

Coding rules specific to the challenger

(1) Roadside incidents that kill fewer than 6 people should not be recorded.[28] However, bombings or attacks that kill fewer than five people should be recorded as challenger actions, even if the perpetrator or victim identity is unclear.
(2) Attacks on state buildings more severe than isolated gunfire should be recorded as challenger action (with the appropriate verb given in the text), even if the source of the attack is unknown.[29]

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[26] For example, the following text would be coded as a 'raid' only:
وفي سياق متصل، نفذت القوات النظامية السورية حملة مداهمات واعتقالات في مدينة القورية بمحافظة دير الزور بحثا عن مطلوبين للسلطات السورية وأسفرت الحملة عن اعتقال عشرة سوريين، بينهم اربعة من عائلة واحدة .
www.syriahro.org/22-3-2012-syrian%20observatory1.htm

[27] Translated from the footnote immediately preceding this one.

[28] This event, for example, would not be coded:
في محافظة ادلب ذكر المرصد السوري لحقوق الانسان ان "مواطنا استشهد اثر اطلاق الرصاص عليه من قبل عناصر موالية للنظام على الطريق بين ادلب ومعرة مصرين، كما استشهد مواطن اثر اصابته بالرصاص في راسه من قبل قوات الجيش السوري على طريق سراقب ".
www.syriahro.org/17-1-2012-syrian%20observatory3.htm

[29] For example, three RPGs and heavy gunfire at Harasta Air Force security should be coded:
افاد المرصد السوري لحقوق الانسان وكالة "فرانس برس" ان مقرا للمخابرات الجوية السورية في حرستا بريف دمشق استهدف مساء الاحد بقذائف "ار بي جي ".
وقال مدير "المرصد" السوري رامي عبد الرحمن: ان "مبنى المخابرات الجوية في حرستا (عشرة كلم شمال شرق دمشق) استهدف بثلاث قذائف "ار بي جي" تبعها اطلاق رصاص كثيف"، من دون ان يتمكن من تحديد مصدر النيران .
وسبق ان تعرضت مقار المخابرات السورية لهجمات متكررة شنها جنود منشقون ينتمون الى الجيش السوري الحر، وفق ناشطين حقوقيين .
www.syriahro.org/5-3-2012-syrian%20observatory3.htm

(3) When identity of challenger is given as "thought to be defectors," the subject should be code as "defectors,"[30] but when an unspecified group is exchanging fire or clashing with the Army, it should be coded as "armed rebels."
(4) When "skirmishes" or "clashes" are reported between social actors and state forces, they should be recorded in both challenger and state action boxes.

Classification of actions – state
Subject-verb-object strings were recorded following the procedure laid out in the challenger section above.

AP
st_subj_AP1, st_subj_AP2, st_verb_AP1, st_verb_AP2, st_obj_AP1, st_obj_AP2
SOHR
st_subj_SO1, st_subj_SO2, st_verb_SO1, st_verb_SO2, st_obj_SO1, st_obj_SO2
al-Thawra
st_subj_ST1, st_subj_ST2, st_verb_ST1, st_verb_ST2, st_obj_ST1, st_obj_ST2

Coding rules specific to the state
(1) if the article says an unspecified actor 'opened fire on demonstrators', code this action as state action and the actor 'unspecified'
(2) events in which the state cuts off water/electricity/communication and seals off area should have 'siege' as the verb in the string
(3) 'thwart' (احباط محاولة) becomes common in July 2012 (when government forces are attacked and capture or kill contenders). When government forces are attacked first, this action should be coded as as attack on government by challenger and a clash.[31]
(4) When 'skirmishes' or 'clashes' are reported between social actors and state forces, they should be recorded in both challenger and state action boxes.
(5) Arrests made in a city with no mention of how they were arrested, or how many are injured or killed in the process (but with the threshold number of arrests to count as an event met), should be coded with the verb 'raid' and object 'residential area'.[32]
(6) In the case where the regime takes three actions and they are recorded, code the two that best capture the spectrum of activity. For example, if clash, strike/shell (قصف), and raid are given, code only clash and strike, as raid is close to clash in technique (security forces pursuing challengers on foot) and level of damage (both use light weapons).

[30] For example:
سقط قتيل واحد على الاقل في اشتباكات عنيفة دارت ليل الثلاثاء الاربعاء في احدى بلدات محافظة درعا في جنوب سوريا بين قوة من الجيش ومسلحين يعتقد انهم جنود منشقون
www.syriahro.org/19-10-2011-syrian%20observatory.htm
[31] See, for example: http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=4124451062012071701043 5.
[32] For example:
ألقت الجهات المختصة في محافظة حمص القبض على 14 مطلوبا في دير بعلبة والاوراس بينهم رئيس المجموعة الارهابية المسلحة التي قامت بالاعتداء على حافلة الركاب
التابعة لمعمل الحرامات وقامت بعمليات خطف وقتل واغتصاب وذلك خلال ملاحقتها لهذه المجموعات التي روعت المواطنين وعاثت دمارا وخرابا.
وذكر مراسل سانا في حمص أن الجهات المختصة بريف حمص تمكنت أيضا من القاء القبض على خمسة مسلحين في منطقة الرستن وتلبيسة وتسعة اخرين في تلكلخ.
http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=962976985201111230328 18

(7) The verb قصف should be coded as 'strike' unless a specific calibre of weaponry (e.g., BMP (ب م ب), tank (دبابة), or shell (قذيفة هاون)) is given and is heavy, in which case the verb should be heavy, then as 'shell'.[33]

Classification of actions – ally
Subject-verb-object strings were recorded following the procedure laid out in the challenger section above.

AP
al_subj_AP1, al_subj_AP2, al_verb_AP1, al_verb_AP2, al_obj_AP1, al_obj_AP2
SOHR
al_subj_SO1, al_subj_SO2, al_verb_SO1, al_verb_SO2, al_obj_SO1, al_obj_SO2
al-Thawra
al_subj_ST1, al_subj_ST2, al_verb_ST1, al_verb_ST2, al_obj_ST1, al_obj_ST2

Coding rules specific to ally
(1) car demonstrations and long flag demonstrations in support of government should be coded to largest place on the demonstration's route.

Counts within events
The database also counts the number of arrested, injured, and killed, and SOHR and al-Thawra disaggregate by actor type to a greater extent because I changed the coding scheme after finding this disaggregation necessary while reading the AP—because these numbers as so frequently left out of reports, these figures are not used in empirical analysis. These numbers are to be used in the conversion of subject-verb-object strings into discrete action levels, described in section III of this appendix.

AP, SO, ST codes indicate sources (AP, SOHR, and Thawra, respectively).
ch_arrested_AP, ch_injured_AP, ch_killed_AP, ch_arrested_SO, ch_injured_SO, civ_killed_SO, reb_killed_SO, unspec_killed_SO, ch_arrested_ST, ch_injured_ST, civ_killed_ST, reb_killed_ST, unspec_killed_ST: number of challenger actors arrested/injured/killed in event, civilian/rebel/unspecified distinction for SOHR and Thawra reflects distinctions among social actors killed.
st_injured_AP, st_killed_AP, st_injured_SO, st_killed_SO, st_injured_ST, st_killed_ST: number of state actors injured/killed in event.
al_injured_AP, al_killed_AP, al_injured_SO, al_killed_SO, al_injured_ST, al_killed_ST: number of state ally actors injured/killed in event.

Coding rules specific to counts
(1) if the article has a list of towns with a total number arrested/injured/killed, distribute them evenly across towns if two or three towns, if four or more leave this field blank for the town-day. For example, if there are ten dead across two towns, code each town-day as having five dead).

[33] For example:
وذكر ناشطون ان القصف يطال ايضًا أحياء جورة الشياح والقصور وحمص القديمة، وتستخدم فيه قذائف الهاون والمدفعية وراجمات الصواريخ، وذلك لليوم الثالث والثلاثين على التوالي. من جهة ثانية، افاد المرصد عن اشتباكات بعيد منتصف الليل قرب كراجات العباسين في دمشق .
في ريف دمشق، تعرّضت بلدتا دير العصافير وزبدين ومدينة قطنا لقصف من القوات النظامية السورية ليلا. كما اشار المرصد الى اشتباكات وقعت فجرا في احياء عدة من مدينة حلب (شمال) بين القوات النظامية ومقاتلين معارضين. وتسبب انفجار عبوة ناسفة في حي بستان القصر في المدينة استهدف دورية امنية بمقتل عنصري امن .
www.syriahro.org/9-7%20-2012-syrian%20observatory2.htm

(2) approximate descriptions into numbers: “big losses” = 3 injured and 7 killed, “injure a number of” = 3 injured,[34] “tens” = 19, “dozens” = 24, “hundreds” = 100
(3) when clashes occur and only a total number of dead, not divided by type of actor, is given, split the number in half across the two parties to the clash.[35]
(4) if the identity of the dead is not explicitly specified, deaths should be coded to the group targeted (the object box in the S-V-O string) by the action. When the dead are specified as “military” in the article but clearly includes some defectors and some soldiers remaining with army, split them evenly.
(5) when unclear whether challenger dead (for SOHR, *Thawra*) are civilian or rebel deaths, if article mentions fighting of defectors with the Army and does not say explicitly civilian deaths, they should be coded as rebel. If an attack on a city center or residential area does not say explicitly that armed elements were involved, it should be coded as civilian.[36]

Variables in the database not employed in the empirical analysis

Unknowable variables
These variables were included in the coding because they are frequently included in other event datasets, but I ceased to fill them out after finishing the coding of the AP (i.e., they were not filled for SOHR and *al-Thawra*) because in the present context, they require information that is simply not given or unreliable given the context in which it is to be collected. For example, having a reporter at demonstrations or clashes in person is usually impossible, making reports of size, duration, and the type of symbols deployed even more difficult to measure than in less repressive institutional contexts.
dur_known: “duration known,” whether the report says when the protest/clash/raid/siege ended.
coord_wother: “coordinated with other event,” whether action was part of a coordinated series of events. This variable is more applicable to a protest campaign over a particular issue in a more receptive institutional context—discerning what was coordinated, beyond coordinated Friday post-prayer demonstrations, was impossible.
initiator_viol: “who initiated violence,” difficult to discern in this repressive institutional context and few on-the-ground professional reporters.
size_est_AP, size_categ_AP, size_verbiage_AP
SO_size_est,, SO_size_categ, SO_size_verbiage
ST_size_est, ST_size_categ, ST_size_verbiage
For the same reasons of having no one on the ground discussed above, reliably determining protest size was impossible.
c_sym_AP1, c_sym_AP2, , c_sym_SO1, c_sym_SO2, c_sym_ST1, c_sym_ST2
st_sym_AP1, st_sym_AP2, st_sym_SO1, st_sym_SO2, st_sym_ST1, st_sym_ST2
al_sym_AP1, al_sym_AP2, al_sym_SO1, al_sym_SO2, al_sym_ST1, al_sym_ST2

[34] See http://thawra.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=412445106201207170104 35.
[35] For example:
وتدور مواجهات عنيفة منذ ثلاثة ايام في مدينة الرستن بين الجنود السوريين وجنود منشقين. وذكر المرصد السوري لحقوق الانسان ان اصداء اطلاق النار بالرشاشات الثقيلة ترددت الخميس في الرستن شمال مدينة حمص لليوم الثالث على التوالي، بينما يشن الجيش عملية واسعة للقبض على الفارين .
واكد المرصد ان "المعارك اسفرت عن 40 جريحا لدى الجانبين ."
www.syriahro.org/30-9-2011-syrian%20observatory3.htm
[36] For example, if the article says 'citizens killed' and mentions defectors but only that the security or military forces took action against them, it should be code as civilian deaths:
وفي محافظة ادلب استشهد 24 مواطنا بينهم 13 في قرية عين لاروز اثر اقتحامها من قبل القوات السورية بحثا عن جنود يقول النظام انهم مختطفون ويقول الاهالي انهم انشقو
www.syriahro.org/10-3-2012-syrian%20observatory2.htm

The “symbols” measure was intended to be attached to the SVO string but was dropped because information about the particular techniques used by actors was not provided in most media reports.

Dummy variables
These variables measure whether violence was used by various actors (state, challenger, ally), as recorded in various sources (AP, SO, ST codes indicate AP, SOHR, and *al-Thawra*, respectively). All information on violence and ally presence was ultimately contained in the subject-verb-object strings, and in greater detail, making these measures superfluous.
AP_challenger_viol, AP_state_viol, AP_ally_present, AP_ally_viol, SO_ally_present, SO_ch_viol, SO_st_viol, SO_al_viol, ST_ally_present, ST_ch_viol, ST_st_viol, ST_al_viol

III. CODING SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT STRINGS INTO DISCRETE EVENT DATA

Once the actions of the state, challenger, and state allies were recorded into town-days for each newspaper, the entries for each actor had to be reduced from up to six total subject-verb-object strings (two actions for each of three sources) into one discrete action. The nine possibilities for action type (four state actions, three challenger actions, and two state ally actions).

Events were coded based upon which tactic of those available for a given actor best matched the recorded subject-verb-object string or strings. Specific rules for recurring ambiguous cases, as well as how conflicting reports from different newspapers, were dealt are discussed below.

Data cleaning at this stage involved ensuring that no duplicate town-day existed (usually due to creating a new record for a new source covering the same town-day).

Additional rules for processing subject-verb-object strings into event data

General
For town-days in which multiple sources have an entry and those entries differ in the action a given actor is taking (e.g., AP records only arrests that would be coded as *crowd control* if no other reports were available for the day and SOHR records more violent action that would be counted as *tactical control* with no other report), the higher level of violence would be the value taken for that event day.

Challenger
When challengers attack state forces in a clash, this counts as *coordinated violence*, opening fire with fewer than three deaths should count as *spontaneous violence*, ambush is counted as *coordinated violence*, blocking roads with no further escalation *nonviolent action*, attacking a checkpoint with fewer than two casualties is *spontaneous violence*, two or more is *coordinated violence*.

al-Thawra claims that the challenger attacked non-state forces were not coded as challenger violent events; confirmation of such an event would need to be present in *AP* or SOHR records.

Roadside attacks against state agents, recurring in *al-Thawra* reports, such as kidnapping from passenger vans or overnight military buses were coded as spontaneous violence if they resulted in more than three deaths. This type of action was not discounted as incredible because interviews of activists and defectors conducted by Bishara[37] corroborated the fact that this was a commonly used tactic in the latter part of the period under study here.

If *al-Thawra* reports attacks by challengers on civilians within a city, code no challenger action. Planting or detonating a bomb in a city should be coded as *spontaneous violence* only if it targets government forces (because this type of challenger attack on state agents is corroborated by third party sources, such as the AP and Bishara[38]).

Allies
Reports that are obvious government fabrications—that contradict narratives in reliable secondary literature like work by Barout[39] or Bishara[40]—should not be coded. For example, the claim that

[37] Bishara. 2013. *Suriya, Darb al-Alam.*
[38] Bishara. 2013. *Suriya, Darb al-Alam.*
[39] Barout. 2012. *al-ʿAqd al-Akhir*.
[40] Bishara. 2013. *Suriya, Darb al-Alam.*

demonstrators at the ʿUmari mosque in Darʿa in March 2011 were citizens coming out spontaneously to support the regime; the state reaction to these anti-retime protests, killing some of the protesters, was in fact what spread the mass uprising throughout the country.[41]

Ally *violent* actions can be as simple as use of fists, such as "beat demonstrators," the only ally action in the database coded *non-violent* is demonstration. If challengers clash with regime supporters but do not use weapons, it should be coded as challenger *non-violent* action if the sequence of interaction is as follows: (1) anti-regime demonstration, (2) ally attack of demonstration, (3) demonstrator response. Spontaneous attacks on state allies would be coded as *spontaneous* or *coordinated* violent action by challengers, but these are not observed empirically.

Ally "attacks" on embassies of countries supporting the rebels were coded as non-violent, as they mostly did minor property damage and no harm to staff.

State

If state action is "open fire" on protesters and kills more than two but fewer than twenty, it should be coded as *tactical control.* If it kills more than twenty, as *destroy.* Strike/sweep actions should be coded as *tactical control* unless they kill more than ten, in which case they should be coded as *destroy.*

The cutoff between state *tactical control* and *destroy* actions is twenty deaths, but if the *AP* and SOHR report different death tolls, take the average. If it is less than 25 and SOHR is the higher of the two or less than 18 with AP the higher of the two, it should be coded as *tactical control*, otherwise it should be coded as *destroy*.

Crowd control should only be assigned if a challenger action takes place in the same town-day.

State agents "opening fire" on a demonstration should be coded as *crowd control* if fewer than three people die, otherwise tactical. If snipers open fire without a reported protest and kill at least 1, however, the event should be coded as *tactical control*.

Actions in which the state "opens fire" and causes zero casualties or one casualty, but injures ten or more, should be coded as *tactical,* even though by the death count alone it should be *crowd control*.

Clash events mentioned in *al-Thawra* should not be coded until clashes begin (temporally) to appear in the AP and SOHR records (October 2011), but coded thereafter; Bishara[42] indicates that clashes did not begin until this point in time.

[41] Similarly, *al-Thawra* reports that civilians assisted government forces should not be coded, as they are unreliable and offered as part of a narrative of the poor citizens manhandled by the armed terrorist groups begging for Army to come save them.

[42] Bishara. 2013. *Suriya, Darb al-Alam.*