Codebook: Civil Resistance against Jihadist Proto-States During the Syrian Civil War

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Table of Contents

1 Identifying Civil Resistance Events during the Syrian Civil War

This dataset was coded for the timeframe 2014-2018, and contains information on events of collective, non-violent civil resistance against jihadist armed groups in Syria. The unit of observation is protest-day, measured at the city/village-level, which corresponds to the 4th, and most local, administrative level in Syria. In total, our dataset contains 624 observations of non-violent resistance. We identified these events by using a fixed string of search words, which were translated from English to Arabic for the Arabic language sources. A full overview of these search strings is provided below. The search strings were used for three main sources: first, both the English and Arabic-language website of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR);[1] second, the Revolutionary Forces of Syria (RFS) media office (both in English and Arabic);[2] and third, SMART News Agency, which was an Arabic-language news website run by one of Syria's largest opposition networks.[3]

We only included events in the dataset that occurred in localities that were controlled by jihadist groups. However, determining the territorial control of Syrian towns and villages throughout the Syrian Civil War has been difficult, given the limitations in terms of data availability. Even the most well-respected sources that have mapped changes in territorial control during the Syrian Civil War have only published weekly updates and did not always (and consistently) differentiate between

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[1] For the English-language version of the SOHR website, follow this link: https://www.syriahr.com/en/.

[2] The website (rfsmediaoffice.com) was accessed between June and November 2018 and is currently offline (June 2021).

[3] The website (smartnews-agency.com) was accessed throughout the same time-frame (until December 2018), and is no longer online.

which exact jihadist group was in control of a certain town or village, at a certain point in time. Thus, it was not possible to distinguish cases of resistance in HTS-held towns from events that occurred in, for instance, Ahrar al-Sham-controlled areas, not least since the many jihadist groups shifted their allegiances and formed alliances multiple times during the war. Still, we have only included an event if we could assume, based on the information provided in the original news articles, that it occurred in either rebel-controlled areas, or in areas that were contested between different armed actors, but not in government-controlled territories.

Search Strings

The search terms presented in the table below were used to identify the cases in our dataset. While the English-language terms were used for the English-language versions of the SOHR and the Revolutionary Forces of Syria (RFS) websites, SmartNews is a purely Arabic-language website. The Arabic-language search string was also used for the Arabic versions of the SOHR and RFS websites.

English search term	Arabic search term
'protest'	احتجاج
'demonstrat'	مظاهرة
'resist'	عصيان
'disobe'	-
'nonviolen'	سلمي
'manifest'	-
'boycott'	مقاطعة
'sit-in'	اعتصام
'strike'	اضراب

2 Variables

Event_ID	Unique event-identifier
Latitude	Latitude of the town/village in which event occurred (admin-level 4)[4]
Longitude	Longitude of the town/village in which event occurred (admin-level 4)
ADM4_EN	Name of admin-level 4 (city/village)
ADM4_PCODE	Postal code of admin-level 4 (city/village)
ADM3_EN	Name of admin-level 3 (sub-district)
ADM3_PCODE	Postal code of admin-level 3 (sub-district)
ADM2_EN	Name of admin-level 2 (district)
ADM2_PCODE	Postal code of admin-level 2 (district)
ADM1_EN	Name of admin-level 1 (governorate)
ADM1_PCODE	Postal code of admin-level 1 (governorate)
Population_Admin_3	Population count of admin-level 3 (sub-district) [5]
Population_Admin_4	Population count of admin-level 4 (city/village)
Group_targeted	The group, against which the protest-event was targeted; contains multiple groups in several cases
Protest_date	The date of the protest-event

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[4] Data about latitude/longitude, and the names of different administrative units were obtained from the website of the Database of Global Administrative Areas (GADM) https://gadm.org/download_country_v3.html.

[5] Population counts are based on the 2004 Syrian national census, which was accessed through the OCHA Services/Humanitarian Data Exchange website: https://data.humdata.org/dataset/syrian-arab-republic-other-0-0-0-0-0-0-0.

Multiple_events	Whether there were other protest-events occurring in neighboring cities or villages, that is, within the same sub-district, on the same day
Description	A short description of the event in question. Usually, the description was copy-pasted from the original news article (either from SOHR, RFS, or Smart-News).
estimate_number_participants	The estimated number of participants (if reported in the news article)
Women_actor	Whether the news article explicitly mentions the involvement of women in the protest-event
Issue	The particular issue/demand about which the protest unfolded; the coding is as follows: - 1= Demands for jihadist group and other armed groups to stop fighting and/or unite - 2= Demands for a jihadist group to leave a town/village 3= Demands for better protection against other armed groups/government attacks - 4= Demands to dismiss individual group members or commanders - 5= General opposition against jihadist group and/or it's ideology - 6= Opposition towards jihadist group exploiting the city's/village's resources/not sharing public goods with the civilian population

	- 7= Rejecting group's practices and violence towards civilians
	- 8= Accusing jihadists of diverting the revolution; supporting the revolution in opposition to jihadists
	- 9= Demanding jihadists not to cooperate or negotiate with regime or other armed groups
	- 10= Demands to release prisoners
	- 11= Demands to return confiscated weapons
	- 12= Demands for the punishment/execution of prisoners of war
	- 13= Demands to let in humanitarian aid
	- 14= Demands to re-open schools and/or change curriculum
	- 15= Demands to lift restraints on journalist activities and media channels
	- 16= Demands to lift blockage of streets
	- 17= Demanding jihadist group to attack regime or other armed groups
	- 18 = Demanding jihadists to negotiate with regime or other armed groups for prisoner release
	- 19= Demanding jihadists to negotiate with regime or other armed groups for ceasefire
	- 20= Demanding jihadists to dismiss local authorities not affiliated with rebel-groups
	- 21= Demanding group leadership to step down

Issue2	Same coding as above, if more than one issue/demand was mentioned in the news article
Issue3	Same coding as above, if more than two issues/demands were mentioned in the news article
Form	The type of protest-event; coding is as follows: - 1= Public march/procession/assembly/sit-in – protests that involve bigger groups of people - 2= Physical, non-violent intervention - 3= Road blockage - 4= Strike - 5= Publishing a manifesto with demands - 6= Cursing at jihadis/open opposition towards jihadis - 7= Teaching despite prohibition - 8= Producing leaflets/flyers, writing slogans
Form2	Same coding as above, if more than one form could be identified
Past_success1	There were past successful resistance events anywhere in Syria in the past month, against the same targeted organization (if more than one organization are targeted, the variable is coded '1' if there was successful resistance against any of the targeted organizations).
Past_success4	There were past successful resistance events in the same administrative unit within the past month, and these were also targeted against the same targeted organization (if more than one organization are targeted, the variable is coded '1' if there

	were successful resistance against any of the targeted organizations)
Past_repress1	Whether any resistance event had previously been repressed anywhere in the country by the same targeted organization, within the past month (if more than one organization are targeted, the variable is coded '1' if there was previous repression by any of the targeted organizations).
Past_repress2	Whether any resistance event had previously been repressed in the same administrative unit (sub-district) by the same targeted organization, within the past year (if more than one organization are targeted, the variable is coded '1' if there was previous repression by any of the targeted organizations).
Past_repress3	Whether any resistance event had previously been repressed in the same administrative unit (sub-district) by the same targeted organization, within the past month (if more than one organization are targeted, the variable is coded '1' if there was previous repression by any of the targeted organizations.
Repressed	Whether the respective protest-event was repressed by the jihadists
Success1	Whether at least one of the stated demands was met within 7 days after the protest event
Success2	Whether at least one of the stated demands was met within 31 days after the protest event
Success_Date	The date on which the demand(s) was/were met
Success_description	Short description of how the demand(s) was/were met

Partially_successful	Either several demands were stated, but not all of them fulfilled, or at least one demand was only partially fulfilled
Past_resist_1	There were past resistance events in the same administrative unit (sub-district), against at least one of the targeted groups, within the past month
Past_resist_2	There were past resistance events anywhere in Syria, against at least one of the targeted groups, within the past month
Past_resist_3	There were past resistance events in the same administrative unit (sub-district), against at least one of the targeted groups, within the past week
Past_resistance_comment	Comments on some coding decisions with regards to past resistance variables
IS_targeted	Whether IS was targeted
Nusra_targeted	Whether al-Nusra/HTS/Jabhat Fateh al-Sham was targeted
Jaysh_al_Islam_targeted	Whether Jaysh al-Islam was targeted
Rahman_Corps_targeted	Whether Rahman Corps (*Faylaq al-Rahman*) was targeted
Maximalist_demands	At least one maximalist demand stated; the following demands are considered 'maximalist': - 1= Demands for jihadist group and other armed groups to stop fighting and/or unite - 2= Demands for a jihadist group to leave a town/village 3= Demands for better protection against other armed groups/government attacks

	- 5= General opposition against jihadist group and/or it's ideology - 7= Rejecting group's practices and violence towards civilians - 8= Accusing jihadists of diverting the revolution; supporting the revolution in opposition to jihadists - 9= Demanding jihadists not to cooperate or negotiate with regime or other armed groups - 17= Demanding jihadist group to attack regime or other armed groups - 19= Demanding jihadists to negotiate with regime or other armed groups for ceasefire - 21= Demanding group leadership to step down
Non_maximalist_demands	At least one non-maximalist demand stated; the following demands are considered 'non-maximalist': - 4= Demands to dismiss individual group members or commanders - 6= Opposition towards jihadist group exploiting the city's/village's resources/not sharing public goods with the civilian population - 10= Demands to release prisoners - 11= Demands to return confiscated weapons - 12= Demands for the punishment/execution of prisoners of war

	- 13= Demands to let in humanitarian aid - 14= Demands to re-open schools and/or change curriculum - 15= Demands to lift restraints on journalist activities and media channels - 16= Demands to lift blockage of streets - 18= Demanding jihadists to negotiate with regime or other armed groups for prisoner release - 20= Demanding jihadists to dismiss local authorities not affiliated with rebel-groups
youth_bulge	Percentage of male population under 15 in the sub-district (from the 2004 Syrian Census)
Rate_of_Illiteracy_male	Percentage of male, illiterate population in the sub-district (from the 2004 Syrian Census)
Rate_of_Unemployment_males	Percentage of male, unemployed population in the sub-district (from the 2004 Syrian Census)
Urbanization_Adm_3	Percentage of the people in a sub-district that live in cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants (from the 2004 Syrian Census)
logpop_Adm3	Logged population count (Admin-level 3)
Past_failure_sub_district	Whether there have been one or more resistance events during the past month, against the same actor in the same sub-district, and none of these resistance events has been successful
Past_failure_national	Whether there have been one or more resistance events during the past month, against the same actor anywhere in the

	country, and none of these resistance events has been successful

3 Additional Sources used for 'Success' Variables

The following is a list of mostly Arabic-language blogs and websites that were used to cross-reference and double-check events that we identified through our main sources. In particular, these websites were used to corroborate our coding of the 'success' variable: al-Akhbar.com; akhbaralaan,net; alaraby.co.uk; al-Jazeera.net; alhayat.com; almarije-paris.com; almodon.com; anapress.net; arabi21.com; arabitoday.com; arabstoday.com; athrpress.com; baladi-news.com; damas-times; enabaladi.net; horrya.net; masarpress.net; orient-news.net; refugeesps.net; rozana.fm; rudaw,net; shaam.org; snacksyrian.com; stepagency-sy.net; syria.tv; syriafreedomforever.wordpress.com; syrian-reporter.net; thefreesyria.org; worldpoliticsreview.com; youm7.com; youtube.com; zamanawlsl.net

4 Further Comments

There are three observations in our dataset, where no demands could be identified at all. These three cases (Event_ID nr. 18, 19 and 401), were all coded with a '0' for both maximalist and non-maximalist demands.