Supporting Information for "Joining by Number": Coding for Unexpected Events

This document will define the unexpected variables in more detail than was done in the main article, discuss the rules and sources used for their coding, and describe each unexpected event in the datasets.

Definitions and Coding Rules for the Unexpected Events Variables

Unexpected events are non-trivial events which were unanticipated contemporary leaders of non-belligerent states. An unexpected event was determined to have occurred if the text indicated surprise on the part of third parties or the journalist recording the event who was treated as a proxy for broader opinion. While not a perfect proxy, it simply was impossible to collect data on the expectations of all non-belligerent states. Obviously, in war and in politics, the unexpected is a daily occurrence. Many of these unexpected events, however, are trivial. Only significant unexpected events—those events which gave indications about the relative military power of the belligerents or the belligerents' political capacity—were recorded. The initial outbreak of war is never coded as unexpected, though later interventions are coded as such when appropriate. This is because the study is not interested in why states initially join civil wars; thus whether the initial outbreak was unexpected or not is irrelevant. Furthermore, these events are not events which were largely anticipated, but where there was uncertainty over the specific timing. For instance, the death of a leader who was ailing for a long time but where the exact date of the death would of course be unknown would not be coded as an unexpected event. This is because even though the specific timing would be surprising, the event itself would have been expected.

Unexpected events were also categorized as being military or political in nature with military events being those events which occurred on the battlefield or the development of new

weapons, strategies, and tactics. Political events were surprising events which occurred away from the battlefield but which significantly affected a government's capacity or preferences. Political events include such things as assassinations, the fall of governments, revolts, riots, large or important protests, and revolutions. While theoretically there could be some overlap between military and political events, in practice there rarely was. In cases where overlap did occur—say the head of a government being killed during an unexpected defeat—they would be treated as separate events. The defeat would be coded as a military event, and the leader's death as a political event. Given that these would be different categories of events, they could take different levels of significance and this does not violate the rule of coding only the most significant event in given month *within an event category* (see below). Both military and political events were recorded for civil wars in the COW dataset while only military events were recorded for civil wars in the PRIO dataset.

The unexpected events variable ranges from zero to three. A zero indicates no unexpected event occurred, while a positive number indicates an unexpected event did occur. The level of the event (one to three) indicates the impact of the event on the military balance of power or the capacity of a state's government and polity. Thus, a higher number indicates the event had more of an impact on the course of the war, not that it was more surprising. For example, a Level One event indicates a military performance that was marginally better or worse than expected, small but surprising improvements in tactics or weapons, surprising important but localized protests and rioting, or deaths of leaders that did not at the time appear likely to alter government policy. Level Two events would be a major surprising victory or defeat short of a rout, unexpected leadership changes that are likely to significantly alter government policy, and widespread rioting or protests which significantly weaken a government's legitimacy or capabilities. Level

Three events are unexpected routs which result in the destruction of large portions of an army or fleet or surprising domestic political events which threaten to topple a government. Such events do not have to knock a country out of a war, but they do have to result in serious damage to one side's capabilities, not just a retreat. The dramatic and surprising use of new and decisive weapons, such as the atomic bomb, also falls into this category.

The following procedure is used if two or more unexpected events occurred in the same month. If one political and one military event occurred in the same month, both are recorded separately per the standard coding rules. If multiple unexpected events of the same type occurred in the same month—in other words, two or more political or two or more military events—the unexpected event with the greatest magnitude for its type is recorded. The events were not added together or otherwise aggregated.

One difficulty was determining when an event ceased to be unexpected. Sometimes a series of events happen, such as long running demonstrations, which were initially unexpected, but over the course of time, became expected. Determining when they cease to be unexpected is difficult, but not impossible. In such cases the onset and surprising changes in the level of intensity of the event were coded as being unexpected. If the event was expected to stop, its continuation is coded as unexpected, but if it was expected to continue, then its continuation is not coded as unexpected.

The problem of hindsight also posed a challenge in coding. Hindsight is generally an advantage, but when determining whether something was unexpected, it is a decided disadvantage. Events that appear inevitable now, may have been largely or even completely unforeseen at the time. For this reason, the coding relied mainly on contemporary accounts to determine if events were indeed unexpected at the time. The *Annual Register*, a British serial

which began in the late 18th century, was the main source for the coding. The *Register* is an annual compilation of year-end reports of events for each state in the world, often written by journalists or other in-country observers. It is an excellent source and can generally be relied on, though prior to the 20th century, the *Register* is quite Eurocentric in its coverage. Despite this, it does cover many of the major non-European states such as the US, China, and Japan in the 19th century. For civil wars that received scant[1] or no coverage in the *Register*—mostly 19th century Asian and Latin American civil wars—other sources were used to supplement the *Register*. They can be found in the bibliography which follows. While not contemporaneous sources, they were the best information available on the wars in English. This use of supplemental materials helped to ensure that more data was not collected on major civil wars—the very civil wars which might be more likely to experience intervention—than for less prominent wars. . Chojnacki et al (2012) suggest that such maintenance of consistency in the quality of coverage across cases and time is important to avoid introducing bias into the data simply through data availability.

Immediately below can be found a list of the sources used in the coding. A list of the unexpected events indicating their type and magnitude, along with a brief description, follows the list of sources.

Sources for the Unexpected Events Data

Abraham, A. J. 1981. *Lebanon at Mid Century: Maronite-Druze Relations in Lebanon 1840 – 1860, A Prelude to Arab Nationalism*. (New York: Lanham).

Aksan, Virginia H. 2007. *Ottoman Wars, 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged.* (London: Pearson).

Allen, W.E.D. and Paul Muratoff. 1953. *Caucasian Battlefields: A History of the Wars on the Turco-Caucasian Border, 1828–1921.* (Nashville: The Battery Press).

[1] Scant coverage was taken to be less than one paragraph devoted to any given year of a war. The amount of coverage of wars in the Register does cover is quite consistent post 1945 (and especially post 1970) for events outside of the United Kingdom. It is less consistent for earlier periods.

Atoshi, Grace A. 1992. *The Story of the Jukun/Tiv Crisis: Why and How They Happened*. (Wukari: Amune).

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