Officers and Regimes: The Historical Origins of Political-Military Relations in Middle Eastern Republics

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> *It is not reasonable to assume that he who is armed should willingly obey him who is unarmed, or that the unarmed should be secure among armed servants.*
>
> (Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, Chapter 14.)

Had he written *Il Principe* in the early 21st rather than the early 16th century, Machiavelli could have well given similar advice to authoritarian incumbents: Throughout the second half of the 20th century, authoritarian leaders were more likely to lose office as a result of some form of military intervention than by any other type of exit (Goemans, Gleditsch & Chiozza 2009). According to Milan Svolik's (2012) data on leadership change in authoritarian regimes, the armed forces were involved in ousting the incumbent leader in 82.5 per cent of cases in which an authoritarian ruler lost power to elite competitors between 1945 and 2008. It is thus not surprising that authoritarian rulers feel the need to protect themselves against those who specialize in the application of violence.

While the challenge is universal, however, the strategies aimed at securing the loyalty of the military are not (see Brooks 1998; Kamrava 2000; Quinlivan

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1999 for overviews focusing on the MENA). In fact, although the military has played a central role in the foundation of almost all authoritarian republics in the MENA (the exception being Tunisia, see below), and although authoritarian consolidation and coop-proofing has succesfully reduced the overt role of military officers in most cases, the Middle East before the Arab Spring still was home to a variety of different forms of politcal-military relations.

This variation took center stage in scholarly debates following the Arab Spring. Several authors have argued that variation in political-military relations can explain the behavior of Middle Eastern militaries during the mass uprisings. Eva Bellin (2012), for example, argued that 'patrimonial' political-military relations can account for military loyalty: Where military career patterns were characterized by favoritism and officers were "linked to regime elites through bonds of blood or sect or ethnicity" (Bellin 2012, 133), she maintained, the armed forces were likely to remain loyal in the face of popular mass uprisings. Building on Bellin's analysis, Derek Lutterbeck (2013) has suggested that the relationship between the armed forces and society at large should be taken into account alongside the degree of patrimonialism. Where the armed forces have strong links with society, Lutterbeck suggested, defections might occur even if military organization is characterized by patrimonialism. Similarly, Michael Makara (2013) has differentiated between different types of coup-proofing that have different implications for the question of loyalty or defection during mass uprisings, an argument that is supported by Holger Albrecht's (2014) analysis of the trajectories of Egypt and Syria in the Arab Spring. Taken together, there is strong evidence that political-military relations were crucial in shaping military behavior in the Arab Spring.

Rather than adding yet another account of military behavior in the Arab Spring to this growing list, however, in this chapter I take a step back and ask why we see different forms of political-military relations in the first place. In particular, I focus on the question of why and how in some Middle Eastern republics a separation between the political and military elite segments of the regime coalition developed, while in others the two elite segments remained tightly intertwined. With respect to the debates on military behavior in the Arab Spring just sketched, I maintain that the difference between incorporation and exclusion in political-military relations is a more adequate charactrization of prevailing dynamics than the contrast between patrimonialism and institutionalization. I will take up this topic in the conclusion.

Differences in the way in which politcal and military elites relate to each other in the Middle East have not been in the center of scholarly attention thus far. Early studies focused primarily on structural determinants of military intervention and thus described the interventionist militaries of the

region as the vanguard of the 'new middle class' (Halpern 1963) or as products of praetorian societies (Perlmutter 1967), but they paid little attention to variation in the relation between political and military elites that followed such interventions. Following an initial wave of studies on Arab militaries in the 1950s and 1960s, moreover, interest in the military in politics largely subsided. There were a number of works that endeavoured to explain the demilitarization of politics in several Middle Eastern countries (Be'eri 1982; Picard 1990); on the whole, however, it is fair to say that interest in the political role of the military in the Arab world diminished with the decreasing visibility of military actors. As Be'eri remarks, "with the coups becoming less frequent and less spectacular and the performance of the ruling officers less brilliant, books about them became more sparse and theorizing about them more modest." (Be'eri 1982, 74). A partial exception is the fact that the Middle East figured prominently in debates on coup-proofing (Brooks 1998; Cook 2007; Quinlivan 1999) even before the Arab Spring. Beyond the pioneering efforts of Risa Brooks (1998), James Quinlivan (1999) and Steven Cook (2007), however, systematic comparisons of and explanations for the different political roles of Arab militaries remained scarce.

Consequently, we have very little in the way of comparative typologies of political-military relations in the Middle East. Mehran Kamrava's (2000) study attempts such a typology, but since his focus is on the Middle East as a whole—including not only the monarchies of the Gulf as well as Jordan and Morocco, but also the democracies of Israel and Turkey—his categories do not help us in identifying dimensions of variation in political-military relations among Middle Eastern republics. Indeed, Egypt, Syria and Tunisia all fall into Kamrava's category of 'mukhabarat states,' despite the significant differences between these countries which I will describe below.

This chapter offers a comparative historical perspective on the political role of the military in authoritarian Arab republics. The aim is to address the issue of variation in political-military relations from a systematic perspective. In particular, I focus on whether military elites are incorporated into or excluded from the ruling coalition as a major dimension of variation. I develop a theoretical narrative that traces the form of political-military relations back to the role of the military in early conflicts surrounding regime foundation.

In developing this model, I draw on the experiences of Egypt, Syria and Tunisia. This case selection is of course not random. Rather, I chose these three cases to represent a wide range of outcomes. Tunisia, to begin with, is an outlier among the authoritarian Middle Eastern republics in that the military did not play a major role in regime foundation. Since this is the case, Tunisian military officers were never incorporated into the regime coalition.

This makes Tunisia a crucial case for my argument about the importance of regime foundation in laying the basis of political-military relations.

The Egyptian and Syrian regimes, on the other hand, both originated in military coups, the armed forces developed into powerful institutions and military officers originally were central pillars of the ruling coalitions. At one point, however, the paths of the two countries started to diverge: While Egypt experienced a process of demilitarization of politics, in Syria no similar dynamics materialized. The result was that the Egyptian military elite developed a great deal of autonomy from the regime coalition, while Syrian military leaders remained tied to the regime.

The chapter proceeds as follows: In the next section, I briefly discuss the conceptual framework that will structure the comparison in the following pages, focusing on the path-dependent nature of political-military relations and the dynamics of authoritarian consolidation and coup-proofing. The remainder of this chapter is then devoted to a comparative historical analysis of the emergence and development of different forms of political-military relations in Egypt, Syria and Tunisia. I first examine the period of regime foundation, explaining why the Tunisian military was rather inconsequential compared to its Egyptian and Syrian counterparts and how this shaped the fundamental countours of political-military relations. I then turn to a period of reform in political-military relations following the 1967 war against Israel that led to divergence between Egypt and Syria. The conclusion, finally, recapitulates the argument and discusses the extent to which the theoretical narrative is applicable to other cases in the MENA beyond the three countries examined here and how it relates to existing explanations of military behavior in the Arab Spring.

Officers and Regimes in the MENA: Incorporation vs. Exclusion

In one of the few more recent studies of the political role of Arab armies, Risa Brooks argues that what she calls "the political-military balance" is a core feature of Arab regimes (Brooks 1998, 11). Going beyond the question of regime types and direct military rule, this perspective recognizes that the military plays an important role in most authoritarian elite coalitions—even where this role is less visible. For, as Geddes et al. (2014, 149) remind us, "[e]ven where they do not rule, the military is an important faction in authoritarian ruling alliances," although, they continue, "most theories of autocracy ignore this gorilla in the room." The political role of the military

under different authoritarian regimes is the core interest of this chapter.

At the same time, this concern is narrower than what is usually covered under the rubric of civil-military relations (see Feaver 1999). While the latter term encompasses all relations between the military and society at large, my interest more narrowly concerns the extent to which the military does, or does not, play a political role. I found Risa Brook's (1998) term 'political-military relations' to best describe this interest.

Variation in political-military relations among my three countries is considerable. To begin with, the three armed forces have very different histories of military intervention and differ widely in terms of their resource base: Syria leads the field with 11 coups or coup attempts since 1950; in Egypt, the armed forces intervened four times, including the coups of 2011 and 2013; Tunisia, finally, experienced one coup since independence.[1] Although the actual occurence of coups or coup attempts is a poor measure for military influence (Belkin & Schofer 2003), these differences nevertheless tell us something about political-military relations in the three cases. Between 1961 and 2011, furthermore, military expenditure in Egypt and Syria averaged about 10 percent of GDP, while it was only 2 percent in Tunisia and differences in force levels were pronounced as well with Tunisia's military by far the smallest force in the region.[2]

Beyond such quantitative indicators, military officers dominated the Egyptian cabinet up to the late 1960s and early 1970s (Cooper 1982), they continue to play an important role in the Syrian Ba'th party (Hinnebusch 2001), but were legally prohibited from joining political parties in Tunisia—including the sucessive regime parties, the Neo-Destour or later the RCD (Willis 2012). Moreover, all chief executives in Egypt and Syria up to the Arab Spring have hailed from the armed forces, whereas in Tunisia only Ben Ali could be said to have such a profile, although he was socilized more in the country's internal security than in the military proper. In short, variation between the three cases is considerable and in need of explanation. Table 1 schematically summarizes these differences.

Shaping Political-Military Relations in the MENA

Theories of military coups d'état have long argued that military intervention in civilian politics is connected to the extent of social mobilization and to the strength or weakness of civilian institutions (see in particular Finer 1977;

[1]Based on the coup data gathered by Powell & Thyne, available at http://www.uky.edu/ clthyn2/coup_data/home.htm.

[2]Data is from the Correlates of War Material Capabilities dataset for years before 1988 and from the World Development Indicators from this year on.

Table 1: Political-Military Relations in Egypt, Syria and Tunisia

	Incorporation	Exclusion
Strong	Syria since 1970s, Egypt up to 1967	Egypt since 1970s
Weak	—	Tunisia since independence

Huntington 1968). Such theories are immediately relevant for the comparison of regime foundation in Middle Eastern republics and the role of the armed forces in this process. Regime foundation in the post-World War II MENA took place against the backdrop of significant mobilization and in the context of rather ineffective institutional systems. Military coups were the rule, rather than the exception. Political regimes in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen were founded by coups. In brief, the "quasi-ordinary form of change of a regime or of a government in the Arab states had become the military coup" (Be'ri 1982, 69).

Seen from this perspective, what is in need of explanation is not so much military intervention as such, but rather the fact that it did not occur everywhere in the Middle East. The fact that Tunisia is the only authoritarian Arab republic to attain independence and to form a post-independence regime without major military involvement set political-military relations in that country on a path that differed significantly from the one travelled by its regional neighbors. In a nutshell, the Tunisian military, compared to its regional neighbors, remained a small and poorly-funded organization. Military officers in Tunisia did not serve in cabinet positions—not even as ministers of defense—and even Ben Ali's 'constitutional coup' of 1987 did not lead to a stronger role for the armed forces. In brief, in Tunisia—in contrast to all other authoritarian Arab republics—the pattern of political-military relations emerging from regime foundation was one in which military officers were excluded from political power. Thus, as Risa Brooks argues,

> Understanding the structure of civil-military relations under the Ben Ali regime requires first assessing the historical role of the military [...]. The character of civil-military relations in Tunisia exhibits some degree of path dependence, with Ben Ali inheriting a particular set of informal norms and institutions and then elaborating in their structure (Brooks 2013, 5).

As I will argue in the next section, regime foundation is the 'critical juncture' (Collier & Collier 1991) that set Tunisia on this specific path.

While the role of the armed forces in regime foundation shaped the fundamental contours of political-military relations, it did not completely determine the subsequent evolution of the military's political role. Rather, the 'political-military balance' was subject to renegotiation, in particular following major political junctures such as changes in leadership or political crises. In such situations the choices open to political actors remained constrained by existing patterns of political-military relations, however. In other words, the development of political-military relations in the Middle East was path dependent and major changes were difficult to implement given that powerful vested interests are associated with the status quo.

Comparing Egypt and Syria provides analytical leverage over the determinants of such periods of renegotiation: Both countries had large and powerful military institutions; both fought in and lost the 1967 war against Israel; in both countries, the post-1967 period coincided with leadership change, in Egypt from Nasser to Sadat and in Syria from Jadid to Assad. Yet, while in Egypt the armed forces were excluded from active politics from the 1970s onward, in Syria the consolidation in power of Hafiz al-Assad led to an even closer incorporation of military elites into the ruling coalition.

In other words, Egypt and Syria after 1967 followed diametrically opposed strategies of reform in political-military relations. While both strategies were aimed at 'coup-proofing' the respective regime and at consolidating the position of the new chief executive, the comparison between Egypt and Syria points at two fundamentally different sets of coup-proofing strategies: strategies aimed at depoliticizing the military on the one hand, and strategies aimed at binding military leaders to the regime on the other.

In *The Soldier and the State* (1957), Samuel Huntington famously argued that civilian control over the military presupposed a strict separation of the civilian and military spheres. Coup-proofing strategies aimed at removing military officers from active politics seem to be predicated on such an understanding of civil-military relations. It is important to see, however, that the separation of the military and political sphere does not imply civilian control of the military. Rather, a strong and autonomous military might not actively intefere in politics; at the same time, however, such an arrangement also prevents political control over military matters. In the Middle East, the return to the barracks of officers in formerly military-dominated regimes was bought with the emergence of such 'military enclaves' (Cook 2007, 14) in which officers and the military as an institution enjoyed wide-ranging autonomy. The existence of military enclaves protects the regime coalition from military intervention to the extent to which military autonomy lowers the stakes of the political game for officers. Since this system guarantees the military a privileged position and allows officers to run the military as a

state in a state, they have little reason to intervene in politics as long as this balance is not upset.

On the other hand, military acquiescence can also be achieved by including officers into the regime coalition. Geddes et al. (2014, 153) have described this process in terms of credible commitments of power sharing. In the course of regime consolidation, they argue, an aspiring incumbent "must make credible commitments to share spoils and policy influence with other officers in return for their commitment to refrain from overthrowing him" (Geddes et al. 2014, 153). Strategies that bind military elites to the regime or to the incumbent by exploiting personal, ethnic, or sectarian loyalties are such mechanisms of incorporation (see Bellin 2012 on 'patrimonialism;' Quinlivan 1999), but credible comittments of power sharing can also be set up through the establishment of military juntas or through other forms of consultation within the military (Geddes et al. 2014).

Historically, the second form of political-military relations, namely the close integration of military elites into regime coalitions, was the norm, rather than the exception in the MENA. There are two different historical paths, however, that led to a relative separation of political and military elites. The Tunisian path starts from the historical marginalization of the Tunisian military that has its roots in the political conflicts of the pre-independence era. In contrast to all other authoritarian Arab republics, the Tunisian military did not play a major role in regime foundation which explains the Tunisian exception where the military never acquired much political clout. The Egyptian path, on the other hand, starts from a strong military that played a crucial role in regime foundation and developed into the main institutional pillar of the regime. Only later, and in reaction to the exogenous shock of military defeat, did political-military relations in Egypt undergo major reforms.

In order to understand these two historical paths, I will focus on two distinct periods. The crucial period for the Tunisian path is the first half of the twentieth century and the establishment of regime coalitions in the context of political conflict. The challenge here is to explain why Tunisia was the only authoritarian Arab republic not to come into being through a military coup. The crucial period for the Egyptian path, on the other hand, is the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. In reaction to their military defeat in this war, the Egyptian armed forces underwent major restructuring that ultimately set them on a path of depoliticization.

Here the comparison between Egypt and Syria is pertinent: While both Egypt and Syria suffered defeat in the 1967 war, only in Egypt did the reforms introduced in the aftermath of defeat lead to the depoliticization of the military and to the emergence of a split between the military and civilian

elite sectors. The following sections turn to a detailed examination of these two crucial periods.

The 'Tunisian Path:' Regime Foundation

Military officers played a major role in the political histories of most authoritarian Arab republics but were rather marginal in Tunisia. All presidents in Egypt and Syria since the foundation of the respective regimes and up to the Arab Spring, for example, have been military officers; in Tunisia, by contrast, active members of the armed forces were prohibited from becoming members of the ruling party and even the post of minister of defense was always held by a civilian. In short, the Egyptian and Syrian armed forces were major players in their respective regimes (see Kandil 2012 on Egypt and Hinnebusch 2001 on Syria) while the Tunisian military remained at the margins of political processes and under the control of civilian elites (see Brooks 2013; Willis 2012).

What accounts for these differences? The crucial factor is the role played by the armed forces during regime foundation. In all three cases, the first half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of conflicts between the political authorities of the day—monarchies backed by colonial powers in Egypt and Tunisia and an oligarchical republic in Syria—and aspiring new elites. Such rising actors, aptly termed second generation elites by Michelle Penner-Angrist (2006), had experienced limited upward social mobility under the old order, but found their further advancement blocked by the political and economic power of traditional elites. In the ensuing conflicts, second generation elites chose different routes to power based on different coalitions that shaped the nature of the emerging regimes. The relatively marginal role of the Tunisian military is due to the fact that—in contrast to all other authoritarian Arab republics—the military was kept out of regime foundation. Instead, Tunisian second generation elites took power in the wake of a campaign for independence supported by a mass-mobilizing party.

These differences, in turn, are the result of the strategic situation in which second generation elites found themselves. In both Egypt and Syria, second-generation elites were blocked from rising to power through formal political competition by traditional elites who controlled major parts of the political scene. In Egypt in the late 1930s and 1940s, traditional elites tightened their grip on the Wafd Party, the main expression of the nationalist movement, and thus prevented the Wafd from turning into a channel of advancement for second generation elites, while in Syria in the mid-1950s collusion between the National Party and the People's Party, both led by different factions of the traditional elite, marginalized the second generation challenge. As a

result, second generation elites in both countries focused their efforts on a military route to power.

In Tunisia, by contrast, second generation elites managed to secure the leadership of the nationalist movement for themselves, entered into a strategic alliance with progressive parts of the traditional elite, and wrested control from the French through a largely non-violent political process. As a result, the Neo-Destour Party, built on a corporatist alliance with trade unions and employer associations, developed into the main institutional pillar of the regime while the military was marginalized.

By and large, the historical cases of Egypt, Syria and Tunisia thus support arguments that see the degree of social mobilization and conflict as a major structural determinant of military coups (Johnson, Slater & McGowan 1984): Where social conflict was intense, a high degree of polarization between traditional and second generation elites precluded regime founding processes based on compromise and institutionalized politics. In such cases, second generation elites ultimately took power through military coups. Where, on the other hand, social conflict was more muted, military intervention could be averted. Let us briefly look at each of the three cases in turn.

Egypt was ruled as a *de facto* British protectorate after 1882, a status that was formalized in 1914. Although the country gained formal independence in 1922 and a constitution was promulgated the following year, Egyptian politics during the so-called 'liberal age' (1923-1952) was dominated by the British and the palace, both of which routinely interfered in formal electoral politics (see Botman 1991; Deeb 1979; Sayyid-Marsot 1977). Socially, the political elite in early twentieth century Egypt was dominated by large landholders who, by virtue of their control of the countryside, exerted considerable control over national politics. Thus, in the 50 different cabinets formed between 1914 and 1952, large landowners were represented with 58 percent of the posts (Botman 1991, p. 79). The main nationalist party, the Wafd (Delegation) Party, had originated in the 1919 revolution and represented a coalition of progressive elements drawn from the urban professional middle classes, a small group of emerging capitalists and traditional elite landholders (see Deeb 1979). Polarization between traditional and second generation elites was intense, however, and representatives of Egypt's traditional landholding elite worked to marginalize their second generation competitors within the Wafd. This led to the dissolution of the original coalition: Given the increasing influence of traditional elite elements on the course of the party under the leadership of Wafd secretary general Fu'ād Sirāg al-Dīn after 1936 (Gordon 1989) and the related loss in the party's appeal among nationalist urban strata, especially after the 'palace incident' of 1942 in which British tanks forced a Wafd-government on King Farūq (Smith 1979), second genera-

tion nationalists increasingly turned to extra-parliamentary groups. Despite this, however, the Wafd continued to dominate electoral politics, creating a situation in which a military coup appeared as the only way to realize full Egyptian independence to second generation elites.

In Syria a different setting led to similar results. Under the French mandate (1920-1947), Syria developed into an oligarchical republic. Big landholding interests found their political expression in the National Bloc (al-Kutla al-Waṭaniyya). The socio-economic conflict between absentee landlords and the peasantry was reinforced in Syria by an additional cultural center-periphery conflict, as well as by ethnic and religious differences. The traditional Syrian elite was mainly composed of urban Sunni Arabs, while religious and ethnic minorities were concentrated in the rural periphery (Van Dam 2011, p. 1-14). This landholder-peasant conflict was the "root cause of the eventual fall of the *ancien régime*" (Hinnebusch 2001, p. 22). Syria gained independence from France with relative ease in 1946 and the National Bloc subsequently split into the National Party (al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī) representing landholding interests and the People's Party (Ḥizb al-Sha'b) as a representative of emerging business interests (Heydemann 1999, p. 37-52). Second generation challengers, on the other hand, were represented by the Ba'th Party as well as a number of leftist and communist groups. In the first post-independence elections in 1947, the People's Party joined the Ba'th in a tactical alliance and alienated its former allies in the National Party by advocating land reform. In these elections, the opposition against the National Party won the relative majority, but traditional elite interests continued to dominate with the help of independent deputies. The resulting political deadlock was broken by military intervention in 1949, an event that initiated a series of coups an counter coups. With their electoral fortunes on the rise in the mid-1950s, the Ba'th campaigned for radical reforms alongside the communists, prompting the business interests represented by the People's Party to reconsider their reformist stance and to rejoin traditional landholders in their resistance against reform. Thus, given the high levels of political polarization between traditional and second generation elites in Syria in the mid-1950s, "[l]and and capital joined to defeat an increasingly militant force of workers and peasants" (Heydemann 1999, 51-2). In reaction, second generation elites sought salvation first in alliance with Nasser, leading Syria into its ill-conceived union with Egypt in the United Arab Republic (1958-1961), and then in the military route to power. Despite the fact that the union was rather short-lived, falling prey to a military coup backed by traditional elites in 1961, it transformed the Syrian political scene in important ways. Crucially, the Ba'th Party, having voluntarily dissolved under the union, was revived in opposition to Nasser in the form of a Military Committee that

drew on officers many of which came from a rural-minoritarian background (Devlin 1976). This military committee staged the coup that brought the Ba'th Party to power in 1963.

In Tunisia the situation was markedly different. Tunisia was ruled as a French colony between 1881 and 1956, but in contrast to Egypt and Syria, French policy in Tunisia included an element of direct colonization by French settlers. As a result, the impact of colonialism on traditional social structures was much more pronounced. Land acquisitions by French *colons* under the policy of 'official colonization' transferred most large landholdings into French ownership (King 2009, p. 47). This crucially weakened traditional elites and their political stature and loosened their grip on the nationalist movement (see Anderson 1986, 153-54). As a result, polarization between traditional and second generation elites in the Tunisian nationalist movement was much weaker than in Egypt or Syria and second generation elites ultimately remained in control of the movement. Organizationally, the Tunisian independence movement went through several stages. Whereas the original Destour Party (from Arabic *dustūr*, constitution) was dominated by urban elites and thus failed to develop a social appeal and to reach out to the emerging labor movement, the Neo-Destour emerging from a split in 1934 explicitly took up social concerns and aimed at mobilizing the rural hinterlands (see Moore 1964). With traditional elites weakened by colonial policies and the Neo-Destour developing an effective alliance with the labor movement represented by the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT), more traditionally inclined nationalists had little choice but to join the movement under the leadership of the Neo-Destour. As Clement Henry Moore observed, the Neo-Destour "appealed mainly to the new middle classes rather than to the Old Destour's broad-based but entirely traditional elite. This difference helps to explain the success of the Neo-Destour, for socially and politically the newer classes, created but not compromised by the colonial situation, were more prepared to spearhead political change" (Moore 1964, 81). In other words, the emergence of the Neo-Destour as the leading force in the Tunisian nationalist movement signaled the passing of the mantle to second generation elites. Having gained independence for Tunisia in 1956, the Neo-Destour under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba proceeded to institutionalize a party-based regime. The fact that the military had not played a special role in the foundation of this regime meant that the armed forces could be kept out of politics.

The long-term influence of the role played by the armed forces during the period of regime foundation was crucial. Throughout post-independence Tunisian history, the military remained small and depoliticized, while the armed forces played key political roles in Egypt and Syria. In the next

section, I illustrate how the fundaments of political-military relations created during regime foundation constrained later processes of renegotiation.

The 'Egyptian Path:' Military Reform

In all three countries, the years following regime foundation saw the consolidation of institutional systems that were strongly shaped by the coalition of actors that had backed regime foundation. In both Egypt and Syria, this meant that the armed forces grew in size and importance, while in Tunisia the military was kept small and poorly funded and the Neo-Destour Party developed into the main institutional pillar of the regime.

Before long, however, all three regimes experienced major crises and all three reacted with a partial remodeling of their institutional systems. The regime crises hit on several levels. On the economic level, all three countries initiated major reform programs, all except the Syrian one under the auspices of the international financial institutions. Politically, there were steps of political liberalization that went along with the reintroduction of multiparty politics in Egypt and Tunisia and with a more limited liberalization of electoral politics in Syria (see Baaklini, Denoueux & Springborg 1999 for an overview). In all three cases, finally, there were changes in the top executive position with the transitions from Nasser to Sadat in Egypt, from Jadīd to Assad in Syria, and from Bourguiba to Ben Ali in Tunisia.

The armed forces, however, were unequally affected by these reforms. In Tunisia, the political-military balance remained largely unaffected. Even though Ben Ali had come to power through a palace coup in 1987, the military remained a small and poorly funded force and military officers did not assume active roles in politics under Ben Ali. By contrast, in both Egypt and Syria, another exogenous shock meant that the armed forces could not evade reform: the defeat of both the Egyptian and the Syrian armed forces in the 1967 war against Israel. While both Egypt and Syria suffered military defeat in 1967 and while in both cases the battlefield ineffectiveness of the respective armed forces was blamed on political reasons (see Hinnebusch 1990, p. 158; Kandil 2012, Chapter 2), different political contexts drove Anwar al-Sadat in Egypt and Hafiz al-Assad in Syria to adopt approaches that were diametrically opposed.

While Sadat removed the 'centers of power' in the military and the party and pushed the military out of active politics (Harb 2003), Assad in Syria dissolved the 'army-party symbiosis' (Rabinovich 1972) that had characterized political-military relations before his 1971 coup by appointing military commanders personally loyal to him. This set political-military relations in the two countries on different courses.

In Egypt, the armed forces had seen significant growth. By 1970, force levels had increased to 255,000—an increase of more than 100,000 within a decade—and military expenditure rose by about 10 percent during the same time (Koehler 2013, p. 147). At the same time, military officers played important roles in other state institutions as well, leading to the emergence of what the Egyptian sociologist Anwar Abdel Malek (1968) described as a 'military society.' In brief, the armed forces were one of the main beneficiaries of the growth of the Egyptian state under Nasser.

This crucial period in the history of the Egyptian armed forces was overseen by the powerful figure of Field Marshall 'Abd al-Ḥakīm 'Āmir who served as chief of staff and minister of defense between 1956 and 1967. During his tenure, 'Amīr built patronage networks within the armed forces that firmly entrenched him in his position and even prevented Nasser from removing him from his command after the failure of the union with Syria in 1961 (Kandil 2012, p. 53). Thus, the "years between 1955 and 1966 constituted the zenith of the military's political centrality and power. This coincides with the period when the Egyptian armed forces were at their worst in terms of military effectiveness" (Hashim 2011a, p. 69).

The lack of military effectiveness became painfully obvious in Egypt's defeat by Israel in 1967. The immediate result was 'Āmir's removal from the military in 1967, but this was only a first and highly visible step in a process that transformed the position of the Egyptian armed forces in the wider system of regime institutions (Brooks 2006; Kandil 2012, Chapter 3). In his 1971 'Corrective Revolution,' Sadat moved against his opponents in the party and the military, purging 91 officials on a single day, about half of which were military officers (Kandil 2012, p. 107). This set the stage for a new approach in political-military relations: While of the 16 years of the Nasser era, 'Āmir had served as minister of defense for 11 years, six different individuals occupied this position during the 11 years of Sadat's presidency (Koehler 2013, p. 182). Similarly, while 35 percent of the 131 ministers under Nasser had come from a military background, only 19 percent of Sadat's 163 ministers had such a career path, while the proportion declined further to 10 percent of the 120 ministers serving under Mubarak up to 2005 (see Hilāl 2006, p. 156, 162-163, and 189; Stacher 2012, p. 62). In brief, the direct political influence of the military declined and recruitment and promotion patterns became significantly more institutionalized.

At the same time, however, the military expanded horizontally into the economic sphere and the practice of appointing retired officers to administrative positions in the state or public sector continued unabated (Bou Nassif 2012; Sayigh 2012; Springborg 1989). This process experienced another boost under the tenure of Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Abū Ghazāla as min-

ister of defense (1981-1989) and led to the emergence of what Yezid Sayigh has aptly termed an 'officers' republic' (Sayigh 2012). These developments notwithstanding, however, the reform of political-military relations in Egypt in the wake of the 1967 defeat led to the depoliticization of the Egyptian military and to the emergence of a powerful, yet separate 'military enclave' (Cook 2007).

Just as in Egypt, the Syrian armed forces also experienced significant and sustained growth. Had they counted only about 80,000 troops in the 1960s, force levels grew to 400,000 by the end of the 1980s (Zisser 2002, p. 122-23). Defense expenditures also experienced an upward trend, especially after the 1967 war (see Koehler 2013, p. 151). In contrast to Egypt, however, the Syrian armed forces were strongly politicized. Between independence in 1946 and 1970, Syria had experienced more than 10 successful military coups. What is more, attempts to politically control the army by appointing loyal officers after the 1963 Ba'thist takeover had infected the military with the factionalism of the party (Hinnebusch 1990, p. 158).

As it happened, however, the 1967 defeat against Israel coincided with a struggle for power between Ḥāfiẓ al-Assad who had taken the position as minister of defense in 1966 and Ṣalāḥ Jadīd, the Ba'th secretary general (van Dam 2011, Chapter 5). From his position in the ministry of defense, Assad used the 1967 defeat to introduce limited reforms in political-military relations. These reforms, however, aimed at weakening the influence of the party within the military and to strengthen the position of officers personally loyal to Assad in preparation for Assad's assumption of power. Thus, in February 1968, chief of staff Aḥmad al-Suwaidānī was replaced with Assad's close friend Muṣṭafā Ṭlāss, who was to serve in high-ranking military positions (first chief of staff, then minister of defense) until 2004; similarly, the crisis of the late 1960s saw the rise to influence of Rif'at al-Assad, Ḥāfiẓ's younger brother who was instrumental in the fall of the intelligence chief and Jadīd-loyalist 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jundī (see Seale 1988, p. 148-53). These tactics significantly strengthened Assad's hand in the 1970 confrontation with the party in which Jadīd was finally overthrown.

In the wake of the 'Corrective Movement,' as Assad's 1970 military takeover became known, the new strongman continued to consolidate his grip on the military, relying on strategies of personal control that had served him well in the struggle against Jadīd. In addition to Ṭlāss, Assad's cronies included such men as Ḥikmat al-Shihābī, chief of staff between 1974 and 1998, 'Alī Dūbā as the head of Military Intelligence (Shu'ba al-Mukhabarāt al-'Askariyya) from 1974 up to 2000, and of course his brother Rif'at as commander of the praetorian Defense Companies (Sirāyā al-Difā') (see Koehler 2013, p. 153). In sharp contrast to Egypt, the changes introduced to political-

military relations in the wake of the 1967 defeat in Syria shaped patterns of military integration into the regime coalition that not only endured for the better part of four decades, but also survived the transition from Ḥāfiẓ to his son Bashār in 2000.

Bashār's succession was carefully prepared through the reshuffling of Syria's military and security elite in the late 1990s (see Gambill 2002; Zisser 2000) as officers loyal to Bashār replaced his father's cronies. This led to the rise of figures such as Bashār's brother-in-law General Aṣif Shawkāt, head of military intelligence after 2005, or of Bashār's brother Bāsil as commander of the 4th Armored Division that included major parts of the Defense Companies formed by their uncle Rif'at. Thus, while the personnel changed in the transition to Bashār, the pattern of military incorporation introduced by Ḥāfiẓ after 1967 continued. This was to prove crucial for the behavior of the Syrian armed forces in the crisis of 2011.

Pre-existing patterns of political-military relations shaped these processes in two different ways. To begin with, the fact that both the Egyptian and Syrian militaries had played important political roles and had consequently grown into powerful institutions precluded their full submission to civilian control. Although the post-1967 crisis represented an opportunity for change in political-military relations, the Tunisian-style marginalization of the armed forces from the political process was not an option in either Egypt or Syria. In brief, officers in Egypt and Syria needed to be enticed into accepting a reformed political-military balance.

The difference between Egypt and Syria stems from this context as well and this is the second way in which existing patterns constrained reform options. In Egypt, Sadat took power as the designated successor to Nasser during a period in which the military's reputation was at an all-time low. Drawing on an initial elite consensus in his favor, Sadat then moved to eliminate the 'centers of power' in several state institutions, including the pary and the army. Resistance against Sadat, however, was not concentrated in any particular institution and the new president built up support in different quarters. By contrast, Hafiz al-Assad took power in a military coup directed against the party. In the power struggles surrounding his rise to the presidency, therefore, the camps were rather clear-cut: While Assad could count on support from within the military which he had cultivated as an original member of the Ba'th military committee and strengthened during his time as defense minister, resistance was concentrated in the party. Consequently, Assad moved to consolidate his support in the army and to weaken the influence of party representatives over the armed forces. The result was pattern of political-military relations in which the political and military elite sectors became tightly intertwined.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have sketched a historical explanation for variance in political-military relations among Middle Eastern republics. I have stressed the fact that the political-military balance is historically determined and changes only incrementally absent fundamental ruptures. In Tunisia, for example, the armed forces did not assume a more central position, despite the fact that Ben Ali came to power through a military coup; similarly, while the military took on an important role in the last days of the Ben Ali regime, it withdrew to the barracks immediately afterward and handed power to civilian elites. This is evidence for the fact that political-military relations constitute engrained patterns of behavior that continue to shape actors' strategies even in response to crisis situations.

On the other hand, I have also argued that the evolution of political-military relations is part and parcel of larger dynamics of regime development. In both Egypt and Syria, the political-military balance was re-formed during phases of regime consolidation that followed on major domestic crises. While in these two cases, reform occured against the backdrop of political succession in context in which the military had been weakened by defeat, in other Middle Eastern republics other triggers prompted reform. In Libya, for example, a failed 1976 coup attempt against Gadhafi triggered change in the political-military balance (Gaub 2013), while in Yemen, attempts to secure the dynastic succession of President Salih's son Ahmad upset political-military relations (Fattah 2010).

In the three cases I examined here, but also in the Middle East at large, incorporation and exclusion figured as the two main strategies in political-military relations. I argue that looking at the incorporation or exclusion of military leaders into/from the ruling coalition is an important dimension in political-military relations that has, however, been overlooked in debates on coup-proofing. These debates have treated different coup-proofing strategies as fundamentally alike, focusing exclusively on coup risk rather than other factors of political-military relations. As we have shown elsewhere (Albrecht & Koehler 2014), however, extreme crisis situations such as those triggered by regime-threatening mass uprisings, lead elites to reasses their affiliation with the regime coalitions. Thus, while both incorporation and inclusion might protect political elites against the risk of military intervention during 'normal' times, they have opposite implications in the context of regime crises (Koehler 2014).

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