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Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School



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**NAVAL  
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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**THE EMERGING PATTERN OF CIVIL-MILITARY  
RELATIONS IN ISLAMIST STATES**

by

R. Alexander Tuininga

March 2013

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Robert Springborg  
Thomas Bruneau

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**THE EMERGING PATTERN OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN  
ISLAMIST STATES**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

The rise of political Islam in the Muslim Middle East is a critical development certain to shape political and social change in the region for decades to come. Political Islam is bound to exert a particularly strong influence on civil-military relations due to the legacy of military dominance of state institutions. Drawing on the reform experiences in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt, this thesis argues that a distinct pattern of civil-military relations is beginning to emerge in which Islamist governments rely on ideology to mobilize and ensure the loyalty of supporters to a degree that clearly distinguishes them from their authoritarian and democratic predecessors. While these Islamist-dominated governments have utilized some democratic control mechanisms in their efforts to expand their control of the government and bring the military under civilian control, this owes more to expediency than to a genuine commitment to democratic reform. Although each Islamist political organization interprets the Islamization of the state differently and some could be considered politically or socially liberal, the primary characteristic of any Islamist political organization is to Islamize the state rather than to democratize it—a characteristic that has important implications for how Islamist governments assert their authority over the military.



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Turkey)
AOE	Assembly of Experts (Iran)
CHP	Republican People's Party (Turkey)
CMR	Civil-military relations
DP	Democratic Party (Turkey)
EU	European Union
FJP	Freedom and Justice Party (Egypt)
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
MB	Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt)
MGK	National Security Council (Turkey)
MIT	Turkish Intelligence Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PRG	Provisional Revolutionary Government (Iran)
SCAF	Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (Egypt)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TNP	Turkish National Police
UN	United Nations
USIP	United States Institute of Peace

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

For much of the twentieth century, it was common for observers of the Muslim Middle East inside and outside the region to accept military dominance of the state as a natural if not an ideal approach to modernization. Reza Khan's overthrow of the Qajar Dynasty in Iran in 1921, the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Iraq's Bakr Sidqi coup in 1936, Gamal Abdel Nasser's Revolution in 1952, Algeria's 1954–1962 War of Independence, and Muammar Qaddafi's "One September Revolution" in 1969 all brought the military or civilianized military officers to power with the promise of delivering radical change that would accelerate development and bring the state closer to modernity. In the decades that followed, these military-dominated regimes proved mostly unable to deliver on their promises of reform. Their governments became characterized less by political development and economic growth than by corruption, ineptitude, and indifference to the needs and concerns of the masses. One by one these military-dominated regimes witnessed their legitimacy erode until the pressure to reform became so overwhelming that the ruling regime either collapsed (such as the downfall of the Shah in Iran and Colonel Qadhafi in Libya) or was forced to relinquish control as part of a broader reorganization of political power (the decline of the military in Turkey or the resignation of General Tantawi in Egypt). Amidst this shift political Islam has arrived at center stage, billing itself as a new, alternative path to modernization. Nearly every country in the Muslim Middle East now has at least one organization that seeks to acquire political power and establish an Islamist state in which laws and institutions are developed in accordance with its own interpretation of religious principles. In countries where Islamists organizations have become the preeminent political authority, the most pressing issue they have to confront is the legacy of the military-dominated state.

This thesis provides an examination of how Islamists have confronted this challenge in the three states where the legacy of military dominance has been most pronounced: Iran, Turkey, and Egypt. The objective is to determine whether or not a distinct Islamist approach to civil-military relations (CMR) can be identified through



comparative analysis. The primary focus is on the methods that civilian leaders employ to subordinate the coercive arm of the state and the rights and prerogatives that the military and security forces enjoy either as individuals or as corporate entities.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Although militaries have long enjoyed a prominent role in national politics in the Muslim Middle East, CMR in the region remains an under-scrutinized field of inquiry. Academic analyses of CMR have become increasingly intertwined with the literature on democratization whereby effective civilian control of the military is treated simply a step along the path toward democratic consolidation. Most theoretical approaches to CMR tend to depict a continuum stretching across a singular axis, with overt military dictatorship at one extreme to democratic civilian control over the military at the other. This conceptualization is usually accompanied by a prescription calling for physical and ideological separation of civilian and military institutions, with the parameters of the latter defined by the former.<sup>1</sup> Such a model fails to capture the complex nature of CMR in the Middle East, where civilian control of the military has often increased while democratization has stalled or regressed.

The need for new research on CMR in the Muslim Middle East is further underscored by the speed with which CMR in the region appears to be changing. As recently as 2007, one of the foremost scholars of the region's politics described how the militaries of Algeria, Turkey, and Egypt retained *de facto* control over their respective states' instruments of power (political, economic, bureaucratic, etc.) while avoiding the day-to-day business of governance.<sup>2</sup> The events of the last five years have raised serious questions about the political, social, and economic roles of the Turkish and Egyptian militaries; only in Algeria has the military continued to enjoy continued dominance of the state. Seismic changes are also occurring in Iran where the IRGC's growing political

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<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Schiff, "Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: A Theory of Concordance," *Armed Forces and Society* 22, no. 1 (Fall 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

influence is changing the nature of state power, yet in a way that appears to be strengthening rather than undermining the rule of the Supreme Leader.

## **C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES**

### **1. Defining Islamism**

Despite volumes of analytical research dedicated to exploring “Islamism,” consensus around the meaning of the term remains elusive. Scholars remain divided over whether Islamism is a social movement, political cause, or economic reform program; its compatibility with democracy; and its ability to support religious diversity. Some allege that Islamism is a negatively-defined ideology that provides a “coherent narrative about what ails Muslim societies and where the cure lies.”<sup>3</sup> For these observers, Islamism is a rejectionist theory borne out of popular frustration with the West and corrupt authoritarian governments in the Middle East. Others have sought to frame Islamism as something decidedly more progressive; a parallel track to modernity that avoids the moral pitfalls of Western modernization. Still others describe Islamism in more conservative terms—a return to the Quranic teachings prescriptions as envisioned by the Prophet.<sup>4</sup> The competing interpretations of Islamism make it difficult to assign the label to any particular state or regime let alone multiple states as part of a comparative analysis.

Such distinctions are often more apparent than real. Each of the Islamist movements examined in this thesis is an ideology-based political movement that was forced underground by military-dominated regimes suspicious of Islamist organizations. Once in power, all three have embraced at least partial democratization as a means to expand and legitimize their own authority at the expense of potential political adversaries, including the military.

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<sup>3</sup> John Owen, “Why Islamism is Winning,” *New York Times*, January 7, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Ali Bulac describes Islamism as “Islam coming to life, following its authority and ideals, with the intention of it to be established in every historical and societal condition in the world.” He goes on to claim that all Muslims are by definition also Islamists, and that “Religion, reduced merely to faith, morals, and worship, is not ‘the religion that Allah has chosen for us and brought to perfection’ (5/Maide, 3).” Ali Bulac, “On Islamism: Its Roots, Development and Future,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (2012).

*a. Islamism as a Political Movement*

Despite Islamism's myriad definitions, most observers are quick to distinguish Islam from Islamism. As Bassam Tibi notes, "Islam itself is basically a faith, a cultural system, and an ethics—and hence not necessarily political by its nature."<sup>5</sup> Islamism, by contrast, refers to a political movement, or, more accurately, several different political movements, all of which maintain that Islam should serve as the primary guide for determining how institutions of the state should be designed and maintained.

In this thesis, the term "Islamism" is applied to three particular political movements: the mullahs who came to power in Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and continue to run the state today, the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. This is not to suggest that all three share the same values or seek to wield power in the same way. Rather, it is merely a way of acknowledging that in all three countries, Islamic ideals have been vital in propelling a political organization or movement to a position of political dominance. By using the term "Islamism" to describe a political phenomenon rather than a specific belief system or ideology, this thesis seeks to avoid the thornier debates about theology and interpretations of the Quran. While such analysis may help explain certain tendencies among Islamist governments, this thesis seeks to examine *how* political Islamism manifests itself in the arena of CMR as opposed to *why*.

*b. Islamism's Ideological Component*

Use of the term "Islamist" to describe the dominant political movements in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt is a fairly controversial proposition. The term "Islamism" is almost universally disavowed in Turkey, where Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly insisted that his Justice and Development Party (AKP) is not an Islamist organization but instead an "Islamic conservative party," and Fethullah Gülen, leader of the country's largest Islamic movement, maintains that his followers are informed by an

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<sup>5</sup> Bassam Tibi. "Islamist Parties: Why They Can't Be Democratic," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. (2008).

inclusive “spirit of mobility” that emphasizes tolerance, dialogue, and compassion and bears no resemblance to Islamist organizations that have sought to transform Islam into a political ideology.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, some observers have argued that Iran’s clerical leadership is an outlier among Islamist political movements, and that Islamists in other countries are generally pragmatic organizations committed to democratic principles and processes.<sup>7</sup>

Islamism is not monolithic: it is not a unitary movement with a singular objective.<sup>8</sup> Islamism is an umbrella term that encompasses several different movements, each of which seeks its own objectives that are in turn informed by different principles. Yet if we are to endow the term “Islamism” with any meaning at all, it is vital not to reject comparative analyses as intrinsically flawed or allow the distinctions among Islamist movements to overshadow that which unites Islamist organizations of all stripes.

What is common to all Islamist political movements is an ideology that connects political goals with Islamic ideals. In this sense, all Islamist political movements are also ideological movements. In each case, the ultimate goal is to Islamize the state. What this means in practice can vary tremendously from one state to another and movement to the next. This is why Islamism has taken a more democratic form in places like Tunisia and Jordan and a more authoritarian one in Iran and the Gaza Strip. But while the differences *among* Islamist movements may be substantial, the differences *within* any particular movement tend to be fairly narrow as no movement can remain unified if its members hold radically divergent visions of the state. While individual

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<sup>6</sup> The AKP’s political program, available on the party’s website, refers to secularism as “a prerequisite of democracy, and an assurance of the freedom of religion and conscience” and “rejects the interpretation and distortion of secularism as enmity against religion.” Justice and Development Party, AKP Party Program Chapter II, “Fundamental Rights and Political Principles,” <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum> ; Enes Ergene, “Political Islam or the Concept of Islamism,” Fethullah Gülen Movement Online, August 6, 2008, <http://www.fethullahgulen.org/gulen-movement/on-the-movement/an-analysis-of-the-gulen-movement/26375-political-islam-or-the-concept-of-islamism>.

<sup>7</sup> Marwan Muasher, “The Overblown Islamist Threat,” *New York Times*, November 2, 2011 [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/03/opinion/the-overblown-islamist-threat.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/03/opinion/the-overblown-islamist-threat.html?_r=0) .

<sup>8</sup> Some Islamist organizations do, however, have linkages that stretch across borders. The Muslim Brotherhood, most notably, has sister organizations in nearly every country in the Muslim Middle East. However, even the leaders of these sub-groups are guided by different by different principles. For example, Hamas, an organization founded by Muslim Brotherhood affiliates in the mid-1980s, still insists on the right to employ violence to achieve political goals despite the parent organization’s disavowal of such tactics.

Islamist organizations may be more or less liberal or supportive of democratic principles, all are movements that have demonstrated a capacity to mobilize supporters on the basis of a shared vision.

The dominant Islamist movements in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt have all relied on a fusion of political and religious ideals to expand their bases of popular support in pursuit of political power. Within each of these movements, members are united by a shared vision of the state—a vision that gives members both purpose and direction, and serves as a sort of ideological glue to prevent the movement from splitting apart. While Iran’s Islamism may be guided a far more conservative ideology than that of Turkey’s Gülenist movement, that should not suggest that the Gülenists are non-ideological. Indeed, the variations between Islamist movements in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt are what make them a worthwhile source for comparison. At the present time, there may be no better way to understand what Islamism is and is not than a comparative study of how it has managed political power in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt—three states appear to run the gamut from the most to least politically free in the Muslim Middle East.<sup>9</sup>

*c. The Conspiratorial Nature of Islamist Movements*

The isolation and persecution that Islamists faced under pre-Islamist governments in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt, continues to play a critical role in how these movements approach political leadership. Because Islamists grew accustomed to operating underground before taking the reins of power, they have adopted an approach to politics that can be generally described as conspiratorial. Islamist movements often display an intense distrust of outsiders. Warnings from Islamist leaders about foreign infiltration cannot be dismissed as demagoguery or fear-mongering; rather, they often reflect genuine anxiety about external forces committed to the destruction of their

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<sup>9</sup> According to Freedom House’s 2013 report, “Partly free” Turkey was assigned a “Freedom Rating” of 3.0, which made it freer than every state in the region other than Israel. Iran, meanwhile, was assigned a 6.0 rating and designated “not free”; only Syria and Saudi Arabia scored worse (both with a worst-possible 7.0). Egypt fell right in the middle with a 5.0 rating and a “partly free” designation. “Freedom in the World 2013: Democratic Breakthroughs in the Balance,” Freedom House.

Islamist vision. One can see this tendency when Turkey's Islamists suggest that secularists might be "hidden Jews" or Iran's leaders accuse the CIA of creating a militant group like Jundallah.

Consequently, Islamist movements have been built largely on interpersonal networks and thrive on trust and personal relationships. In this regard, the evolution of Islamist movements bears a strong similarity to that of the Bolsheviks, Maoists, or even the Ba'athists. This suggests that the single party totalitarian model of governance also bears relevance to this study. These similarities are important and will be further explored in Chapter III; however, it is important to note the limitations of any such comparison. Chief among them is the vital role that democratic processes play in Islamist states.

*d. Islamism's "Instrumental" View of Democracy*

Intimately connected to the discussion of Islamism and ideology is the debate about the compatibility of Islamism and democracy. At one extreme are those who maintain that the "principles of Islam are in contradiction to the values of civilian society and democracy."<sup>10</sup> At the other are those who have defined the relationship between Islam and democracy "in a positive context," rejecting the possibility of non-democratic interpretations of Islam.<sup>11</sup> This is not merely an academic argument as there is tremendous variation in how each movement has translated its principles into practice. If we evaluate Islamists solely by their rhetoric, it is clear that they are not intrinsically hostile to democratic ideas or processes. Some Islamist leaders, including Ayatollah Khomeini, deny the possibility of any conflict between democratic and Islamist values:

[T]o juxtapose "democratic" and "Islamic" is an insult to Islam. Because when you place the word "democratic" in front of "Islamic," it means that Islam is lacking in the alleged virtues of democracy, although Islam is, in fact, superior to all forms of democracy. To speak of a "democratic Islamic republic" is like speaking of a "justice-oriented Islamic republic."

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<sup>10</sup> David Bukay, "The Military in Politics: Is the Military Bulwark against Islamism Collapsing?" *Middle East Quarterly* (2009).

<sup>11</sup> Ergun Yildirim, "Plural Islamism in Plural Modernities," *Insight Turkey* 14, No. 4 (2012).

That is an insult to Islam because it suggests that justice is something extrinsic to Islam, whereas it is the very substance of Islam.<sup>12</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood has adopted a less defensive position than Khomeini's, but the emphasis on an intimate connection between Islam and democracy remains. The Brothers argue that the Egyptian state should be built on a foundation of "Islamic-oriented democracy," suggesting democracy must in essence be purified by passing through the prism of Islamic values.<sup>13</sup> This hybridization of Islam and democracy is least apparent in Turkey, where the AKP and the Gülen movement continue to insist that political institutions are and should remain secular; however, the Gülenists are sure to justify their support for democracy on Islamic grounds, arguing that:

Islam holds individuals and societies responsible for their own fate, people must be responsible for governing themselves. The Quran addresses society with such phrases as: "O people!" and "O believers!" The duties entrusted to modern democratic systems are those that Islam refers to society and classifies, in order of importance, as "absolutely necessary, relatively necessary, and commendable to carry out."<sup>14</sup>

Such statements are not merely empty rhetoric. Because Islamist movements tend to spring from grassroots organizations, their leaders may find democracy to be the quickest and surest route to political power. Islamists have proven adept at capitalizing on their organizational strength to effect desired changes through competitive elections. Democratic processes also serve a vital legitimizing function as they allow Islamist organizations to point to success at the ballot box in order to silence critics at home and abroad.

Yet even the most liberal of Islamist movements maintains what Tibi describes as an "instrumental" view of democracy.<sup>15</sup> That is, Islamist movements rely on democratic procedures only insofar as they help the movement promote and realize

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<sup>12</sup> Ruhollah Khomeini and Hamid Algar. *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980), 339.

<sup>13</sup> IkwanWeb, "Muslim Brotherhood and Democracy in Egypt," June 13, 2007, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=808>.

<sup>14</sup> Fethullah Gülen Movement Online, "A Comparative Approach to Islam and Democracy," January 7, 2013, <http://www.gulenmovement.us/a-comparative-approach-to-islam-and-democracy.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Tibi, "Islamist Parties," 44.

Islamist objectives. Democratic principles such as judicial independence, press freedom, and the right to peaceful assembly have been systematically undermined as part of an effort to suppress dissent from non-Islamists. In Iran, non-Islamists have been barred from competing in elections. In Turkey, prosecutions and imprisonment have become common for journalists who have raised questions about Islamist beliefs and practices. And in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has continued to rely on harsh tactics to subdue mass protests. In effect, Islamist movements have employed tactics characteristic of “competitive authoritarianism.” According to Levitsky and Way:

Competitive authoritarian regimes are civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents’ abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-à-vis their opponents. Such regimes are competitive in that opposition parties use democratic institutions to contest seriously for power, but they are not democratic because the playing field is heavily skewed in favor of incumbents.<sup>16</sup>

Although Levitsky and Way do not include Islamist states in their analysis, there are significant similarities, Islamists in pre-2009 Iran, AKP-led Turkey, and post-Mubarak Egypt have all relied on democratic procedures to secure political power but have severely undermined democratic institutions once in office, To put it another way Islamist organizations tend to embrace “the methods and lineaments of democracy” without accepting its “cultural and political values” once in power.<sup>17</sup> Islamists have shown little interest in inclusionary politics or compromise. They may engage in tactical alliances with potential adversaries, particularly secular political groups and the military, but these have invariably been temporary arrangements. In all three countries Islamists have alienated allies en route to consolidating their authority.

For all the pro-democracy rhetoric that Islamists employ, Islamist movements do not owe their fidelity to democratic ideals. Consequently, democratic principles will be sacrificed or subverted whenever they come into conflict with the

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<sup>16</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge, 2010), 5.

<sup>17</sup> Amr Elshobaki, “Building Democracy or Confronting the Islamists?” *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, no. 10 (November 2011), 10.2815/22223, [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Egyptian\\_democracy\\_and\\_the\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Egyptian_democracy_and_the_Muslim_Brotherhood.pdf).



Islamists' pursuit of maximizing temporal power. Such subversions run little risk of alienating core supporters as long as they are perceived as conducive to the Islamists' ultimate objective of establishing an Islamist state. Although Islamists may be patient and pragmatic, this is because they recognize the potential of political overreach to provoke a backlash that would hinder their ultimate objective of Islamizing the state. Patience and pragmatism should not be confused with democratic virtues like inclusiveness and compromise.

## **2. An Islamist Approach to CMR**

The short history and limited sample size of Islamist-dominated states make it difficult to speak of a distinctly Islamist *model* of CMR; however, certain patterns of interaction have emerged that make it possible to discuss Islamist approaches to CMR in terms of trends or parameters. These trends are derivative of the chief characteristics of Islamist movements previously discussed. In other words, Islamist governments tend to view the military primarily in political terms, they may seek to impose their ideology on the force, rely on interpersonal connections and networks to establish control and determine leadership roles within the armed forces, and utilize democratic oversight mechanisms for the purpose of maximizing control rather than out of a commitment to genuine democratic reform.

The most immediate goal for any Islamist organization is to reduce the military's political influence and capacity for intervention. While this process may be partially or even wholly consistent with democratic approaches to civilian oversight of the military, this is not because Islamist organizations particularly value democratic control mechanisms. Rather it is because democratic approaches to asserting authority over the military are the least likely to provoke opposition from non-Islamists or foreign observers which may make them the easiest to implement. The clearest example of this is Turkey where the AKP relied on European Union (EU) accession process to implement dramatic changes that minimized the military's influence over politics. While these reforms were initially hailed by the international community as evidence of the AKP's commitment to democratic reform, subsequent events, including a series of investigations that have

placed many of the military's senior leaders in jail, strongly suggest that the AKP was never as interested in democratic reform as it was in weakening the country's historically powerful military.

Islamist governments may also seek to use the military as a vehicle for expanding an Islamist ideology after it has been effectively neutralized. At the very least this entails the promotion of religious officers sympathetic to Islamist objectives. An example of this is the promotion of General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, widely regarded as a deeply religious man, to Defense Minister in Egypt.<sup>18</sup> In Iran, use of the military to advance an Islamist ideology is far more advanced as volunteers and conscripts alike are subjected to an intense indoctrination program. That similar programs have not been put into effect in Turkey and Egypt may be more a matter of time and political constraints (the Turkish and Egyptian militaries remain far more popular and influential than the Shah's military was at the time of the Islamic Revolution) more than genuine respect for military professionalism and autonomy.

### **3. Identifying a Framework for Evaluating CMR**

Traditional civil-military scholarship tends to focus on the balance of power between the armed forces and civilian leadership: too much military control leaves the civilian component weak, impotent, and unstable, whereas too much civilian control can leave the country unprepared for national security challenges. However, this formulation is generally insufficient for assessing CMR in the Middle East, where it is not uncommon for the military to enjoy tremendous privileges while posing virtually no threat to the civilian leadership's control of the government. The civil-military relationship is characterized by co-dependence rather than contestation. While rivalry and distrust between the country's civilian and military leaders might still play a critical role in determining CMR outcomes, this antagonism rarely if ever threatens the civil leaders'

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<sup>18</sup> "Profile: Egypt Armed Forces Chief Abdul Fattah al-Sisi," *BBC News*, August 21, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19256730>.

control of the state. This dynamic has important implications for both pre- and post-Islamist governments in the region, as it captures the essence of CMR in both Mubarak's Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

One of the key challenges of this thesis will be to analyze CMR in a way that is cognizant of such complexity. This requires a broad interpretation of the factors relevant to CMR. While some studies on CMR focus exclusively on constitutional prerogatives, budgets, mission analysis, and force structures, such an approach is far too narrow for the militaries of the Middle East, where the military often penetrates all aspects of political and social life. Economic development, the law, education, civil liberties, and even national identity itself are all intimately connected to the military in both real and symbolic ways. CMR studies of the Middle East are complicated further by the role of the security sector, as police and intelligence agencies are frequently as large as the military itself and are responsible for providing services that may overlap with military functions and areas of responsibility.

#### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The scholarship relevant to this thesis can be roughly divided into four fields: CMR theory, analyses of political Islam, comparative studies of the Middle East, and studies of particular countries examined in this thesis.

Chapter II is dedicated to a thorough review of the CMR literature as it pertains to political Islam; however, it should be noted here that Huntington's *The Soldier and the State*, published more than fifty years ago, remains the most influential work in the field.<sup>19</sup> Despite the book's emphasis on CMR on U.S. military history, it outlines a broad theoretical framework intended to be universally applicable. Huntington's emphasis is on defining "objective control," or the process by which the military internalizes its apolitical role and renders itself "politically sterile and neutral."<sup>20</sup> Objective civilian control remains the most influential concept in the field of CMR; most scholars in the field focus on developing tools to effectively assess objective civilian control. One

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<sup>19</sup> Samuel Huntington, *Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1957).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 83–4.

prominent example is Alfred Stepan's *Rethinking Military Politics*, in which Stepan outlines eleven "military prerogatives" in which the military "assumes they have acquired the right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extramilitary areas within the state apparatus, or even to structure relationships between state and political or civil society."<sup>21</sup>

While Stepan's approach may be useful for evaluating CMR as part of democratic consolidation and for explaining how and why objective civilian control of the military has not yet matured in an ostensibly democratic state, studies like his do not attempt to examine how or why undemocratic patterns of CMR have proven so durable in certain contexts. Indeed, this limitation is characteristic of much CMR scholarship, which has become increasingly intertwined with the literature of democratization. In *The Third Wave*, Huntington dismisses the value of evaluating such arrangements, arguing that "the experience of the Third Wave strongly suggests that liberalized authoritarianism is not a stable equilibrium; the halfway house does not stand."<sup>22</sup> This kind of thinking, common in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, has proven fallacious over the last two decades, as evidenced by the experiences of Russia, China, former Soviet Republics, and, of course, the Middle East. In all of these cases, authoritarian regimes have introduced token democratic reforms to maintain a veneer of political liberalism. Jason Brownlee has confronted Huntington's argument about the vulnerability of "halfway houses" even more directly with an empirical study demonstrating that authoritarian regimes with elements of pluralism have become "twice as common as fully closed exclusionary authoritarianism."<sup>23</sup>

Brownlee and others have attempted to address this contradiction by examining the nature of power and political stability in the region's "halfway houses." Cook, Brooks, and Kamrava—whose conclusions will be reviewed in Chapter III—have all recognized the primacy of militaries in these regimes and offer complementary

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<sup>21</sup> Alfred C. Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 93.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 137.

<sup>23</sup> Jason Brownlee, "Ruling Parties and Durable Authoritarianism," Stanford Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, Working Paper 23, October 28, 2004.

explanations for how civilian governments managed to prevent the threat of military coups without actually subordinating the military in ways characteristic of consolidated democracies.<sup>24</sup> However, most of this work predates the rise of the AKP in Turkey and the Arab Spring, which are almost certainly the two most significant developments for political Islam since 1979.

Although comparative studies of CMR may be lagging behind current political developments, the same cannot be said for country-specific analyses. Academic and research institutions have produced a wealth of analysis on CMR developments in Iran and Turkey (and to a lesser extent in Egypt). This trend is most pronounced in studies on CMR reform in Turkey under the AKP. However, many of these authors have taken the party's commitment to democratization for granted. Mario Zucconi, Ersel Aydnı, Müge Aknur, Sevgi Akarcesme, and Pavel Danek, among many others, all treat the decline of military tutelage in Turkey as either a consequence of democratic currents in Turkish society or a result of a deliberate democratic reform campaign crafted by the AKP for the primary purpose of accelerating the EU accession process.<sup>25</sup> While such descriptions bear more than a grain of truth, they tend to obscure the profoundly un-democratic trends in AKP-run Turkey, including the imprisonment and intimidation of journalists and other regime critics and the rapidly growing power of the Fethullah Gülen movement—an ostensibly secular Islamist organization whose followers own and operate dozens of schools and universities, major business conglomerates, several major media outlets, and are reportedly in control of several government agencies and departments, including the Turkish National Police (TNP) and the judiciary.

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<sup>24</sup> Risa Brooks, *Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing*.

<sup>25</sup> See Mario Zucconi, "The Impact of the EU Connection on Turkey's Domestic and Foreign Policy," *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 1., March 2009; Müge Aknur, "The Impact of Civil-Military Relations on Democratic Consolidation in Turkey," in *Democratic Consolidation in Turkey* ed. by Müge Aknur (Boca Raton, FL: Universal-Publishers: 2012), 203–248; Ersel Aydnı, "Civil-Military Relations Transformed," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (January 2012): 100–108; Pavel Danek, *Changes in Civil-Military Relations in Turkey since the Late 90s* (Berlin: Lambert, 2011); Sevgi Akarcesme, *Military of Civilian Supremacy in Turkey? The New Framework of Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Feb 28 Era*, Berlin: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010.

Analyses of CMR in Iran, on the other hand, make little mention of progress toward democracy. Most studies focus on making sense of the country's complex security decision-making structure and the respective roles of—and rivalries between—the regular military and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Cann and Danopoulos review several competing explanations for the quiescence of the military to the regime, including the officer purges of the early 1980s, the regime's capacity to repress dissent, and cultural indoctrination.<sup>26</sup> Their conclusion, which echoes Huntington and Kamrava, is that the regular military's internal divisions and competition with the IRGC prevented the armed forces from becoming involved in domestic politics. In other words, Iranian CMR is discussed in a manner that suggests it is no different than in other autocratic regimes, such as Mubarak-era Egypt or Qadhafi-era Libya.

One weakness with many of these studies is that they have not attempted to isolate Islamism as an independent variable to understand its impact on the forms and functions of political power. Likewise, the ever-growing body of scholarship on political Islam remains dominated by abstract and normative questions. Analysis of Islamism's ground truths—how its concepts become manifest in issues of real world governance—is yet to be undertaken in a serious and comprehensive way. Wright's *The Islamists are Coming*; Brown, Ülgen, Ottaway, and Salem's "The Emerging Order in the Middle East"; Dessouki's "Official Islam and Political Legitimation in the Arab Countries"; and Kurzman and Naqvi's "Do Muslims Vote Islamic?" have all emphasized the flexibility of Islamism in addressing modern political problems.<sup>27</sup> Each of these works identifies what Brown describes as the "diversity of the Islamist part of the political spectrum" to argue that differing interpretations of Islam, cultural variations, and political constraints will continue to produce vastly different results in states where Islamists have assumed

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<sup>26</sup> Rebecca Cann and Constantine Danopoulos, "The Military and Politic in a Theocratic State: Iran as a Case Study," *Armed Forces and Society* (Winter 2007): 269–88.

<sup>27</sup> Robin Wright, *The Islamists are Coming* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005); Sinan Ülgen, Nathan Brown, Marina Ottaway, and Paul Salem, "The Emerging Order in the Middle East," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Outlook (May 2012), [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/middle\\_east\\_order1.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/middle_east_order1.pdf); Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, "Official Islam and Political Legitimation in the Arab Countries," in *The Islamic Impulse*, ed. Barbara Freyer Stowasser (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press: 1987); Charles Kurzman and Ijlal Naqvi, "Do Muslims Vote Islamic?" *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 2 (April 2010): 50.

power.<sup>28</sup> These studies generally offer little with respect to how Islamist political organizations consolidate power and have taken at least partial democratization for granted.

This stove-piped approach to analysis is problematic for both fields of inquiry. CMR studies that fail to examine the nature and meaning of Islamism are forced to interpret the relationship between civilian and military leaders in Islamist states through either a democratic or an authoritarian lens. This carries a high risk for misinterpretation. Because most scholars described the AKP's CMR reforms prior to 2007 in terms of democratic consolidation, few anticipated the more authoritarian tendencies the party has demonstrated over the last six years. Likewise, academic debates about the meaning of Islamism are generally plagued by the selective use of data and self-serving theological interpretations. Yet the proliferation of Islamist governments has begun to provide enough empirical data to challenge these normative arguments. Because CMR reform has been the top priority in states where Islamist organizations have achieved their greatest successes, the field provides the richest source of data for making sense of what Islamism is and is not.

## **E. THESIS OVERVIEW**

Chapter II will provide an overview of theoretical and empirical approaches to CMR and offer some general observations of research trends. The intent of this chapter is to outline the scope of CMR in order to frame the analysis of particular countries that follows in subsequent chapters.

Chapter III provides an overview of CMR trends in the Middle East prior to and concurrent with the rise of Islamist regimes. This chapter seeks to place the emergence of Islamism within the broader context of regional political development in order to demonstrate how Islamist regimes represent both a break with and continuation of longstanding trends in regional CMR.

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<sup>28</sup> Ülgen et al., "Emerging Order in the Middle East."

Chapters IV, V, and VI will investigate CMR in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt, respectively. These chapters will attempt to provide a brief history pre-Islamist CMR trends in order to provide context for Islamist CMR development. Key areas of focus will include a discussion of the roles and missions of the military and security services, the military's role in domestic and foreign policy decision-making, access to resources, and the institutional factors that enable or inhibit military influence.

Chapter VII will be the conclusion, in which I summarize the key findings of this study and offer recommendations for further research.



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## II. IDENTIFYING A FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING CMR IN ISLAMIST STATES

### A. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

At a minimum, all examinations of CMR seek to answer one fundamental question: How do militaries and civilian leaders coexist within a state? Most CMR scholars describe military subordination to democratically-elected civilian leaders as the ideal condition, but there is nothing inevitable or organic about such an arrangement. In most states, the armed forces maintain sufficient resources—equipment, training, and manpower—to pose a credible threat to the civilian leaders’ control of the government. This threat can assume a variety of forms. Soldiers can turn their guns on the government and assume power for themselves, exploit their government’s dependence on coercive power in order to secure privileges for themselves, or put down their weapons to allow a restive population or rival political faction to seize power and depose the incumbent leadership.<sup>29</sup>

While civilian control of the armed forces may be the most fundamental question of CMR scholarship, it is not the only one. As Peter Feaver notes, CMR “is a very broad subject, encompassing the entire range of relationships between the military and civilian society at every level.”<sup>30</sup> Historians, sociologists, and philosophers have all made important contributions to the field. Their work generally falls into two categories: theoretical analyses that attempt to explain how and why relations between the military and the state evolve as they do, and empirical or descriptive studies that analyze CMR

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<sup>29</sup>As Samuel Finer notes, CMR scholars should ask not “why the military engage in politics,” but instead “why they ever do otherwise.” Samuel Finer, *The Man on Horseback* (Boulder: Westview, 1988), 5.

<sup>30</sup>Peter Feaver, “Civil-Military Relations,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 211. See also Thomas Bruneau and Cris Matei, *Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 17.

within particular states, regions, or regime types.<sup>31</sup> This paper seeks to contribute to the latter body of research; however, it is first necessary to review the theoretical work in order to outline the parameters for analysis.

## 1. Huntington and the Subjective-Objective Control Dichotomy

The most prominent CMR theorist is Samuel Huntington, whose *Soldier and the State* remains the most cited and controversial work on the subject. Huntington's primary focus is on civilian control of the military, which he defines in two ways. The first, "subjective control," refers to the "maximizing of the power of civilian groups in relation to the military" and according to Huntington can be achieved through institutional arrangements, constitutional decree, or as a function of conflict between social classes.<sup>32</sup> Though Huntington argues that subjective control of the armed forces has been the historical norm, he is dismissive of its strength and viability. He describes subjective control over the military as a "slogan" usually employed by one civilian group or institution against another for the purpose of advancing its own interests.<sup>33</sup> By contrast, "objective control" of the armed forces refers to "the maximizing of military professionalism," or the process by which the coercive arm of the state internalizes the concept of civilian control and voluntarily removes itself from domestic politics. A military that is objectively controlled by civilian leaders "stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state," but remains at all times "politically sterile and neutral."<sup>34</sup> Huntington builds on the subjective-objective control dichotomy with two additional factors. The first, the military's "political power," refers to the legal authority and influence a military enjoys within the state. According to Huntington, the military's political power does not

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<sup>31</sup> Feaver identifies three trends in the political science research on CMR—*normative* studies that attempt to explain how civilian leaders and militaries should interact, *empirical/descriptive* studies that analyze CMR in particular states or regions, and *theoretical* works which seek to identify the factors are likeliest to produce critical outcomes such as coups or effective civilian control of the military—the overlap between the *normative* and *theoretical* approaches is so great that the two have become virtually indistinguishable. Feaver, "Civil Military Relations," 214.

<sup>32</sup> Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 80–82.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

necessarily suggest anything about its professionalism: a military can enjoy tremendous influence and autonomy within a state without interfering in politics. The second, ideology, refers to the values held by the dominant civilian group. By Huntington's definition, ideology can be either pro-military (value the military's role in society), or anti-military (regard the military with skepticism).

Huntington's paradigm transcends academic studies of CMR. His terminology is still employed by an array of individuals ranging from critics who decry the presence of retired American flag officers on cable news programs<sup>35</sup> to scholars evaluating the prospects for democratization in the developing world.<sup>36</sup> Huntington's influence also continues to reverberate within the field of CMR. Leading CMR scholars like Morris Janowitz and Bengt Abrahamsson build on Huntington's foundational work rather than developing wholly new, alternative models. While both make note of certain weaknesses and limitations in Huntington's approach, their continued reliance on concepts like the objective-subjective dichotomy and "military professionalization" reveal durability in Huntington's model. This does not suggest that Huntington's model is without major, fundamental weaknesses. Indeed, such notoriety has in part made Huntington's framework a lightning rod for criticism. Abrahamsson notes that Huntington has considerable difficulty "reconcil[ing] his historical accounts of civil-military relations with his conceptual scheme."<sup>37</sup> Thomas Bruneau goes further, arguing that Huntington had developed a theory that is fatally flawed and a poor basis for empirical analysis. According to Bruneau, Huntington's model is tautological because it fails to distinguish between professionalism and objective civilian control; relies too heavily on selective data; and is too focused on a narrow conceptualization of civilian control.<sup>38</sup> Bruneau's

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<sup>35</sup> Richard H. Kohn, "Tarnished Brass: Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline?" *World Affairs*, Spring 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Larry Diamond, *Civil-Military Relations and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>37</sup> Bengt Abrahamsson, *Military Professionalization and Political Power* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1972), 149.

<sup>38</sup> Bruneau and Matei, *Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, 16.

criticism appears to be borne out by the experience of empirical researchers, as even those who rely on Huntington's framework are forced to re-define his terms in order to present coherent analysis.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. Principal-Agent Model

Huntington's thesis was not designed as a comprehensive or universal analysis of CMR but as a predictive analysis of American power and CMR during the Cold War. Peter Feaver argues that Huntington's failure to anticipate actual Cold War outcomes raises serious questions about his model and demands an alternative approach to evaluating CMR.<sup>40</sup> Feaver's model, which is based on microeconomic theory about "principals" and "agents," holds that:

The civilian principal establishes a military agent to provide the security function for the state, but then must take pains to ensure that the military agent continues to do the civilian's bidding. Given the adverse selection and moral hazard problems endemic in any agency relationship, but particularly acute in the civil-military context, civilian oversight of the military is crucial. Fortunately, civilians have available a wide variety of oversight mechanisms, each involving a different degree of intrusiveness and therefore each posing a different set of costs on the actors.<sup>41</sup>

Feaver's principal-agent model has several advantages over Huntington's objective-subjective dichotomy. For one, it recognizes the power of formal and informal civilian control mechanisms over the military. Whereas Huntington dismissed "subjective control" mechanisms as a more primitive form of control effective only with respect to an "unprofessional" military, Feaver recognizes that they remain potent and relevant even in modern states with advanced, professional militaries firmly committed to democratic civilian oversight.

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<sup>39</sup> For example, Mehran Kamrava rejects Huntington's definition of "professionalization" as "complete subordination of the military command to civilian officials" in favor of "the introduction of modern military equipment, established procedures for recruitment and promotions, and advanced training." Mehran Kamrava, "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 1 (Spring 2000).

<sup>40</sup> Peter D. Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

Feaver's model places Huntington's notion of "professionalism" within the context of the interplay between civilian and military leaders. Huntington treated the military disengagement from politics as something easily identifiable and as a purely endogenous phenomenon. Feaver's principal-agent model, by contrast, is far more inclusive of the subtle forms of political interaction, and is mindful of the costs and benefits such interactions can have on either party.

## **B. DEMOCRATIC MODELS OF CMR**

The primary weakness of Feaver's model (and with CMR theories in general) is that it does not lend itself to empirical analysis. It is extremely difficult to detect, characterize, and quantify the types of CMR interactions described by the principal-agent model. Other CMR theorists, however, have developed models with metrics that make such analysis much easier. While most CMR theories attempt to explain how and why civilian political leaders and militaries interact as they do, empirical studies generally eschew such causal analysis, favoring instead an approach to analysis based principally on observation. In essence, the empirical work is the "what" to the theoretical work's "why."

### **1. Stepan's Military Prerogatives**

Alfred Stepan outlines two dimensions for assessing CMR: military "contestation," or the degree to which the military opposes the constraints on its power and influence imposed by civilian leaders; and military "prerogatives," which he defines as the "privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extra military areas within the state apparatus, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or civil society."<sup>42</sup> Stepan articulates his prerogatives in a clear, straight-forward manner, which makes them an ideal basis for empirical analysis. Whether or not the military enjoys a constitutionally-

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<sup>42</sup> Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics*, 93.

protected role in the politics of the state or the degree to which the military controls its own budget, to name just two, can reveal much about the size and scope of the military's role in a given state.

Stepan's work represents an improvement over both the Huntington and Feaver frameworks in terms of clarity and specificity. However, it remains premised on two normative assumptions: civilian control of the military is preferable to military dominance of the government and democratic civilian control is preferable to non-democratic control mechanisms. The question at the center of his model is not, "how do civilian leaders and militaries interact within a state?" but instead, "how should they interact within a democracy?"

## **2. Bruneau and Matei's Democratic Framework**

Bruneau and Matei largely build on Stepan's institutional approach, but broaden the discussion to include the concepts of military "effectiveness," or the ability of the security services to carry out their assigned missions and tasks, and "efficiency," which refers to their ability to perform these duties at an "optimum cost."<sup>43</sup> Their work differs from the others described here in that it does not offer an explanatory theory of CMR, but instead attempts to lay out a framework to help guide discussion on the subject. However, the framework presumes a certain threshold for democratic maturation that makes it difficult for analyzing non-democratic regimes.<sup>44</sup> For example, what Bruneau and Matei call "democratic civilian control" does not account for non-democratic control mechanisms, which include (but are not limited to): judicial and extra-judicial punishment for potentially disloyal officers; exploitation of inter-service rivalries to reward or punish particular individuals and organizations; and patronage networks designed to reward active and retired military personnel with lucrative private and public sector employment opportunities. Additionally, the "effectiveness" element presumes a mission set consistent with democratic principles. The intelligence agencies, secret

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<sup>43</sup> Bruneau, *Handbook of Civil-Military Relations*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Bruneau and Matei state that their framework is designed to improve analysis of "developing and consolidated democracies," as opposed to totalitarian or authoritarian ones. *Ibid.*, 26.

police, and militias charged with spying on citizens and disrupting or intimidating dissident groups may be extremely effective in carrying out their assigned missions, but the un-democratic nature of their work makes it difficult to apply the term “effectiveness” in the way that Bruneau and Matei intended.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. Problematic CMR-Democratization Convergence

Applying a CMR framework premised on democratic control of the armed forces to non-democratic regimes will invariably result in an incomplete and inaccurate understanding of the role of the armed forces within the state. This is especially true of so-called “hybrid regimes” that attempt to mimic democratic institutions and processes. These regimes may appear to employ democratic civilian control when in reality their authority derives principally from non-democratic sources.<sup>46</sup> The proliferation of such regimes in recent decades has yielded a vast sub-literature on regime typologies. Within the broad categories of totalitarian, authoritarian, and democratic states, scholars have identified countless sub-categories like “hybrid,” “partly free,” “competitive authoritarian,” and “illiberal democracies,” all of which attempt to describe not just who rules but how legitimacy is derived, how transitions are governed, whether and how political opposition elements can challenge for power, and a variety of additional characteristics.<sup>47</sup>

The mechanisms that help ensure civilian control of the military in these so-called hybrid regimes are not necessarily the same as those in democratic states even though they may share many of the same features such as elections, courts, and a civilian bureaucracy. In these states, democratic practices are often a veneer designed to slow rather than accelerate democratic reform. However, there is a temptation to assume that these states are transitioning democracies rather than entrenched autocracies hiding

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<sup>45</sup> Bruneau and Matei maintain that the three pillars of their framework—control, effectiveness, and efficiency—“must be assessed as interdependent parts of a whole in a *democratic context*” (emphasis added). *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> As will be discussed in the next chapter, this is essentially what happened in Iran during the 1990s. Most observers highlighted the regime’s democratic reform movement but failed to detect the growing power of the IRGC, which was largely made possible by Ayatollah Khamenei’s confidence in his power to contain the Guards through informal control methods.

<sup>47</sup> Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, 14.



behind a democratic façade. When these states fail to develop into mature, functioning democracies it is not because their reform efforts *failed*; rather, it is because they were never intended to promote democratic change in the first place. The criteria used to determine whether or not such reforms were successful should not derive from abstract or idealized notions of democracy, but should instead be based on what such policies were actually designed to achieve. For example, a state that holds parliamentary elections but prevents major opposition groups from contesting seats should not be considered a “flawed democracy” as though its leaders sought genuine democratic reform.

The same is true of efforts to maximize civilian control over the military. A civilian government may be able to increase its control of the military through ostensibly democratic means such as constitutional reform and legislative oversight (what Huntington would call “subjective control” and Stepan would call a reduction in military prerogatives), but if such methods are not complemented by broader democratic reforms, it may be inaccurate or misleading to describe such changes as an increase in democratic civilian control. In some cases, democratic reform reflects a genuine commitment to democratization while in others it is merely a fig leaf meant to legitimize the marginalization of the military and disguise the civilian-led government’s authoritarian tendencies or ulterior motives. The difficulty in assessing the intent behind any particular democratic reform effort means that CMR frameworks premised on democratic institutional controls are, at best, an incomplete guide for evaluating the relationship between the armed forces and the state. In Iran, Turkey, and Egypt, Islamist leaders have attempted to implement at least some military reforms under a banner of democratization—yet these governments’ commitment to democratization is questionable at best. Indeed, the banner of democratization can often be a false flag, as evidenced by the case of military reform in Iran. Although the mullahs initially stood with non-Islamist opponents of the Shah in pledging to democratize the force, they ultimately abandoned this pledge and instead imposed a rigid indoctrination program on the conventional force and re-assigned many national security responsibilities to the ideological IRGC.

Proponents of security sector reform (SSR) have demonstrated an awareness of these potential pitfalls and have called for a whole-of-government approach to CMR

reform. SSR advocates emphasize the importance of coupling military reform with other elements of the security apparatus including law enforcement, corrections, intelligence services, border management, customs, the judiciary, legislative bodies, and civil society groups.<sup>48</sup> The concept of SSR has gained significant traction in recent years, winning adherents in a variety of organizations, including the United Nations, U.S. State Department, and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). While these efforts are a positive development for democracy and human rights advocates, SSR remains at present a concept with far more utility for practitioners than for scholars. SSR lacks explanatory power; it is a prescription, not a diagnosis.

Moreover, the implication that democratization and civilian control of the military move in tandem is both inaccurate and misleading. The experiences of the Muslim Middle East over the last several decades have demonstrated that the reverse may in fact be more common. In post-revolutionary Iran and in AKP-run Turkey, civilian leaders have maximized their control over the military while weakening the state's democratic institutions. This is not to suggest that the process of democratization is irrelevant to studies of CMR. On the contrary, the presence or absence of democratic institutions is a vital part of whether and how civilian leaders attempt to reform CMR. However, it is impossible to assess CMR in Islamist states without understanding CMR trends in non-democracies.

### **C. CMR IN NON-DEMOCRACIES**

While efforts to understand democratic forms of CMR have yielded volumes of fine-grained analysis, the same cannot be said of non-democratic approaches to CMR. Scholars have generally refrained from evaluating CMR across the spectrum of non-democratic regimes, preferring instead to limit comparative studies to specific contexts, such as the juntas of Latin America or Southeast Asia. This imbalance in favor of democratic studies of CMR almost certainly owes to the democratization-CMR convergence. The field of CMR is flooded with books that emphasize change and

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<sup>48</sup> "The United Nations SSR Perspective," a magazine published by the Security Sector Reform Unit, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/ssr/ssr\\_perspective\\_2012.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/ssr/ssr_perspective_2012.pdf).

transition in CMR. The titles of such books almost invariably include words like “reform,” “transform,” “transition,” and “fixing.” In this frenzy to describe ideal CMR arrangements and anticipate the pitfalls of transition, detailed exploration of how CMR evolve in non-democracies gets lost.

Although detailed and comprehensive analyses of non-democratic CMR may be lacking, most analysts at least acknowledge the power of non-democratic control mechanisms. Samuel Finer notes that in “despotisms and autocracies of a totalitarian type...the military are subordinated to the civilians as much as or even more than in the liberal-democratic regimes.”<sup>49</sup> Huntington goes a step further by identifying some specific methods for non-democratic control:

In a totalitarian regime...the power of the military may be reduced by breaking the officer corps up into competing units, establishing party armies and special military forces (Waffen-SS and MVD), infiltrating the military hierarchy with independent chains of command (political commissars), and similar techniques. Terror, conspiracy, surveillance, and force are the means by which the civilians in such a state control their armed forces.<sup>50</sup>

Such techniques, which have often proven ruthlessly effective even if only for short durations, are not restricted to totalitarian regimes as Huntington implies. One can find similar approaches in other non-democratic regimes, including sultanistic regimes in the Middle East throughout the twentieth century. However, these approaches to controlling the military are most pronounced in ideological regimes, where civilian leaders seem to be least afraid of using harsh techniques to subdue the force.

### **1. CMR in Ideological Regimes**

Martin Seliger defines ideology as “Sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given

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<sup>49</sup> Finer, *Man on Horseback*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 82.

social order.”<sup>51</sup> The two elements captured by Seliger’s definition that most clearly distinguish ideological regimes from other patterns of rule are “[s]ets of ideas” and “organized social action.” The extent to which these characteristics prove mutually supportive can help explain why some ideologies endure for decades while others lose their ability to inspire political action within only a few short years. Social and political actions that reflect the values of a particular ideology are far more likely to succeed than those that seem driven by purely political considerations. Successful ideological mobilizations tend to demonstrate revolutionary aims focused not only on establishing political control over the machinery of the state but on extending influence over all aspects of social and cultural life.<sup>52</sup> This is most often accomplished through a disciplined political organization (such as a party) that tends to be both the exemplar of ideological values and the instrument through which they are imposed on the state. In extreme cases the distinction between the party and the state can disappear altogether as all instruments of the state—including the military—become members and defenders of the party.

Although Huntington placed ideology at the center of his theory of CMR, his treatment of the subject leaves much to be desired.<sup>53</sup> Huntington renders ideology the sole province of the civilian realm and suggests that the military is impermeable to its influence. By his definition all militaries have an “ethic” that is “concrete, permanent, and universal.”<sup>54</sup> Militaries cannot have a unique ideology of their own, nor can their values be affected by the dominant ideology of the state. Huntington’s notion of a universal interpretation of military professionalism does not, however, mirror reality. The Turkish military’s commitment to Kemalism, for example, has long superseded its commitment to the state’s elected civilian leaders; it is impossible to argue that the

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<sup>51</sup> Martin Seliger, *Ideology and Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977). 11. See also John Gerring, “Ideology: A Definitional Analysis,” *Political Research Quarterly* 50, No. 4, December 1997.

<sup>52</sup> For example, the Iraq-centered pan-Arabism championed by the Ba’ath Party after 1968 sought to highlight the country’s unique Mesopotamic history through education reform, the adoption of new folkloric traditions, and even state funding for archaeological excavations. Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Ba’thist Iraq, 1968–1989* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1991).

<sup>53</sup> Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 90.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

Turkish armed forces' understanding of "professionalism" has always been the same as, for instance, the American military's. In Iran, the Revolutionary Guards' internalization of *velayat-e faqih* has had a similar effect: the Guards have become the dominant force in politics and society in a manner that seems to preserve rather than challenge the clerical leadership and the ideology of the state.

**a. Indoctrination**

Indoctrination is a critical part of the legitimization strategy for ideological regimes. Soviet Russia brought indoctrination into primary schools, "instill[ing] in youth a sense of nationalism, militarism, and readiness for war...on a scale unprecedented in peacetime."<sup>55</sup> Communist leaders in North Vietnam and North Korea similarly made indoctrination in Marxist-Leninist ideology a core part of basic education; the latter using ideology to legitimize the use of child labor to offset the negative effects of the country's labor shortage.<sup>56</sup> Indoctrinating the military is often the most critical short-term goal as the military typically poses the most immediate and significant threat to the regime. Civilian leaders seek to force the military to accept the legitimacy of the civilians' right to rule as part of the new ideology of the state. This idea is central to Mao Tse-Tung's assertion that "Power grows out of the barrel of the gun. Our principle is that the party controls the gun and the gun shall never be allowed to command the party."<sup>57</sup> Huntington's definition of military "professionalism," with its emphasis on the distinctiveness and universality of the military ethic, fails to capture the essence of Mao's assertion. Rather than being an intrinsic element of the military ethos, Mao and others

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<sup>55</sup> Leon Goure, *The Military Indoctrination of Soviet Youth* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1973), 1.

<sup>56</sup> Gerard Tongas, "Indoctrination Replaces Education," *The China Quarterly*, No. 9 (January-March 1962), 70; Hyung-Chan Kim, "Ideology and Indoctrination in the Development of North Korean Education," *Asian Survey* 9, no. 11 (November 1969), 831-841.

<sup>57</sup> Eric Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 15-16.

viewed military subordination to the civilian government as inseparable part of the ideology of the state, and something that had to be taught to military leaders.<sup>58</sup>

**b. *Mass Purges***

Purging the military of potentially dissident leaders is common to all types of non-democratic regimes regardless of whether or not ideology plays a significant role. However, non-ideological regimes are generally less likely to embrace mass purges as a technique for asserting control over the military as such regimes often depend on relationships built on patronage and personal loyalty that can be threatened by large-scale purges. Ideological regimes, however, tend to harbor immense distrust of those who do not share their belief their system or share a deep-seated commitment to the dominant ideology of the state. It is often the case that instead of viewing the military as agnostic toward the ideology of the state, ideological regimes treat the military as either a counterrevolutionary threat or one infiltrated by hostile foreign powers. The most dramatic example of this was in Stalinist Russia, where nearly one million Red Army soldiers stood trial in military courts and 157,000 were sentenced to death during as part of the Great Purges of the 1930s.<sup>59</sup>

**c. *New Elite: Secret Police and Political-Ideological Agents***

Secret police and political-ideological agents are not unique to ideological regimes; they are common to authoritarian regimes of all stripes and predate the rise of Islamist governments in all three of the countries examined in this thesis. Nor are the methods that such organizations employ necessarily more or less brutal in ideological regimes—the SAVAK in Pahlavi’s Iran and Interior Ministry in Mubarak’s Egypt were both notorious for the harsh tactics they employed in suppressing internal dissent. Their lofty status owes partly to the fact that unlike the military, the internal security services’ leadership is “hidden from public view and has little if any chance of winning popular

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<sup>58</sup> As Eric Nordlinger writes, the common view in ideological regimes is that “The army is differentiated from the civilian sphere in terms of professional expertise but [must become] congruent with it in terms of a shared ideology.” *Ibid.*, 15–16.

<sup>59</sup> Robert W. Pringle, “Modernization of Terror: The Transformation of Stalin’s NKVD, 1934–1941,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* no. 1, 121.

support.”<sup>60</sup> Autocratic leaders tend to value this attribute regardless of the ideological leanings of the regime or its security personnel.

In regimes where members of the intelligence and security apparatus are fully indoctrinated in the dominant ideology of the state, the security services tend to acquire a vast array of ancillary responsibilities in addition to regular stability support and repression of domestic dissent. In the Soviet Union, for example, the NKVD evolved from a loosely organized association of thugs and strongmen in 1917 to the largest secret police service in world history within a span of ten years, to a highly effective organization tasked with most of the USSR’s most sensitive missions, including intelligence collection on the U.S. weapons systems, oversight of the Soviet nuclear program, monitoring and prosecuting suspected spies (including those within the Red Army), and management of up to nine percent of the country’s industrial production by the 1950s.<sup>61</sup> Members of these organizations are not, however, above reproach. Their suspicious governments have often made them the targets of investigation and purges. The NKVD itself endured two severe purges during a four-year span in the late 1930s.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, these security organizations are generally the prize pupils of ideological regimes and have been favored above the military and entrusted with the state’s highest priority missions.

## **2. CMR in Authoritarian and Sultanistic Regimes**

Unlike highly ideological regimes that thrive on mobilizing supporters around a particular, ideal vision of the state, authoritarian regimes are:

political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group

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<sup>60</sup> Robert Springborg, “Protest against a Hybrid State: Words without Meaning?” *Cairo Papers in Social Science* 29, no. 2-3 (Summer/Fall 2006), 13.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.<sup>63</sup>

Linz's definition for authoritarianism is supposed to offer a marked contrast with sultanism as defined by Max Weber. According to Weber, sultanism is a pattern of control that arises:

whenever traditional domination develops an administration and a military force which are purely personal instruments of the master...[Sultanism] is not, however, rationalized in impersonal terms, but consists only in the extreme development of the ruler's discretion.<sup>64</sup>

While the highly personalized nature of authority in a sultanistic regime is an important distinction, the notion that authoritarian regimes operate within generally "predictable" limits while sultanistic rulers exercise their authority in a more unpredictable and arbitrary manner is debatable. Indeed, the Arab monarchies that exemplify the personal rulership of the sultanistic regime tend to rule in extraordinarily predictable patterns—perhaps more so than the political leaders in the region whose authority derives, at least in theory, from non-traditional, non-familial factors. Furthermore, many regimes bear a strong resemblance to both types. Mubarak-era Egypt, for example, coupled the limited plurality of authoritarianism with the intensely personal exercise of authority and nepotism of sultanistic regimes.

For the purposes of this analysis, a firm distinction between authoritarianism and sultanism is not essential. What is important is a clear understanding of the features the two regimes types share in common. Specifically, neither sultanistic nor authoritarian regimes are strictly constrained by a dominant ideology. Sultanistic regimes are designed to protect and enhance the authority of an individual ruler without striving to effect any broader transformation of society. Authoritarian regimes are similarly structured in that their primary aim is to preserve stability rather than to pursue any utopian or

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<sup>63</sup> Juan Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain," in *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems*, ed. Erik Allard and Yrjo Littunen (Helsinki: Westermark Society, 1964), 255.

<sup>64</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Clause Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 232. See also Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 51–54.



transformational goals. Although authoritarian regimes might be influenced by general principles that Linz describes as “mentalities,” these do not comprise a concrete vision of the state and are generally incapable of mobilizing the population or influencing institutional design. According to Linz, mentalities are “difficult to diffuse to the masses, less susceptible to be used in education, less likely to come into conflict with religion or science and more difficult to use as a test of loyalty.”<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the logic of authority in both sultanistic and authoritarian regimes is far more transactional. Both types of rulers are forced to maintain the loyalty of subordinates through a mixture of patronage and coercion, often paving the way to cronyism. This is why it is more common for militaries in authoritarian and sultanistic regimes to dominate major industries and business sectors, benefit from exclusive government contracts, and acquire government employment after retirement than in ideological or totalitarian regimes.

#### **D. THE RELEVANCE OF CMR THEORY FOR ISLAMIST STATES**

The field of CMR provides a patchwork of ideas and concepts, each of which is useful for explaining some, but not all, interactions between the military and the state. Islamist states may be authoritarian, but in a way that is distinct from past patterns of authoritarianism. They are not totalitarian, though ideology plays a critical role in ensuring loyalty. They are not democratic, but democratic principles help Islamist leaders establish and maintain control of the military.

While no single theory can provide a comprehensive explanation of all the civil-military interactions in a state, Feaver’s principal-agent model is probably the most useful for this examination. As the three Islamist movements examined in this thesis have struggled to balance their efforts to establish control over the military against a need to expand or preserve their own legitimacy, their decisions are best understood in terms of risk and reward. From the military perspective, the absence of a firm base of civilian political support left all three militaries with no recourse for opposing Islamist rule except to challenge the civilian leadership itself—a risk that these militaries have generally considered too high to their own long-term interests. The reluctance of these three

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<sup>65</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 162–3.

militaries to openly oppose their Islamist civilian leaders owes less to a Huntingtonian sense of “professionalism” and more to a cognizance of their own political constraints. The Iranian military was never popular enough to challenge Khomeini even as the clerics began to feud with liberal reformers. the Turkish military’s failed “e-coup” in 2007 cost the generals precious political capital and prevented them from attempting another intervention even amidst highly controversial investigations left have placed many flag officers behind bars. And the decline in popular support for the Egyptian military that occurred over the course of the SCAF’s tenure as the country’s supreme political body has led to a tentative peace with Morsi’s government and the Muslim Brothers.

Of course, how the civilian and military actors perceive risk and opportunity and attempt to assert their authority is determined to a large degree by historical and institutional legacies, which is why it is vital to examine the pre-Islamist history of CMR in the region.

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### **III. PRE-ISLAMIST TRENDS IN MIDDLE EAST CMR**

#### **A. SULTANISM, AUTHORITARIANISM, AND THE LEGACY OF TRANSACTIONAL POLITICS**

The question that lies at the heart of this analysis is whether Islamism's rise portends a radical transformation for CMR in the Middle East or is merely the latest incarnation of the sultanistic and authoritarian trends that have characterized CMR for decades. As is usually the case with these sorts of questions, the truth probably lies somewhere in between. Islamist governments have been swept into power in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt in part because they derive their influence and legitimacy from sources that had abandoned their predecessors in each state. Yet Islamist governments have adopted many of the same non-democratic practices that were utilized by the sultanistic and authoritarian governments that preceded them, which suggests that Islamism does not represent a wholly new or distinct approach to government. To understand the CMR developments in Islamist states today, it is necessary to place them within the broader context of regional CMR practices of the past several decades. Comparative analyses of CMR in the Middle East have helped identify several key features and patterns of interaction that set the region apart from others around the world. Although many of the best assessments are starting to show their age, many of the trends and patterns identified here have echoes in the Islamist order of the present.

##### **1. Arab Sultanism and its Impact on CMR**

In *Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes*, Risa Brooks identifies several trends in Arab CMR interactions in the late twentieth century. These include an expansion of a non-military support base “by cultivating social, economic, and religious groups”; securing the loyalty of the military’s high command and officer corps with both corporate and individual benefits; appeasing privileged minority groups with appointments to key government posts; and weakening potential political challengers through “extensive monitoring and purges.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Brooks, *Political-Military Relations*, 19–20.

Although Brooks' analysis is restricted to Arab states and pre-dates the Arab Spring revolutions, Brooks' observations remain relevant for explaining CMR in Islamist states today for two reasons. First, the weaknesses and excesses of this system of rule provided Islamists with an opening. The corruption and cronyism characteristic of sultanistic and authoritarian regimes tends to generate popular resentment. Islamists in Iran, Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere have all managed to capitalize on this resentment and have come to power in part because of their promises to curb corruption—particularly that associated with the military. Second, many of the tactics and strategies adopted by Islamist rulers appear to be patterned—consciously or not—after the behavior of Arab autocrats. For example, there are great similarities between the military's economic might in Mubarak's Egypt and the IRGC's domination of the Iranian economy.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the Islamist-led purges of senior military leaders in Iran, Turkey, and to a lesser extent Egypt are hardly without precedent: since the 1950s, similar purges have taken place in Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Nasser-era Egypt.<sup>68</sup>

Of course, the decline of sultanism in the Middle East long predates the rise of Islamism. The collapse of sultanistic regimes in Iran, Tunisia, and Egypt likely would have occurred with or without Islamist organizations. Even the monarchies have begun to show signs of strain: most have made concessions to democratic institutions and processes in recent years. For example, in Jordan's King Abdullah II agreed to transfer new powers to the country's democratically-elected parliament in January 2013, including the right to select its own prime minister. Whether the move reflects a genuine commitment to democratic reform or is merely a token gesture meant to appease political opponents may be beside the point: what is significant is that the King has become sensitive to popular pressure to reform—a clear indication of the declining power of sultanism.

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<sup>67</sup> See Yezid Sayigh, "Above the State: The Officer's Republic in Egypt," *Carnegie Papers* (August 2012).

<sup>68</sup> Brooks, *Political-Military Relations*, 35–36.

## 2. Patterns of Interaction: Democracies, Inclusionary States, Exclusionary States, and Monarchies

While sultanism was the predominant form of government in the late-twentieth century Middle East, this should not suggest that CMR were identical in every state across the region. On the contrary, the states of the region have demonstrated significant variations in their approaches CMR—a reflection of several different social, economic, and political development factors. In a 2000 comparative analysis, Mehran Kamrava identifies four distinct “patterns of interaction” that characterize the relationship between civilian rulers and their instruments of coercion in the region: democratic states in which the military is assigned a substantial role in domestic politics through a constitutional or other lawful mandate (Turkey), “inclusionary states” that rely on ideological militias to compete with the regular military and stifle its political ambitions (Iran), “exclusionary states” that have transformed once-ideological military officers into “civilian autocrats” (Mubarak-era Egypt), and small monarchies that rely on foreign forces to provide security (the GCC states).<sup>69</sup>

Kamrava rightfully describes these as ideal types, acknowledging that civil-military interactions in many states often bear a strong resemblance to two or more categories. However, it is not so much the limitations inherent in such categorization that pose the greatest challenge to his framework; rather, it is the tremendous political changes that have swept through the region in the thirteen years since he first published the article. Indeed, many of the countries discussed in the piece no longer seem to fit the descriptions of the categories they were assigned. The pattern of Islamist CMR that has emerged in Iran, Turkey, and arguably in post-Mubarak Egypt seems to be an amalgamation of the democratic and inclusionary typologies. In all three countries, regular national elections and elements of democratic civilian control over the armed forces seem to fit Kamrava’s description of the democratic pattern. The immense privileges afforded to the military are not simply symptoms of a corrupt sultanistic state; rather, they are often institutionalized procedures that have been legitimized by law,

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<sup>69</sup> Mehran Kamrava, “Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East,” *Political Science Quarterly* no. 1 (Spring 2000), 68.

code, and custom. Yet the inclusionary pattern also seems to hold. Rumors of deep Islamist penetration of the National Police in Turkey (as well as the legal system) suggest that the country's civilian leaders may be trying to use their Islamist allies as a bulwark against the military in a manner consistent with the inclusionary model. On the other hand, the influence of the IRGC in Iran has become so pronounced that it would not be a stretch to describe Iran as an exclusionary state. Post-Mubarak Egypt, meanwhile, can no longer be appropriately considered an exclusionary state; however, to call Egypt a democratic or inclusionary regime seems equally unsatisfying.

### **3. Military Dominance: Ruling but Not Governing**

Writing in 2007, Steven Cook found parallels in the logic of authority in Turkey, Algeria, and Egypt. While all three had democratic elements, none could rightfully be considered a democratic regime. In Turkey and Algeria, the military had long prevented the rise of would-be sultanistic rulers, while in Egypt, Mubarak's control over the military appeared to be less than sultanistic. In all three, Cook described the military as "ruling but not governing," an arrangement whereby the military is able to maximize its political influence while avoiding the day-to-day business of government. Cook describes all three as "military-dominated regime," a term meant to distinguish the Middle Eastern militaries from the generals who led "military dictatorships" in Latin America and Asia.<sup>70</sup> While the latter witnessed their legitimacy erode because of their inability to govern effectively, the "military-dominated regimes" of the Middle East faced no such pressure as the responsibility to govern still fell to civilian leaders who were unable or unwilling to rein in the military. In other words, the Algerian, Turkish, and Egyptian militaries enjoyed all of the benefits associated with running a state without shouldering any of the responsibility.

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<sup>70</sup> Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing*.

#### 4. The Role of pre-Islamist Political Ideologies

The absence of a unifying or mobilizing ideology in many Middle Eastern regimes hindered many autocratic rulers' ability to effect change, which almost certainly contributed to their collapse in authority. As Linz writes,

Such regimes pay a price for their lack of ideology in our sense of the term. It limits their capacity to mobilize people to create the psychological and emotional identification of the masses with the regime. The absence of an articulate ideology, of a sense of ultimate meaning, of long-run purposes, of an a priori model of ideal society reduces the attractiveness of such regimes to those for whom ideas, meaning, and values are central.<sup>71</sup>

Yet when analyzing politics of the Middle East during the twentieth century, one cannot ignore the role that ideologies like Arab socialism, Kemalism, and Ba'athism had on institutional development. This apparent contradiction can be partly resolved by recalling that sultanism and authoritarianism, like all social and political science concepts, refer to ideal types, and that reality has a tendency to poke holes in such constructs. A more complete explanation is that ideology tended to ebb and flow over the course of the twentieth century. The failure of Middle Eastern political leaders to fully commit to a particular ideology and remake the institutions in accordingly led many ideological regimes to descend back into authoritarian or sultanistic patterns of control. This tendency helps explain why despite the periodic emergence of radical ideologies, no Middle Eastern state evolved into a true totalitarian regime. According to Linz, political mobilizations based on ideology often play a role "at some points in [authoritarian regime] development," without culminating in a true, one-party state.<sup>72</sup>

Prior to the emergence of Islamism, the most successful efforts to bring the military into this mobilizational effort were likely in Kemalist Turkey and Ba'athist Iraq. From the time they are cadets at the military academy, Turkish military officers are continually told that, "Your ideology will be [Ataturk's] principles, your aim will be the

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<sup>71</sup> Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, 164.

<sup>72</sup> Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime," 255.



discretion he showed us. You will follow unswervingly in Ataturk's footsteps."<sup>73</sup> The six principles (or "arrows") of Kemalism—Republicanism, Populism, Secularism, Revolutionism, Nationalism, and Statism—form a core part of the military officer's education in Turkey. Of course, it is not difficult to understand why Kemalism resonates with Turkish officers, who are also often told that they "constitute the unshakable foundation of the state."<sup>74</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter V, this belief fundamentally shapes the military's view of civilian leaders and has been used to justify its periodic interventions into politics.

Saddam Hussein's program to indoctrinate the military in Ba'athist ideology, on the other hand, was far more coercive and reflected a fear and hostility towards the military borne out of the failure of the Ba'athists' first attempt to seize power as well as Saddam Hussein's own personal experience with the military.<sup>75</sup> Saddam pushed forward a program to transform the military into *al jaysh al-'aqidi* ("ideological army"), by establishing a Party Military Bureau and Directorate of Political Guidance to spread the ideology of pan-Arabism, indoctrinate members with the principles of the July 17th Revolution, and supervise the political activities of military officers.<sup>76</sup> Although Hussein's later efforts to weaken the Ba'ath Party and exert more direct and personal control over the armed forces eroded the ideological power of Ba'athism and brought Iraqi CMR closer to a sultanistic pattern of control, the first ten to twenty years of CMR in Saddam Hussein's Iraq serve as a good example of how ideology can be used to restrict the military's autonomy so severely that its leaders are incapable of perceiving the military's interests as distinct from those of the ruling regime.

Ideological regimes that do not attempt to indoctrinate the military are far likelier to descend into transactional patterns of interaction and control. Egypt never attempted to impose an indoctrination program on its armed forces comparable to those of Ba'athist

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<sup>73</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel: An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces* (New York: Tauris, 1991), 3.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> See Ahmed Hashim, "Saddam Husayn and Civil-Military Relations in Iraq: The Quest for Legitimacy and Power," *Middle East Journal* 57, no. 1 (Winter 2003).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Iraq or Kemalist Turkey. As Hazem Kandil writes, this is because the “Nasser had no political revolutionary party to keep the military in check. His chief revolutionary party organization was none other than the military itself.”<sup>77</sup> Nasser did not make a serious effort to indoctrinate the military in his vision of Arab socialism until more than a decade after the 1952 revolution. Although he established a 30,000 member Vanguard Organization (VO) to carry out this mission in the mid-1960s, the VO was led by security officers with little knowledge of how to inspire ideological thinking. The VO neglected its education mission and became instead “a giant security edifice centered on surveillance and political control.”<sup>78</sup> The absence of ideological control over the military in Egypt set in motion a pattern of control whereby the country’s civilian leaders—from Nasser through Mubarak—relied solely on instruments of patronage and coercion. The security apparatus charged with monitoring the military was thus focused only on identifying possible subversives rather than ensuring ideological cohesion.

## **B. ISLAMISM AS IDEOLOGY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CMR**

The point of such comparisons is not to suggest that all Islamist movements are as oppressive as Soviet Russia or Maoist China. Rather, it is to demonstrate the correlation between ideological cohesion, organizational strength, and a capacity to shape institutional development. Islamists in Iran and Turkey have already begun to realize the potential of this capacity with respect to CMR, transforming civil-military relations in a manner comparable to that of other highly effective ideological mobilizations. Iran and Turkey have both undertaken massive purges of the armed forces and have turned to trusted agents—whose loyalty owes more to ideological adherence than to patronage—within the police and security establishment to keep watch over the military. Indeed, the IRGC may be the closest relative to the NKVD today as the Guards’ mandate to protect the revolution against foreign and domestic threats has been interpreted as broadly as

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<sup>77</sup> Hazem Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt’s Road to Revolt* (New York: Verso, 2012), 42.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

possible to give the organization authority over internal and external security responsibilities, intelligence collection, and management of vital (and profitable) state industries.

The organizational strength of Islamist movements in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt appears to be greater than that of the Middle Eastern ideologies that preceded them, such as Ba'athism and Arab socialism. This is partly due to the prominent role of religion, or more accurately religious identity, in social life in the Muslim Middle East. Religious identity enables Islamist organizations to gather support at the grassroots level—it is a bottom-up movement rather than an elite phenomenon. Yet Islamists should not be considered the poor and disenfranchised; Islamist movements often win the support of those in the middle- and upper-middle classes, including professionals and business leaders. Rather than seeking to attain political power first, Islamist organizations often set their sights lower, investing in schools, businesses, and hospitals. This enables Islamist organizations to amass significant resources in terms of both human capital and material support long before they ever attempt to challenge for political power.

The organizational strength of Islamist movements also reflects the legacies of persecution and political isolation that each has faced at the hands of hostile governments. In Iran, Turkey, and Egypt, political repression not only failed to destroy the Islamist organization, but inspired greater cohesion among its members. In Turkey and Egypt, repression compelled members to refine their beliefs, which in turn made it easier for the organizations to inspire and mobilize supporters. This tendency is most pronounced in Egypt where more than 80 years of political persecution forced the Brotherhood to develop an elaborate recruiting and indoctrination program to ensure the commitment of its members. Yet one can find evidence of this in Iran and Turkey as well. Khomeini was arrested by the Shah's leaders and spent several years in exile, and the Shah's secret police (SAVAK) were notorious for their persecution of dissident clerics and efforts to control religious institutions during the 1970s.<sup>79</sup> In Turkey, the military has

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<sup>79</sup> A particularly noteworthy incident was the arrest, torture, and death of Ayatollah Muhammad Reza Sa'idi at the hands of SAVAK in 1970. See James A. Bill, "Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran," *Middle East Journal* 36, No. (Winter 1982).

a long history of undermining Islamist political organizations and Erdogan himself famously spent four months in prison in 1997 for allegedly inciting religious hatred by reading a poem that included religious imagery. Fethullah Gülen has lived in self-imposed exile since 1999, when a government investigation into his movement intensified.<sup>80</sup>

In all three cases, political repression has led Islamists to adopt a veil of secrecy. How each movement is organized and makes decisions remain largely unknown. In Turkey and Egypt, accusations of secret Islamist infiltration of the military and security services have become common and religiosity seems to be a prerequisite for appointment to most government posts. In essence, ideological and organizational strength have become reciprocating factors.

Although the institutional legacies of Sultanism and military dominance continue to loom large in Iran, Turkey, and particularly in Egypt, the mobilizational power of Islamism has re-shaped many aspects of CMR and state development in general. Whether Islamism is able to endure for decades or follows a path similar to that of Iraqi Ba'athism or Arab Socialism likely depends on its ability to articulate a clear vision for the state and mobilize not only its supporters but the broader population as well.

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<sup>80</sup> "Turkish Investigation into Islamic Sect Expanded," *BBC News*, July 21, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/374649.stm>.

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## IV. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN IRAN

### A. INTRODUCTION

By the standards of traditional CMR models like Huntington's, the Islamic Republic of Iran would appear to be exemplary case on the basis of regime stability. Iran has not experienced frequent, overt military interventions into politics in the same way as its neighbors like Pakistan and Turkey. In the three-plus decades since the Islamic Revolution toppled the government of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Islamic Republic's leaders appear to have brought the armed forces to heel, and Iranian scholars maintain that the probability of a coup attempt, let alone a successful one, is "low to vanishing."<sup>81</sup> While the regime's control of the armed forces may be effective, its control mechanisms are not the democratic ones prescribed by normative CMR models. Instead, civilian control of the armed forces in Iran derives primarily from the regime's ability to exploit divisions within elements of the coercive services—divisions that in many ways reflect the intense factionalization of the regime itself.

The most important example of this is the rapidly expanding influence of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) over the past two decades. Although the IRGC remains a smaller force in terms of total manpower than the conventional military forces, it has assumed formal control of critical national security programs like Iran's ballistic missile force and allegedly its nascent nuclear capability.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the IRGC has become more politicized as current and former IRGC officers have increased their control over the Iranian economy and secured a growing share of elected and appointed political positions. Yet the IRGC's growing power does not appear to threaten regime stability; rather, it remains intimately connected to the legitimacy of the Supreme Leader. The IRGC's rise has been made possible by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali

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<sup>81</sup> Cann and Danopoulos, "Military and Politics in a Theocratic State."

<sup>82</sup> Elliot Hen-Tov and Nathan Gonzalez, "The Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran: Praetorianism 2.0" *The Washington Quarterly* 34 no. 1 (Winter 2011), 50.

Khamenei and his allies in order to weaken political opponents within the ruling elite as well as real and perceived threats from political activists and the conventional military forces.

The co-dependent relationship between the IRGC and the Supreme Leader is the defining feature of CMR in Iran today. In order to understand how this unique relationship came about, it is necessary to review the critical developments in the evolution of Iranian CMR, dating back to the creation of a unified military force under the Shah.

## **B. CMR IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY IRAN**

The collapse of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's government in 1979 came as major surprise to most in the West. Just one year before he fled the country, U.S. President Jimmy Carter famously toasted the Shah's leadership and trumpeted Iran as an "island of stability" in the Middle East. Carter's comments reflected the wisdom of the time; the Shah's political opponents appeared too factionalized to pose any significant threat to the monarchy and the military appeared extremely loyal and disciplined. At the time of the Revolution, the Shah's military was the fifth largest in the world and the most capable in the region.<sup>83</sup> But for all of its alleged strength, the Shah's military was insecure, fractious, and deeply unpopular with the Iranian public, which tended to view the armed forces as an instrument of the Shah rather than the guarantor of national security.<sup>84</sup>

To some extent, skepticism of the Shah and his military was a reflection of deeply-rooted historical issues. Before the Pahlavi Dynasty, Iran never had a "unified military establishment under national control."<sup>85</sup> For centuries, Iran's military forces had been undisciplined units marginally organized at the tribal level. At the dawn of the twentieth century, European commanders began to assume responsibility for organizing

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<sup>83</sup> Mohsen Milani, *The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 186.

<sup>84</sup> Sepehr Zabih, *The Iranian Military in Revolution and War* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 110; Nader Entessar, "The Military and Politics," in *Post-Revolutionary Iran*, ed. Hooshang Amirahmadi and Manoucher Parvin (London: Westview Press, 1988), 59.

<sup>85</sup> Ahmed Hashim, "Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic of Iran," in *Iran, Iraq, and the Arab Gulf States*, ed. Joseph Kechichian (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 33–34.

and training these units at the behest of the crown, ostensibly to improve protection for the regime. Although some units undoubtedly became more technically skilled, overall these foreign-trained forces developed a reputation for placing “the interests of their own respective countries above those of the Iranian monarch.”<sup>86</sup> One of these units, the Russian-trained Cossack Brigade, launched a coup against the Qajar dynasty in 1921—the only successful coup in modern Iranian history. Five years after the coup, one of the Cossack’s senior commanders, Colonel Reza Khan, installed himself as king. Reza Shah made the military a central part of his regime, consolidating the armed forces into a singular national entity. The Allied invasion of Iran in 1941 exposed the weakness of this military and forced the Shah to abdicate the throne. However, when Reza Shah’s son Mohammed Reza assumed power, he followed in his father’s footsteps, making the military his top priority.

At the end of the war, Mohammed Reza Shah aligned himself closely with Washington, managing to secure substantial American assistance in order to rebuild and strengthen a unified, national military force. The U.S.-backed overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953 furthered popular perceptions that the Shah and his military were more interested in protecting the interests of their powerful foreign supporters than the Iranian people, a notion that Mossadegh himself tried to exploit during his trial.<sup>87</sup>

The more proximate causes of the Shah’s downfall relate to his own mismanagement of the military, particularly the senior officer corps. The Shah made himself indispensable, ensuring that even routine military matters were routed through him. He adopted a “divide and rule” approach designed to disrupt horizontal communications and encourage rivalry among key factions and leaders. In short, his

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>87</sup> At his trial in December 1953, Mossadegh defended his decision to nationalize the oil industry, saying “With God’s blessing and the will of the people, I fought this savage and dreadful system of international espionage and colonialism ... I am well aware that my fate must serve as an example in the future throughout the Middle East in breaking the chains of slavery and servitude to colonial interests.” Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh Biography, <http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography/>; Hashim, “Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic,” 35.



leadership style “rewarded sycophancy and submission and punished independence of mind, constructive criticism, and truthfulness.”<sup>88</sup> The military was ill-prepared to handle a crisis as complex as the 1978 uprising.

As the anti-Shah coalition gained momentum and demonstrations grew violent, senior military officers did little to protect the regime and the lower-ranking personnel who comprised the bulk of the force sympathized with and in some cases openly declared their support for the opposition.<sup>89</sup> Within weeks of the Shah’s decision to flee the country—a decision he thought would last only as long as it took the military to regain control of the country and return him to power—the military declared its neutrality, allowing the opposition to dispatch with the Shah’s hastily-formed interim government and install its own Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) to draft a new constitution for an Islamic Republic.<sup>90</sup>

### C. CMR UNDER KHOMEINI

The uprising that culminated with the Shah’s ouster in January 1979 was not an exclusively religious phenomenon. On the contrary, the anti-Shah coalition represented an array of interests, ranging from secular democratic reformers, members of the intelligentsia, Marxists, organized labor, and the Mojahedin.<sup>91</sup> As “no single group had the resources or the power to dethrone the Pahlavis,” the Revolution’s leaders kept their intentions vague to avoid alienating their allies.<sup>92</sup> The most influential and adept of these opposition leaders was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whose shrewd political maneuvering catapulted him to the forefront of the movement despite remaining outside the country until after the Shah’s departure.

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<sup>88</sup> Milani, *Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution*, 199.

<sup>89</sup> Hashim, “Civil-Military Relations in the Islamic Republic,” 36.

<sup>90</sup> Milani, *Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution*, 230.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

## 1. Consolidating Political Control

Once their initial goal had been achieved, the disparate groups that comprised the opposition began competing with one another for control of the country's political fate, primarily through the 30-member PRG.<sup>93</sup> Infighting left the PRG "hamstrung" and unable to exert much influence over a country in "chaos."<sup>94</sup> Khomeini and his allies capitalized on this opportunity, establishing control over ad hoc neighborhood committees (*komites*) that had emerged during the crisis. Through the *komites*, the clerics created new parastate institutions like the Revolutionary Courts that would ultimately be used to help purge the regular military's officer corps and a 4,000-member paramilitary force that would eventually become the IRGC.<sup>95</sup> These efforts, which were designed to restore law and order whilst solidifying the clerics' authority were enhanced and legitimized by a wave of Shia populism borne out of popular frustration with the Shah's decadence and the impotence of the PRG. Popular support for the clerics enabled Khomeini's allies to dominate the first critical election of the post-Revolution period: the competition for seats in the 77-member Assembly of Experts (AOE).<sup>96</sup>

Following the elections, the AOE's first task was to review a draft constitution developed by the PRG; however, the AOE essentially re-wrote the document around the principle of *velayat-e faqih*, or rule by the supreme jurist, maximizing the political power of the clerical elite in general and Khomeini in particular.<sup>97</sup> The final version, approved in December 1979, made the Supreme Leader the most powerful figure in the Republic, granting him control over the armed forces (including the conventional military and the nascent IRGC), the right to declare war, the authority to approve or reject presidential and legislative candidates, and even dismiss a seated president. The constitution also established a 12-member Council of Guardians comprised of six Islamic jurists appointed by the Supreme Leader and six legal scholars appointed by the legislature charged with

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 249–260.

<sup>96</sup> The *ulama*, or religious scholars, won more than fifty of the 73 seats contested during the elections; Ibid., 263.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 264.

determining whether legislation passed by the legislature was compliant with both the Constitution and Islamic law and given the authority to approve or reject all candidates for elected office.

*a. Khomeini's Vision of the State*

If secular reformers failed to anticipate the radical changes favored by the clerical elite, it is not because Khomeini was coy about his intentions. On the contrary, Khomeini had outlined his vision of an Islamist state in a series of lectures that were published and disseminated in Iran almost a decade prior to the revolution. In the lectures, Khomeini argues forcefully that because Islam is a “comprehensive religion” that governs every aspect of human life, a government for an Islamic society should be based exclusively on Islamic teachings.<sup>98</sup> Khomeini derides Iran’s monarchy and constitutional republics as un-Islamic and, insisting that “Islamic government does not correspond to any of the existing forms of governments,” calls for a “planning body” of Islamic scholars to replace the legislature because “the legislative power and competence to establish laws belongs exclusively to God Almighty.”<sup>99</sup> Khomeini also argues that the effort to establish an Islamic Republic should be carried out openly by the clerical elite: “If we want to form an Islamic government, then we must do it in our cloaks and turbans; otherwise we commit an offense against decency and justice.”<sup>100</sup>

Khomeini’s view of the military follows a similar logic. While he makes no secret of his contempt for the Shah’s military, describing “the apparel of a soldier” as “incompatible with true manliness and justice,”<sup>101</sup> he retains high esteem for the military profession, noting that “the leaders of our religion were all soldiers, commanders, and warriors.”<sup>102</sup> This attitude was reflected in the reforms imposed on the Iranian armed forces post-1979. Long before the revolution, Khomeini’s speeches foreshadowed the decimation of the force most closely affiliated with the *ancien régime* and the elevation

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<sup>98</sup> Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 28.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

of new, more righteous force unburdened by the past and created specifically to serve the Islamist revolution. Yet these pre-revolutionary statements did not amount to a comprehensive plan for reform. Rather, the changes to the structure and composition of the military that followed the revolution were all implemented in an ad hoc fashion as Iran's new political elite, headed by the Ayatollah, began to gain a sense its newfound powers and responded to perceived threats.

## **2. Regular Military: Purge and Preserve**

The extraordinary powers bestowed on Khomeini and the clerics were anathema to many within the opposition who had sought a more democratic revolution. Nevertheless, the transition was kept on track primarily because the would-be democratic reformers considered a Khomeini-led theocratic government preferable to military rule or the return of the Shah. The pervasive distrust of the military, which persisted long after the Shah's departure, prompted some within the opposition to suggest that the military's declaration of neutrality was merely a "tactical deception" designed to buy the armed forces time to regroup and undermine the post-Shah government.<sup>103</sup> Many even called for the wholesale dissolution of the military.<sup>104</sup>

Khomeini, however, remained cognizant of the need for a force capable of responding to internal and external threats and sought to preserve the military while ensuring its loyalty to the new regime. To do this, Khomeini purged the officer corps of all individuals considered a threat to regime and introduced new methods of indoctrination designed to "Islamize" the force.<sup>105</sup> While the initial phase of purges that took place during the summer of 1979 was aimed only at a "handful of top military personnel" closely associated with the Shah's regime, subsequent phases during the early 1980s would ultimately reduce the officer corps by 40 to 60 percent.<sup>106</sup> To ensure loyalty of the remaining officers, the regime established the Ideological-Political Directorate

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<sup>103</sup> Zabih, *Iranian Military in Revolution and War*, 115.

<sup>104</sup> Entessar, "Military and Politics," 62.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 62–3; Hashim, "Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic," 37–8.

<sup>106</sup> Entessar, "Military and Politics," 62; Cann and Danopoulos, "Military and Politics in a Theocratic State," 275.

(IPD) within every branch of military service. The IPD, which was made up of mid-level clerics with ties to the administration, was tasked with monitoring officers, ensuring their complicity with the tenants of Islam, and providing “advice” on promotions that invariably favored officers whose families were connected to the clerical elite.<sup>107</sup>

### **3. War with Iraq and the “Three-Tiered” Force**

The outbreak of war with Iraq in 1980 became the first major challenge for the new regime and a slimmed-down military force. The early months did not bode well for CMR as the clerics feuded with the Republic’s first president, Abol Hasan Bani Sadr, over how to manage the conflict. While Bani Sadr attempted to assert his own authority over the regular forces and promote them as the country’s primary fighting force, the clerical elite pushed back, seeking to maintain firm control over national security instruments and decision-making processes. Khomeini and the clerics wanted the IRGC, which had already ballooned from 5,000 men in 1979 to 50,000 in 1981 (and would expand further to 150,000 troops by 1983) to lead the war effort.<sup>108</sup> The clerics, who believed that Bani Sadr harbored “Bonapartist tendencies” and was conspiring to overthrow the clerical elite, had Bani Sadr impeached by mid-1981.<sup>109</sup>

To prosecute the war, Tehran adopted a “three-tiered structure” that allowed the regular forces, IRGC, and a new all-volunteer militia force known as the *Basij* to prosecute the war in a complementary but non-integrated fashion.<sup>110</sup> Despite some initial successes, the structure collapsed by the end of the conflict as hostility between the services grew and military defeats became more frequent. The ineffectiveness of this approach during the Iraq war prompted a series of major military reforms that, when coupled with the death of Khomeini in 1989, would completely transformed Iranian CMR.

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<sup>107</sup> Hashim, “Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic,” 38; Entessar, “Military and Politics,” 62.

<sup>108</sup> Hashim, “Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic,” 38–9; Entessar, “Military and Politics,” 66.

<sup>109</sup> Hashim, “Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic,” 39.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

## D. CMR UNDER KHAMENEI

### 1. Post-war Reforms

The post-war military reform effort was led by Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who would also serve as president from 1989 through 1997. Rafsanjani made streamlining the chain of command and reducing friction between the IRGC and regular military his top priorities. Rafsanjani created the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics to exercise administrative control over both military services and established a Supreme Council for National Security staffed by all major civilian government leaders in order to streamline national security decision-making.<sup>111</sup>

For the IRGC, these were not mere bureaucratic changes. The Guards initially considered Rafsanjani's reforms an existential threat capable of eviscerating their "identity as a separate entity from the regular army."<sup>112</sup> Their fears were not without merit; much of the blame for combat failures of the Iraq war was levied at the IRGC and its aggressive commanders.<sup>113</sup> Some scholars suggest that Rafsanjani did in fact seek to dissolve the IRGC and merge them into the regular forces and that it was Khomeini who intervened to keep the Guards as a distinct force.<sup>114</sup> Others have rejected this hypothesis, and have pointed to Rafsanjani's public praise for the IRGC in the immediate aftermath of the war.<sup>115</sup> Whatever the case, the Guards retained their independence and semi-autonomy, though their "revolutionary" identity began to change in significant ways. Rafsanjani and others stressed the importance of professionalizing the force, and in the early 1990s the IRGC adopted many of the trappings of a conventional military force, such as uniforms and a formal rank structure.<sup>116</sup> The rank structure and uniforms accompanied other efforts to satisfy the IRGC's corporate interests, including a new emphasis by the civilian leadership on advanced military technology. The IRGC was

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<sup>111</sup> Anthony Cordesman, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition: Conventional Threats and Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), 34.

<sup>112</sup> Hashim, "Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic," 40.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>114</sup> Cordesman, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition* 32.

<sup>115</sup> Hashim, "Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic," 40.

<sup>116</sup> Cordesman, *Iran's Military Forces in Transition*, 37.

placed at the forefront of the country's nascent defense manufacturing industry—a major source of national pride for a country eager to reduce its reliance on foreign weapons.<sup>117</sup>

Despite the civilian leadership's emphasis on professionalizing the Guards, it was during this period that the IRGC began an “institutional transformation into a network of political and economic actors, rather than a purely military institution.”<sup>118</sup> The causes underlying this transformation are numerous. To some extent, the problem originates with the Guards' nebulous constitutional mandate to guard “the principle of government by the supreme jurist and the principle of jihad.”<sup>119</sup> The principal cause, however, was the change in civilian leadership that followed Khomeini's death.

## **2. Khamenei's Power and the Rise of the IRGC**

It is important here to note that in spite of the extensive formal powers enjoyed by the Supreme Leader under the constitution, informal procedures and relationships and a consensus-driven approach to decision-making have been the hallmarks of Iranian political leadership. As opposed to dictators in other authoritarian or totalitarian regimes whose edicts go largely unchallenged, the Supreme Leader has historically served as an “arbiter” negotiating compromises between various factions within the governing elite.<sup>120</sup> Governing Iran has been described as a complicated “game” in which the rules are known only to a few key players and the Supreme Leader serves as referee.<sup>121</sup> Many within the regime wield little formal power but exercise tremendous authority of decision-making processes by the virtue of their relationships and negotiating skill.

As a charismatic figure with extensive religious qualifications who led the Revolution, Khomeini's authority was rarely questioned or challenged. Khamenei, by contrast, entered office from a much weaker position. Unlike his predecessor, Khamenei has never been regarded as a charismatic figure. Khamenei's religious credentials are less

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<sup>117</sup> Hashim, “Civil Military Relations in the Islamic Republic,” 42.

<sup>118</sup> Hen-Tov and Gonzalez, “Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran,” 50.

<sup>119</sup> Alie Alfoneh, “The Revolutionary Guards' Role in Iranian Politics,” *Middle East Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (2008), 15.

<sup>120</sup> David E. Thaler, et. al, *Mullahs, Guards, and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2010), iv.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

impressive than Khomeini's and those many of his contemporaries. To compensate for these shortcomings, Khamenei has relied on his relationship with the IRGC and elevated their status within the state.<sup>122</sup> Over the last two decades, Khamenei has helped active and retired IRGC officers secure influential political positions and consolidate their control over the economy in order to maintain their loyalty and keep rival political leaders and groups at bay. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the IRGC's loyalty to the Khamenei stems solely from patronage. On the contrary, the IRGC appears to recognize that *velayat-e faqih* and the legitimacy of clerical rule are as vital to their own existence as they are to the Supreme Leader.

**a. IRGC's Economic Privileges**

The IRGC's economic might, for example, is not merely an example of thinly-veiled cronyism, but is in fact codified by the Iranian Constitution. Article 147 stipulates that "the government must utilize the personnel and technical equipment of the army in relief operations as well as for educational and productive ends." During Rafsanjani's presidency, this was interpreted broadly to allow the Guards to consolidate control over the country's major industries, including construction, hydrocarbons, and telecommunications.<sup>123</sup> The IRGC presently exercises direct or indirect control over more than one hundred companies and accounts approximately 35 percent of Iran's GDP.<sup>124</sup>

**b. IRGC's Political Privileges**

The IRGC's increased role in domestic politics has been even more dramatic. During the 1997 presidential election, several IRGC leaders, including IRGC Commander Mohsen Rezai openly campaign against Mohammad Khatami and the liberal reformers. Khatami's pledges to liberalize the Iranian economy, expand democratization,

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<sup>122</sup> Jerrold Green, Frederic Wherey, Charles Wolf, *Understanding Iran* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009), 7.

<sup>123</sup> Hen-Tov and Gonzalez, "Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran," 50.

<sup>124</sup> Hen-Tov and Gonzalez, 52; Ali Alfoneh, "How Intertwined Are the Revolutionary Guards in Iran's Economy?" AEI Outlook Series 3, October 2007; Kim Murphy, "Iran's \$12-billion enforcers," *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 2007, <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/aug/26/world/fg-guards26>.



and improve diplomatic relations with the West were perceived as a threat to the spirit of the Revolution as interpreted by certain IRGC commanders. Rezai even threatened that the Guards would prevent liberals from entering the Majlis if elected.<sup>125</sup> Although Khamenei initially attempted to position himself between the reformers and the hardliners and even dismissed Rezai at Khatami's request, he too came to view the reformers as a threat, and relied on a variety of legal tools to weaken Khatami's administration.<sup>126</sup> At the same time, Khamenei permitted or encouraged the IRGC to adopt increasingly hard-line tactics against the reformers. For example, during student protests in 1999, 24 IRGC commanders publicly threatened to launch a coup if Khatami failed to restore order.<sup>127</sup>

After Khatami's election, Khamenei also began to appoint veteran IRGC officers to political posts throughout the government. While these began with direct appointments to various positions inside the Office of the Supreme Leader, they quickly expanded to the Majles. While virtually no IRGC members served in parliament during the 1980s and 1990s, approximately one-third of parliamentarians have been IRGC veterans since the mid-2000s.<sup>128</sup> Likewise, cabinet ministries have been dominated by the IRGC in recent years.<sup>129</sup> The most noteworthy example of this crossover into politics for former IRGC officers is of course the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005. The protests that erupted in the wake of his controversial 2009 reelection were put down by the IRGC with substantial assistance from the Basij.

### **3. Impact of Privileges on Military Readiness**

The effect that the IRGC's encroachment into economic and political realms has had on its combat effectiveness is debatable. Iran has not faced a sustained, conventional

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<sup>125</sup> Mehdi Moslem, "The State and Factional Politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran," in Eric Hooglund, ed., *Twenty Years of Islamic Revolution: Political and Social Transition in Iran Since 1979* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), p. 32.

<sup>126</sup> Hen-Tov and Gonzalez, "Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran," 50.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Eisenstadt, "Iran's Islamic Revolution: Lessons for the Arab Spring of 2011?" NDU Strategic Forum 267 (April 2011), 8.

<sup>128</sup> Hen-Tov and Gonzalez, "Militarization of Post-Khomeini Iran," 51.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

military conflict with an external adversary since the Iran-Iraq War, so the results of Rafsanjani's reform efforts remain inconclusive. Likewise the IRGC's interoperability with the regular forces has not yet been tested, even though the services participate in regular combined exercises.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, the IRGC's evolution into a "network [or] brotherhood, in which personalities and connections mattered far more than structures," means that assessing its ability to conduct conventional military operations is arguably the least less important part of understanding its role in contemporary Iran.<sup>131</sup>

#### **E. ZENITH OF THE ISLAMIST STATE?**

Although Iran has not experienced any significant threat of a military-led revolution or coup d'état since 1979, the IRGC's dominance of electoral politics has become so pronounced that in some ways it resembles the military juntas of Latin America during the 1970s more than the transitioning democracy it appeared to be during the reformist Khatami era. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that the IRGC is interested in undermining the Supreme Leader's authority as the Guards' enthusiasm for upholding clerical rule. Rather than a silent military coup, the depth of the IRGC's commitment to the mullah's Islamist ideology may actually represent the zenith of the

While it is too early to determine whether other Islamist states will follow Iran's path to such militaristic and undemocratic extremes, the elements of the Iranian regime's approach to CMR—the purges of senior officers, the expansion of both democratic and non-democratic control mechanisms, and the strengthening of an alternative coercive element—all have their echoes in the AKP-run Turkey and arguably Egypt under the Brotherhood. Whether Turkish and Egyptian Islamists continue in Iran's footsteps may depend on their ability to impose an Islamist ideology on the military and secure the kind of endogenous control that the IRGC seems to demonstrate.

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<sup>130</sup> Anthony Cordesman, "The Conventional Military," United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/conventional-military>.

<sup>131</sup> Ali Ansari, "The Revolution Will be Mercantilized," The National Interest, February 11, 2010, <http://nationalinterest.org/article/the-revolution-will-be-mercantilized-3332>.

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## V. CMR IN TURKEY

### A. INTRODUCTION

Political Islam is hardly a new phenomenon in Turkey; religion has been a critical part of state-building since the days of the Ottoman Empire. Even as Kemalism became the country's secular religion after the founding of the modern Turkish Republic, Islamist ideas and political organizations never disappeared completely. Still, the AKP's dominance of Turkish politics over the last decade represents something new. Not only is the AKP's electoral success unprecedented in democratic Turkey, but the party has managed to reduce the political influence of the Turkish armed forces to arguably its lowest level since the nineteenth century. While many inside and outside of Turkey have celebrated the weakening of the military's political influence as evidence of democratic consolidation, Turkish Islamists' commitment to democratic reform has been uneven at best. Turkish Islamists have demonstrated an authoritarian streak and a tendency toward conspiratorial politics.

Turkey's Islamists are, of course, distinct from Iran's in several ways. Whereas Ayatollah Khomeini insisted that the government be led by those in "cloaks and turbans," Turkey's Islamists prefer the suit and tie—a preference that reflects substance as much as style. Publicly, AKP members have consistently stressed their commitment to secularism and the party's policy priorities have largely sidestepped issues of religiosity, a marked contrast with the fusion of politics and religion in Iran. There is little evidence to suggest that any prominent Islamist in Turkey envisions a state comparable to Iran's theocratic form of government. However, from an organizational perspective, Turkey's Islamists have demonstrated many of the same characteristics as Iran's clerics. In both countries, Islamists have used democratic tools, such as constitutional reform and the court system, to increase institutional control over the military while simultaneously subverting democratic norms to suppress dissent. Moreover the political leadership in both countries has relied on trusted agents (i.e., those who have been educated or indoctrinated by Islamist thought) to fill key government and security roles.

Indeed, the military-led “deep state” that dominated Turkish politics for decades appears to have been replaced not by effective democratic institutions and the rule of law but by a new, Islamist-oriented “deep state.” Yet there is also a growing rift within Turkey’s Islamist movement. Prime Minister Erdogan, who has been the face of the movement for the past decade, may be trying to distance himself from the influential Gülen movement, which may in fact form the backbone of the AKP and the Turkish government. How this rivalry plays out over the next few years will have major implications for the future of both Islamism and CMR in Turkey.

## **B. CMR IN TURKEY BEFORE 2002**

### **1. Islam and the Emergence of a Military-Bureaucratic Elite in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic**

The struggle between the military and AKP for control of the state over the last decade is in a very real sense the latest chapter in a competition that has been ongoing for five centuries. In the early sixteenth century, Ottoman rulers perceived the Islamic heterodoxy as a potentially severe threat as Islamic sects—many of which were led by charismatic leaders capable of undermining the authority of the Porte—seemed capable of fracturing the empire.<sup>132</sup> To minimize this threat, Ottoman rulers co-opted religion by declaring the sultan the head of a new Ottoman Caliphate and bringing Islamic scholars into the business of state-building. This new religious elite, called ulema, would come to exercise vast control over the empire’s administrative, legal, and educational systems over the course of three centuries beginning in 1517.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close and the Porte began to consider the expanding empires of Europe a growing threat, sultans Selim III and Mahmud II implemented a series of reforms that ultimately devastated the ulema. While the reforms were designed to increase revenue generation and military modernization, they elevated two new classes to power: bureaucrats educated in secular schools and a new military force trained and influenced by Western Europeans. The rise of these groups laid the

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<sup>132</sup> Serif Mardin, “Religion and Secularism in Turkey,” *The Modern Middle East: A Reader* ed. Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991, 348–52.

foundation for a top-down approach to modernization, centered on a military-bureaucratic elite that would become a foundational principle of the Turkish Republic. They did not, however, displace the ulema overnight.<sup>133</sup> On the contrary, the Ottoman Empire's administration remained contentiously divided until its collapse.

By the mid-nineteenth century the empire had entered into a period of irreversible decline, and two distinct and contradictory narratives about the root causes of the empire's troubles emerged from the Ottomans' bifurcated elite structure. According to the ulema, "the reason for the decline was religious: the Ottomans had neglected their duties as Muslims, and therefore they had lost the power they commanded when their faith had been strong."<sup>134</sup> For secular bureaucrats and military leaders, the problem was just the opposite: the inefficiencies, corruption, and ineptitude of the religious elite were slowly poisoning the organs of the state and precluding the emergence of a modern, European-style government.

This religious-secular divide would dominate Ottoman political thought until the empire's collapse and exert a major influence on Mustafa Kemal, who considered Islam an impediment to Turkish nationalism and state formation:

Turks were a great nation even before they adopted Islam. This religion did not help the Arabs, Iranians, Egyptians and others to unite with Turks to form a nation. Conversely, it weakened the Turks' national relations; it numbed Turkish national feelings and enthusiasm.<sup>135</sup>

Ataturk's vision of the Turkish state was based not on the principles of Islam, but instead on the "six arrows" of Kemalism, which were codified in Article 2 of the 1924 Constitution.<sup>136</sup> Ataturk considered the Turkish military Kemalism's natural ally and its officer corps the "vanguard of a new Enlightenment"<sup>137</sup> Not only had the military already been heavily influenced by secular values by virtue of its exposure to Western thought

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<sup>133</sup> Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 30.

<sup>134</sup> Mardin, "Religion and Secularism in Turkey," 351.

<sup>135</sup> Ataturk Society of America, [http://www.ataturksociety.org/speech\\_details.asp?id=80](http://www.ataturksociety.org/speech_details.asp?id=80).

<sup>136</sup> For additional information on the principles of Kemalism (Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Secularism, Statism, and Revolutionism), see Jung and Dietrich, *Turkey at the Crossroads*, 75–78.

<sup>137</sup> See Danek, *Changes in Civil-Military Relations in Turkey*.

and training, but the very structure of the force—namely the conscription, education, and indoctrination of young men from different parts of the country and with diverse backgrounds—could be used to help forge the new Turkish identity Atatürk considered vital to state formation.<sup>138</sup> In this sense, the military was not only the protector of the new Turkish Republic, but a vehicle for expanding the reach and influence of Kemalism. Although Atatürk prohibited military officers from holding political office while in uniform, the government was dominated by military veterans for the first three decades of the Republic.<sup>139</sup> Between 1923 and 1950, the political party founded by Atatürk, the CHP, enjoyed single-party rule in Turkey. The CHP was a “creature of the military establishment and its civilian allies”; its existence reflected a continuation of the top-down approach to modernization typical of the Ottoman period.<sup>140</sup> The transition to multiparty politics in 1946, however, unleashed new forces on the Turkish political machine: the middle classes, urban poor, the rural population, and religious conservatives. These groups comprised the base of the new Democratic Party (DP), whose leader Adnan Menderes became the country’s first democratically-elected prime minister in 1950.<sup>141</sup> Menderes’ relationship with the military was rough from the start, and he responded to repeated coup rumors by purging the military of many top officers.<sup>142</sup> His ten-year rule came to a disastrous end with the 1960 military coup, which preceded his execution a year later.<sup>143</sup> While some have pointed to the authoritarian tendencies of Menderes and the DP as the primary cause of military intervention, most

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<sup>138</sup> Kamrava, “Military Professionalism and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East,” 73.

<sup>139</sup> Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics*, Adelphi Paper 337 (New York: Oxford Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>140</sup> Cook, *Ruling but not Governing*, 99.

<sup>141</sup> Muge Aknur, *Democratic Consolidation in Turkey: State, Political Parties, Civil Society, Civil-Military Relations, Socio-Economic Developments, EU, Rise of Political Islam and Separatist Kurdish Nationalism*, Boca Raton: Universal Publishers, 2012, 208–9.

<sup>142</sup> “Turkey’s Army: At Ease,” *The Economist*, August 6, 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Menderes’ execution remains a source of controversy today. Prime Minister Erdoğan frequently invokes his name in order to justify efforts to curb the military’s political influence. *Ibid.*

scholars are generally dismissive of this argument and insist that the military relied on “trumped-up charges” to justify an intervention that was about little more than protecting the armed forces’ interests.<sup>144</sup>

## 2. Military Dominance of the State: 1960–2002

The 1960 coup was a watershed in modern Turkish history as it reaffirmed the military’s dominant position within the state and established a pattern for future interventions. The quick restoration of democratic civilian rule less than eighteen months after the removal of Menderes helped normalize the coup, enabling the military to credibly claim that it sought not to maximize its own interests but instead to preserve the secular Kemalist system. The Turkish armed forces thus redefined professionalism, inverting the civilian and military roles as typically understood by proponents of democratic CMR. By the Turkish model, “professionalism is not perceived as antithetical to its continued significance in domestic politics,” but refers instead to “an esprit de corps among soldiers and officers, the acquisition of sophisticated weaponry, effective fighting capability, and continued interference in civilian political affairs.”<sup>145</sup> This sensibility was reinforced both institutionally and culturally, elevating military influence beyond the previous heights reached under Ataturk.

The institutionalization of military dominance began with the 1960 constitution and the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Directive. The latter made explicit what the military had previously assumed implicitly, namely that its primary duty was to “protect the Turkish homeland and the Republic, by arms when necessary, against internal and external threats” and to protect and preserve the Turkish homeland and the Turkish Republic as defined in the constitution.”<sup>146</sup> This principle became manifest with the constitutionally-mandated National Security Council (MGK). While formally an advisory

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<sup>144</sup> For a defense of the military’s 1960 coup, see Aknur, *Democratic Consolidation in Turkey*, 208–210. For more critical interpretations of the military’s actions, see Cook, *Ruling but not Governing*, “Turkey’s Army: At Ease,” *The Economist*; Akarcesme, *Military of Civilian Supremacy in Turkey?* 26.

<sup>145</sup> Kamrava, “Military Professionalism and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East,” 73.

<sup>146</sup> Gareth Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play: Military-JDP Relations,” in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti* ed. M. Hakan Yavuz (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 188.



body to the prime minister on issues of defense and national security, in actuality the MGK became the mechanism by which senior military leaders voiced their concerns and priorities to civilian leaders and served as the real locus of power in Turkey from 1961 until 2002. The 1983 Law on the MGK formally expanded the body's purview by redefining "national security" to include "protection of the constitutional order of the state, its national existence, integrity and all political, social, cultural, and economic interests of the state in the international field."<sup>147</sup> Although the MGK was and remains headed by the Turkish president—which ostensibly places the body under civilian control—in actuality, the president has been selected by the military. Between 1923 and 1989 every president but one, the DP's Celal Bayar from 1950–1960, had been selected among a group of retired generals and the three presidents appointed between 1989 and 2007 were staunch Kemalists who did little to rein in the military. The MGK enabled the military to preserve and expand its autonomy. Issues like pay, promotions, and procurement, for example, were handled by the generals with little-to-no civilian oversight. Likewise, the military's management of its own expansive court system and schools for educating officers enabled the armed forces to operate inside an autonomous bubble removed from the rest of society.<sup>148</sup> In the economic realm, the Mutual Assistance Agency of the Army (OYAK) has ballooned from a pension fund into one of the country's largest business conglomerates—one afforded considerable government benefits.<sup>149</sup>

The military's institutional prerogatives were strengthened by its cultural influence. The armed forces have long been the most highly regarded institution in the state—a reflection of a highly successful myth-making campaign. The military's influence over the media and education system has played a key role in promoting a popular view of the military as the state's supreme institution. To this end, the military has often inflated the threat posed by foreign powers and organizations, including the Soviet Union, Iran's Islamic Republic, Iraq, and the PKK, to help justify its prerogatives.

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<sup>147</sup> Aknur, "Impact of Civil-Military Relations on Democratic Consolidation in Turkey," 216.

<sup>148</sup> Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads*, 96.

<sup>149</sup> Aknur, "Impact of Civil-Military Relations on Democratic Consolidation in Turkey," 221.

Likewise, the military has also emphasized the moral superiority of its members, suggesting that those who serve are in a sense the most Turkish members of society. The phrase “every Turk is born a soldier” is a common one, taught in both military and non-military schools and repeated in political discourse.<sup>150</sup>

While the military has long been the dominant force in Turkish politics, it has never enjoyed a total monopoly on power or social influence. Autonomous and semi-autonomous actors have always been present within politics, the economy, and civil society. Indeed, the military has long relied on non-military allies among the political elite to preserve its lofty station. This dependency slowly developed into a vulnerability with each political intervention. Although the military’s public approval rating never cratered, each coup alienated a key political ally. In 1960 it was the peasant classes that had supported Menderes and the DP; in 1970, left-wing revolutionary groups; in 1980, right-wing ultranationalists; and in 1997 the intelligentsia and Islamists. By 2002, the military had become politically isolated and its only devoted supporters were ultra-secularists whose national popularity had been waning for decades.<sup>151</sup>

The military’s association with “deep state” controversies also contributed to its decline. The origins, members, and aims of Turkey’s “deep state” remain controversial and shrouded in mystery, but they are generally traceable to the “stay-behind forces” allegedly organized by the CIA and British Secret Intelligence Service during the 1950s to repel a Soviet invasion.<sup>152</sup> While organized initially as a resistance force trained to perform “espionage, sabotage, and assassination missions,” Turkey’s “deep state” grew into a large underground network connecting military officers, the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), the TNP, right-wing ultranationalist groups and politicians, journalists, and organized crime. Among other crimes, the “deep state” has been accused of stoking domestic unrest—particularly the extreme political violence of the 1970s—in

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<sup>150</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the Turkish military-nation myth, see Ayse Gul Altinay, *The Myth of the Military Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 13.

<sup>151</sup> Ersel Aydin, “Turkey under the AKP: Civil-Military Relations Transformed,” *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (January 2012), 104.

<sup>152</sup> H. Akin Unver, “Turkey’s Deep-State and the Ergenekon Conundrum,” *Middle East Institute Policy Brief* 23 (April 2009).

order to justify military intervention into state politics and other authoritarian practices. Public awareness and outrage over the “deep state” peaked in the 1990s when “extra-judicial killings, massacres, and village evacuations became commonplace,” particularly as the state widened its conflict with the PKK.<sup>153</sup> Perhaps more significantly, a fatal car accident in 1996 involving the deputy commander of the TNP, the former leader of the ultranationalist Grey Wolves criminal organization (who was on Interpol’s most wanted list), and a prominent Kurdish parliamentarian and his wife became a national scandal that all but proved the existence of such an organization.

As public confidence in state institutions dropped, new power structures emerged. Some of these came from the economic sphere as new businesses and business associations began to flourish as a result of the economic liberalization schemes launched under Turgut Ozal during the 1980s and 1990s. Another emerged from civil society groups where an interest in modernizing Islamic values and ideas first took root. Beginning in the 1970s, conservative Islamic intellectuals began developing a new ideology that fused Islam with Turkish nationalism as a counter to radical leftist ideologies. Their ideas were couched in the language of revivalism: they sought to restore Islam to the forefront of Turkish politics and society as it had been during the days of the Ottoman Caliphate.<sup>154</sup> Ironically, the MGK played a major role in the spread of this new, neo-Ottoman ideology. The ban on leftist groups following the 1980 coup left a “political vacuum that was gradually filled by religious discourse.”<sup>155</sup> The ideas spread through intellectual circles, schools, and civil society organizations; its adherents included businessmen, center-right politicians, and, at least initially, some senior military officers. One of the leading voices from this group was Necmettin Erbakan, who headed multiple Islamist parties between the 1970s and 1990s, including the Welfare Party—the forerunner to the AKP. Although the military banned multiple incarnations of their political parties (including Erbakan’s Welfare Party after the 1997 coup), Islamist ideas had already begun to demonstrate a higher degree of flexibility, durability, and

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>154</sup> Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads*, 121.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 121.

pragmatism than had other ideologies promoted as alternatives to Kemalism throughout the latter decades of the twentieth century. In this light, the military's distrust of Islamism was not without merit. As the first decade of AKP rule in Turkey has demonstrated, Islamism has become the most serious challenge to the military-bureaucratic order in more than a century.

### **C. CMR IN TURKEY SINCE 2002**

Since the AKP came to power in the 2002, two major power struggles have played out concurrently in Turkey: a civil-military competition for control of the state and a competition for control of the Islamist movement. While the civil-military struggle has yielded extraordinary gains for the civilian government and garnered much press attention over the last several years, the latter may prove more consequential for the long-term future of Turkish democracy. Paradoxically, the intra-Islamist struggle may ultimately also have a greater impact on the long-term future of CMR in Turkey. Depending on how this struggle plays out, intra-Islamist tensions could provide an opening for the military to reassert itself politically, or conversely, pave the way for deeper reforms that reduce the strength and prestige of the military in a manner similar to Iran's conventional forces.

#### **1. Islamists and Generals**

During the early to mid-2000s, the most potent weapon the AKP had in its arsenal against the military was the EU. Although the EU accession process was initiated long before the AKP came to power, the AKP promoted reform with unprecedented zeal as it legitimized the AKP's effort to weaken the military's grip on the state by coupling it with a politically popular objective that secularists could embrace. The EU had been openly critical of military influence over Turkish politics for years, citing undue control over the bureaucracy, judiciary, media, and executive branch in a series of progress reports issued in the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>156</sup> The reports provided specific recommendations for increasing democratic control over the military, including revisions to the MGK and the

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<sup>156</sup> European Commission, *2000 Regular Report from the Commission of Turkey's Progress Towards Accession*, [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key\\_documents\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/key_documents_en.htm).

Armed Forces Internal Service Law. Many of these recommendations have already been implemented through legislation and executive decree: the Turkish parliament approved reform packages in 2003 and 2004 that inserted a secretary general at head of the MGK, helped transform the council into a “genuinely advisory body,” and reduced the jurisdiction of military courts.<sup>157</sup> The military itself was initially supportive of reform, as “most within the military accepted the identification of Europe with modernization.”<sup>158</sup> However, as Erdogan began to make it clear that his government was interested in reform even without membership assurances from the EU, the military grew skeptical of the reform process and wary of the AKP.<sup>159</sup>

This skepticism was exacerbated by the AKP’s willingness to challenge the military’s leadership role in fields that were not necessarily identified by the EU as areas for reform. Prior to 2007, these efforts were somewhat restrained and halting. As Gareth Jenkins writes, the AKP engaged “in a shadow play of symbols and oblique rhetoric in which the [party] would subtly probe the boundaries of Kemalist orthodoxy only to withdraw again if it provoked a reaction from the military.”<sup>160</sup> For example, in 2003 the AKP introduced a plan to reform the country’s education system partly through the expansion of Islamic imam-hatip schools, setting off a power struggle with the military. The military, which had historically exerted tremendous influence over the education system and its curriculum, argued that education was a national security priority and therefore within its purview. Undeterred by the military’s public pressure, the AKP-led parliament passed the legislation; however, when President Ahmet Necdet Sezer threatened to veto, the AKP backed down. Nevertheless, the episode signaled the AKP’s confidence and willingness to test the limits of the military’s jurisdiction in the non-security realm—an opening salvo in the battle for cultural influence.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ahmet T. Kuru, “The Rise and Fall of Military Tutelage in Turkey: Fears of Islamism, Kurdism, and Communism,” *Insight Turkey* 14, No. 2 (Spring 2012), 47.

<sup>158</sup> Zucconi, “Impact of the EU Connection,” 28; see also Danek, *Changes in Civil-Military Relations in Turkey*, 39–41.

<sup>159</sup> Danek, *Changes in Civil-Military Relations in Turkey*, 43.

<sup>160</sup> Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play”, 198–201.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–201.

The Islamist-military competition became far more intense and sensational in 2007, beginning with the AKP's announcement that Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul would be the party's candidate for president. Although the Turkish presidency is a largely ceremonial post, the military had for decades grown accustomed to selecting the president and balked at the prospect of an Islamist filling the role. In response, the General Staff posted a thinly veiled threat to the AKP on its website in an incident that has come to be described as an "e-coup." The General Staff's response was condemned by Western diplomats, as both the EU and United States urged the military to show restraint and respect the democratic process.<sup>162</sup> Undeterred by the military's threat, the AKP called for early elections which it won handily, paving the way for the Gul's confirmation.

2007 also marked the beginning of the state's controversial investigation into the "deep state" known as Ergenekon. The roots of the investigation stretch back to the murder of a secular judge who had ruled against a schoolteacher who had been denied a promotion because of her insistence on wearing a traditional Islamic headscarf. While the murderer was initially accused of being a supporter of the AKP who had been inspired by Islamist criticism of the court's decision, Turkish police allegedly discovered evidence connecting the murderer to a secretive ultranationalist organization.<sup>163</sup> The police alleged that the group had elaborate plans to conduct assassinations nationwide in order to provoke public unrest and open the door to an overthrow of the AKP-led government. In the nearly six years since the investigation began, police have arrested more than three hundred individuals from the military, intelligence services, media, and academia. International opinion on the case has transformed from cautiously supportive to disdainful as the claims made by the prosecutor have become increasingly paranoid. Such claims include the allegation that Turkey's MIT is under "complete control" of the CIA and that the mafia is run by the Pentagon.<sup>164</sup> In Turkey, however, opinion on the case

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<sup>162</sup> "EU warns Turkish Army over Vote," *BBC News*, April 28, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6602661.stm>.

<sup>163</sup> Philip Shishkin, "Blood and Faith: In Turkey, a Judge's Murder Puts Religion in Spotlight," *Wall Street Journal*, March 30, 2007.

<sup>164</sup> Dezter Filkins, "The Deep State," *The New Yorker*, March 12, 2012.

seems to remain fairly divided. While the trial has plenty of domestic critics, it has also retained a fair share of supporters. This is due in part to the Susurluk incident and long-standing fears of shadow state, but also because of the changes in the media landscape. Because secularists no longer enjoy a monopoly on Turkish media, the Ergenekon case has become a “litmus test for the press,” dividing media outlets into two camps: those who support the AKP and the Islamists on one side and those who support the military and secularists on the other.<sup>165</sup>

Ergenekon is just one of several investigations into the activities of purportedly mutinous military officers. The most publicized of these has been the so-called “Sledgehammer” investigation, named after a 2003 war game at First Army headquarters in Istanbul. At the trial’s conclusion in September 2012, 330 officers were convicted and sentenced for up to twenty years in prison, including several flag officers. Like Ergenekon, observers have raised serious doubts about the evidence in the trial, suggesting that the prosecution has been based more on political concerns than actual wrongdoing.<sup>166</sup>

In addition to these convictions, premature retirements—voluntary and otherwise—have left the military bereft of senior commanders. In July 2011, the military’s chief of staff and service chiefs all resigned in protest over a disagreement with Erdogan over staff promotions. A similar incident occurred in January 2013, when Fleet Commander Admiral Nurset Guner, who was widely reported to be the leading candidate to become Navy chief in August, suddenly announced his retirement. In total, the government has placed more than half of all Navy admirals and one in ten generals in jail since 2007—a situation that is almost certainly having a negative effect on military readiness.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Kuru, “Rise and Fall of Military Tutelage,” 51.

<sup>166</sup> Halil M. Karaveli, “What the Sledgehammer Sentences Mean,” *Turkey Analyst* 5 no. 18, September 26, 2012.

<sup>167</sup> “Turkey and its Army: Erdogan and his Generals,” *The Economist*, February 2, 2013.

## 2. Battle for Control of Turkey's Islamist Movement

Islamism in Turkish politics is a far more decentralized phenomenon than in Iran or Egypt. Whereas Iran's Islamic Republic was dominated by the cult of Khomeinism and Egypt's ruling Freedom and Justice Party is little more than the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, the AKP has no singular Islamist organization, philosophy, or ideology behind it. In this sense Erdogan's insistence that the AKP is a "conservative Muslim" party rather than an Islamist one is more than just shrewd politics—it reflects the idea that the party remains untethered by the trappings of an Islamist organization. The idea of a truly independent AKP has come under intense scrutiny in recent years by the increasingly public conflict between Erdogan and Turkey's most influential cleric, Fethullah Gülen.

Of the Islamic scholars who began promoting Turkey's Islamic revivalism in the 1970s, Gülen is undeniably the most prominent. Today he heads a global movement with millions of followers in more than one hundred countries. His adherents—who prefer the term "followers" to "members"—liken the group to a "civic society" organization and emphasize the voluntary nature of their connections within the network. The movement's website emphasizes secular values such as "sympathy for the fellow human, compassion, and altruism."<sup>168</sup> Publicly, the group maintains that education remains its primary mission, as it has been since the organization's inception. Gülenists operate more than one thousand schools worldwide including several dozen charter schools in the United States, where students of all grade levels receive a secular education with a heavy emphasis on math and science.<sup>169</sup>

Gülen has declared support for democracy, scientific education, tolerance toward non-Muslims, and is adamantly opposed to violence. Unlike Khomeini, Gülen publicly opposes the imposition of *Shari'a* and has criticized the governments of Iran and Saudi

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<sup>168</sup>Gülen Inspired Schools, <http://gulenschools.com/gulen-movement.html>.

<sup>169</sup> Suzy Hansen, "The Global Imam," *The New Republic*, November 10, 2010, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/world/magazine/79062/global-turkey-imam-fethullah-gulen>.



Arabia for imposing Islamic law on the state.<sup>170</sup> Gülen even broke with popular opinion in Turkey by condemning the Gaza flotilla runners aboard the Mavi Marmara after the Israeli forces stormed the vessel and killed nine Turkish activists.<sup>171</sup>

In spite of all of this, Gülen and his movement remain the source of tremendous intrigue and controversy. The conservative U.S. think-tank *Middle East Forum*, for example, argues that Gülen's "rhetoric of tolerance is only skin-deep" and that the movement's true aim is "to govern every aspect of life in [Turkey]."<sup>172</sup> Others have suggested that the Gülen movement is the new "deep state," and that it aims to become—if it has not yet already—a shadow government controlling democratically-elected civilian leaders as puppets.<sup>173</sup> While such claims are almost certainly exaggerated and might be rightly derided as "Islamophobic," the notion that the group's power may have serious implications for the future of Turkish democracy should not be considered a controversial claim.<sup>174</sup>

Although he has lived in the United States since 1999, Gülen's network continues to exert enormous influence in Turkish politics and society today. In addition to the network of schools and universities, his followers control the country's biggest Islamic bank, a major business conglomerate called the Kaynak Holding Group, and one of the country's largest media consortiums.

Such a diverse portfolio might be dismissed as little more than a negative consequence of excessive liberalization if it were not for the inroads the group has allegedly made into the government.<sup>175</sup> According to multiple sources, Gülenist

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<sup>170</sup> Bulent Aras and Omer Caha, "Fethullah Gülen and his Liberal 'Turkish Islam' Movement," in *Revolutionaries and Reformers: Contemporary Islamist Movements in the Middle East* ed. by Barry Rubin (New York: SUNY Press, 2003), 143.

<sup>171</sup> Hansen, "The Global Imam."

<sup>172</sup> Rachel Sharon-Krespin, "Fethullah Gülen's Grand Ambition: Turkey's Islamist Danger," *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2009), 66.

<sup>173</sup> Justin Vela, "Turkey; Has Gülen Movement Replaced Deep State?" *EurasiaNet.org*, December 29, 2011, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/64769>.

<sup>174</sup> Michael Shank, "Islamophobia Network Targets Top Performing American Schools," *Huffington Post*, September 26, 2011, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-shank/islamophobia-network-targets-top-performing-american-schools\\_b\\_975946.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-shank/islamophobia-network-targets-top-performing-american-schools_b_975946.html).

<sup>175</sup> Vela, "Turkey; Has Gülen Movement Replaced Deep State?"

penetration of the state is most pronounced inside the TNP, where some estimate that the organization's members constitute up to 80 percent of the force.<sup>176</sup> U.S. diplomats have raised concerns about Gülenists' alleged infiltration of the TNP as well as reports that the police have increasingly been used to intimidate critics of the AKP and the Gülen movement.<sup>177</sup> The government may also be interested in expanding the TNP's capabilities as Ankara recently agreed to purchase 15 advanced Bell helicopters from the United States for \$75 million.<sup>178</sup>

Two individuals who have attempted to shed light on the relationship between the group and the TNP, journalist Ahmet Sik and former TNP commander Hanefi Avcı, have been arrested and put in jail. Sik, who was arrested just prior to the release of a book on the Gülenist takeover of the TNP called *The Imam's Army*, was charged as a member of Ergenekon. Turkish observers have called this charge "absurd," as Sik had for years been an outspoken critic of the military and a proponent of democratic reform.<sup>179</sup> In addition to Sik and Avcı, the police have actively pursued other critics of the Gülen movement and the AKP, particularly journalists in the non-Islamist media who also happen to be business rivals of Gülen allies. Indeed, secularists and liberals in the media seem to have supplanted the military as the Gülenists' primary target. In 2012, Turkey imprisoned 76 journalists—more than any other country in the world. The Committee to Protect Journalists has released a number of scathing reports on Turkey's media crisis, accusing the government of waging "one of the world's biggest crackdowns on press freedom in recent history."<sup>180</sup> Gülenist-owned media outlets, however, have not only been spared from this crackdown, but have attempted to cast doubt on those who criticize the

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<sup>176</sup> Jurgen Gottschlich, "Arrested Journalist's Book Claims Turkish Police Infiltrated by Islamic Movement," *Der Spiegel*, April 6, 2011.

<sup>177</sup> Dan Bilefsky and Sebnem Arsu, "Turkey Feels Sway of Elusive Cleric," *New York Times*, April 24, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/25/world/middleeast/turkey-feels-sway-of-fethullah-gulen-a-reclusive-cleric.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/25/world/middleeast/turkey-feels-sway-of-fethullah-gulen-a-reclusive-cleric.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

<sup>178</sup> Bob Cox, "Turkish National Police Buying 15 Bell 429 Helicopters," *Dallas Star-Telegram*, March 12, 2012, <http://www.star-telegram.com/2012/03/12/3804360/turkish-national-police-buying.html>.

<sup>179</sup> Jenna Krajeski, "'000KITAP': The Book that is Scandalizing Istanbul," *New Yorker*, December 1, 2011, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/books/2011/12/000kitap-ahmet-sik.html>.

<sup>180</sup> "Turkey's Press Freedom Crisis," *Committee to Protect Journalists*, October 2012, <http://cpj.org/reports/Turkey2012.English.pdf>.

movement. For example, a February 2012 article in the Gülenist-owned *Today's Zaman* defends the police against “Kemalists and liberal intellectuals” who have raised questions about the motives and activity of the police force, accusing them of “hav[ing] no insight into how the police think.”<sup>181</sup>

The relationship between the Gülen movement and the AKP remains an open question. Erdogan himself is not a follower, but President Gul is. The group is widely suspected of having followers in key leadership posts within the interior and education ministries, the MIT, and the judiciary, but precisely who is a member and who is not remains largely a matter of speculation.<sup>182</sup> What is clear is that Gülenists and non-Gülenists within the AKP shared a tactical alliance that allowed them to put aside any differences in order to weaken the military. Within the last two years, however, this alliance has begun to show signs of strain. Erdogan has actively sought to strengthen his own power base at the expense of the Gülenists. For example, a March 2012 education reform plan—an update of the failed 2003 initiative—paved the way for a dramatic expansion of religious imam-hatip schools in Turkey. The measure was “conspicuously aimed” at the Gülenists, whose schools provide in secular education.<sup>183</sup> Around the same time, a Gülenist prosecutor in Istanbul subpoenaed MIT chief and Erdogan ally Sadrettin Sarikaya on suspicion of collaborating with the PKK—a move widely seen as a political move to challenge Erdogan’s authority.

The competition between Erdogan and Gülen for control of the AKP and Turkey’s Islamist movement is likely to culminate over a fight for reform of the country’s political system. Erdogan, who is currently serving his third and final term as prime minister, is attempting to transform the Turkish government from a parliamentary to a presidential system in order to run for president and expand his political power. Gul, who is widely expected to succeed Erdogan as prime minister, seeks to preserve the system as

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<sup>181</sup> Emre Uslu, “Are the National Police Assuming the Military’s Role in Turkish Politics?” *Today’s Zaman*, February 2, 2012, <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-270368-are-the-national-police-assuming-the-militarys-role-in-turkish-politics.html>.

<sup>182</sup> Vela, “Turkey; Has Gülen Movement Replaced Deep State?”

<sup>183</sup> M. Kemal Kaya and Halil M. Karaveli, “Remolding Compulsory Education, the AKP Erases a Secularist Legacy and Seeks to Check the Gülen Brotherhood,” *Turkey Analyst* 5 no. 7 (April 2, 2012).

is. Although the two men remain the most popular leaders in the Turkish government, the conflict threatens to permanently divide the AKP, with Gul and the Gülenists on one side, and Erdogan and his loyalists on the other. Public support for Erdogan's presidential plan is low; as of November 2012, those preferring the parliamentary system outnumbered Erdogan's supporters by a margin of two-to-one.<sup>184</sup> Even if no such transition plan goes through, Erdogan is unlikely to go quietly into the night and may try to expand the power of the presidency through informal and extra-legal means.<sup>185</sup>

#### **D. APPROACHING AN INFLECTION POINT?**

Unlike the Shah's deeply unpopular military, the Turkish military was and remains one of Turkey's most popular and trusted institutions, which has had a profound impact on the Islamists' approach to reforming CMR. Although the military currently appears to have been thoroughly and permanently weakened by an institutional reform process that has been largely democratic and a series of purges that have been anything but, the future of CMR in Turkey remains largely uncertain. The fate of CMR in Turkey almost certainly depends on the trajectory of Islamism. If the Gülen movement becomes the strongest force in Islamist politics, it might seek to weaken the military even further and possibly elevate the TNP as the regime's primary protection force. While it was not uncommon to see Erdogan compared to the ill-fated Prime Minister Menderes during the height of civil-military tensions just a few short years ago, an ascendant Gülen movement could actually steer Erdogan toward a fate not unlike that of Iran's Bani Sadr—an Islamist ally cast off when his star burned too bright.

Yet such a scenario is anything but assured. Ironically, Erdogan may find that his best option for re-asserting his authority is to try to reconcile with the military. Halil Karaveli argues that Erdogan has a good working relationship with the current chief of the Turkish General Staff and that Erdogan and his allies may have actually been disappointed with the recent Sledgehammer verdict.<sup>186</sup> It is not inconceivable that

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<sup>184</sup> "Turkey Opposes AKP's Presidential Plan: Poll," *Hurriyet Daily News*, November 16, 2012.

<sup>185</sup> Gareth Jenkins, "Gul and Erdogan: An Increasingly Fratricidal Relationship?" *Turkey Analyst* 5 no 15, August 13, 2012.

<sup>186</sup> Karaveli, "What the Sledgehammer Sentences Mean."

Erdogan might try to make common cause with the military against the Gülenists, whose dominance of the police force and judiciary has enabled the most controversial efforts against the military. Such a scenario might not be wholly dissimilar to the later years of Nasser's Egypt or even Saddam Hussein's Iraq, whereby ideological decay gives way to a resurgent form of sultanism. Of course, if Erdogan has such an appetite for personal rulership, he might encounter far more resistance than either Nasser or Hussein ever did. Abdullah Gul's ascendance and popularity, the Gülenists' presence (if not dominance) within the AKP, the maturity of Turkish democratic institutions, and popular opposition to Erdogan's plans for a presidential system suggest he would have a tough road to hoe. Even if he were able to marshal overwhelming military support, the Gülenists' influence in the police force, judiciary, media, and business would present a major obstacle to Erdogan's ambitions.

Whatever the future of CMR in Turkey, the last decade suggests that even moderate Islamists who express strong support for democracy are willing to subvert democratic norms in order to maximize their power, particularly with respect to the military. Wherever the real locus of power within the AKP lies, the government's willingness to imprison journalists and sully the reputation of its judicial system has parallels to the Iranian Revolution. Even if this first decade of AKP rule proves to be the low-water mark for Turkish democracy in the post-military state era, it is a troublesome sign that bears a stronger resemblance to highly ideological movements in non-democracies than to the traditional democratic consolidation path.

## VI. CMR IN EGYPT

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood is not only the Middle East's oldest Islamist organization but almost certainly its most disciplined. Yet of the three Islamist-dominated governments examined in this thesis, the Brotherhood's control of the state in general and the military in particular is by far the weakest. This is partly a function of time: both the mullahs in Iran and the AKP in Turkey required years to consolidate their authority over the military—a process that remains very much ongoing in the latter—so it should not be surprising that civilian control of the Egyptian armed forces remains tenuous today, less than one year into Morsi's first presidential term. The toxic political environment that Mubarak left behind has also proven a major hurdle for the Brothers. The grievances that brought young Egyptians to the streets in early 2011, particularly the economic ones, continue to drive domestic unrest and threaten regime stability. A shared anxiety over further domestic unrest appears to have pushed the Brothers and the military into a tactical alliance. For the moment, neither side appears interested in challenging the authority of the other for fear of a total government collapse that would serve no one's interests.

While there is tremendous uncertainty surrounding both the Brotherhood's intentions and the future of the Egyptian state, what is clear is that the Brothers have thus far prioritized maximizing their own political power over democratic reform. In this regard, the Brothers' approach to governance bears a strong resemblance not only to Mubarak but to that of their Islamist forebears in Iran and Turkey.

### A. **WHAT THE BROTHERS INHERITED: INSTITUTIONAL LEGACIES OF THE PRE-ARAB SPRING ERA**

Egyptian authoritarianism is so deeply intertwined with the country's CMR that it is nearly impossible to distinguish one from the other. For more than half a century, the Egyptian presidency and its military have been by far the country's most powerful institutions. Indeed, the weakness of other political actors in Egypt can be largely understood as a direct consequence of the country's troubled civil-military relationship

and the oscillations between collaboration and competition. The military's privileged position in Egyptian society and government can be traced back to the formation of the modern state under Nasser following the 1952 coup. Unlike Mustafa Kemal in Turkey, Nasser did not come to power with a clear vision of the state informed by ideology. Rather, Nasser and his Free Officers movement were motivated more by immediate goals such as anti-colonialism and the abolition of feudalism. While these were no doubt radical ideas requiring a dramatic re-ordering of Egyptian society, the Free Officers were "pragmatic nationalists and 'diligent military bureaucrats' with no predetermined views on political organization of ideological organization."<sup>187</sup> Although the Free Officers spoke of democratic reform, in practice they actively sought to undermine political pluralism, banning political parties purging potential political rivals such as the landed elite and the Muslim Brotherhood from the organs of the state. While Nasser did reconstitute the Egyptian assembly, the new parliament was "little more than a consultative body that rubber-stamped legislation originating with the president."<sup>188</sup> Instead of a competitive democracy, the Free Officers laid the foundations for a single-party system dominated by military officers. In Nasser's own words, he "want[ed] no politics in the Army...but the Army as a whole to be a force in national politics."<sup>189</sup> Despite this early pronouncement, the Egyptian state did not evolve as a military-dominated state comparable to that of Kemalist Turkey. Instead, divisions within the military-bureaucratic elite left Nasser suspicious of the military and eager for an alternative source of political strength.

An intra-military fissure first emerged with the removal of Egypt's first president, Muhammad Naguib. Nasser, who led the Free Officers movement and as Interior Minister controlled the country's intelligence and security services, was the more influential figure behind the scenes; however, Naguib, a senior military veteran himself, enjoyed significant public support. Naguib's conciliatory stance towards non-military

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<sup>187</sup> William L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 304; P.J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 109.

<sup>188</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 319.

<sup>189</sup> Khaled Fahmy, "The Military and Politics in Egypt: An Historical Overview" (Paris: IFRI, 2001), 47-8.

elites—including the Muslim Brotherhood—and eagerness to empower the country’s parliament made him a formidable adversary and won him the support within the military. Two failed mutinies against Nasser and his Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) revealed the extent of the military’s factionalization. Mounting tensions between Naguib’s and Nasser’s factions culminated with Naguib’s resignation and subsequent house arrest in November 1954—less than eighteen months after he first assumed power.<sup>190</sup>

The military’s unwillingness to stand united behind Nasser in his standoff against Naguib permanently altered the former’s perception of the military. As president, Nasser’s suspicion of the armed forces only hardened, particularly as his rivalry with Abd al-Hakim Amer intensified during the 1960s. As Defense Minister, Amer managed to secure the loyalty of many of the military’s top leaders, undermining Nasser’s authority over the force. Indeed, there is some speculation that the 1967 war with Israel may in fact have been an attempt by Amer to distinguish himself as Egypt’s most successful leader and assume control of the country. However, Egypt’s defeat in the war and Amer’s subsequent “suicide” led to an additional round of purges of commanders in order to bring the military back under Nasser’s command.

More importantly, Nasser’s rivalries with Naguib and Amer accelerated the evolution of the security state. This “pyramid of intelligence and security services” included the General Intelligence Service (GIS), General Intelligence Directorate (GID), and later the Central Security Forces (CSF).<sup>191</sup> The size and scope of the Interior Ministry’s internal security functions remains a feature of the Egyptian state today and is arguably Nasser’s most enduring legacy. Under Nasser, the Interior Ministry became the president’s most trusted and influential institution—a veritable “shadow state” according

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<sup>190</sup> Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen*, 33.

<sup>191</sup> Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: The Amoral Politics of Power* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 82; see also Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen*, 19.



to some. The securitization of the Egyptian state was so thorough that even Nasser's political party, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), was used more as a domestic spy service than a traditional political party.<sup>192</sup>

Nasser's successors continued to show a preference for the domestic security apparatus and a suspicion of the military. Upon assuming the presidency in 1970, Anwar Sadat set about removing his political rivals in the military and from within the presidency just as Nasser had in the 1950s. As part of his "revolution of rectification," Sadat promised to liberalize Egyptian politics as well as its economy, but he ultimately came to view the polity as a threat, particularly after the 1977 bread riots. The riots, which were put down by the Egyptian army, reaffirmed the military's role as "the ultimate guarantor of the regime's survival" and enabled its leaders to establish themselves as "the core of the ruling elite."<sup>193</sup> Although Sadat appointed far more civilians to leadership positions within his government than Nasser had, the military was never fully marginalized. Even after preparation for war with Israel—the military's *raison d'être*—was made virtually irrelevant by the Camp David peace settlement in 1979, the military's dominance of the political environment rendered Sadat unable and unwilling to contract the force.

The real maturation of Egypt's security and intelligence services, however, occurred under Mubarak. The emergency law put into place after Sadat's assassination was only a start; the Interior Ministry was given *carte blanche* with respect to suppressing political organizations. The services were allowed to conduct investigations, interrogate and detain political activists, disrupt public demonstrations, and infiltrate civil society organizations. The proximity of the security and intelligence services to the opposition ultimately made them the authority on public opinion, elevating their status within the shadow state. This is why General Intelligence Service chief Omar Suleiman became Mubarak's most trusted adviser, and for a brief moment last January, his first vice

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<sup>192</sup> The ASU reportedly kept files on more than 30,000 military officers and served as a network of informants that fed intelligence about potential dissidents directly to Nasser. Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen*, 58; Owen L. Sirrs, *A History of the Egyptian Intelligence Service: A History of the Mukhabarat, 1910-2009*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 88.

<sup>193</sup> Fahmy, "Military and Politics in Egypt," 52.

president. The close relationship between the president and the Interior Ministry soured Mubarak's relationship with the military. This resentment helps explain why the military was so quick to abandon Mubarak and its decision to place Suleiman under arrest after the regime collapsed.

Between 1967 and 2011 the military's interventions into domestic politics were mostly held in check with one spectacular exception: the assassination of Sadat. Although most observers have highlighted the Islamist leanings of Sadat's assassins, Springborg and Kandil have both drawn attention to the assassins' military connections. All four were military officers and at least one—Abbud al-Zumur—has publicly acknowledged that frustration with Sadat's peace treaty with Israel was the primary motivation behind the killing and that there was in fact a discussion of a military takeover of the government.<sup>194</sup> While military dissatisfaction with Sadat was certainly high at this time, there is nothing to suggest that the majority of the officer corps supported his assassination or that there was any broader military conspiracy to remove him from power. That the military was either unable or unwilling to seize power directly in the aftermath of the Camp David peace accord and Sadat's death is indicative of two important trends in Egyptian CMR: the officer corps' distaste for such overt intervention into domestic politics after Amer's death, and the ability of the Interior Ministry to maintain order and security on behalf of the presidency.

The general lack of political activity on the part of the military during this time should not imply that Egypt was approaching anything close to normalized, democratic CMR prior to 2011. While fewer active duty officers were appointed to high-profile cabinet positions under Sadat and Mubarak than had been the case under Nasser, effective civilian control of the military was never close to fully realized. One important example of the military's continued clout is the size of the force, which has remained roughly the same for decades despite the peace agreement with Israel. Even as high-level government posts went to civilian technocrats, senior and retired officers received appointments to "leading posts in government ministries, agencies, and state-owned

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<sup>194</sup> Springborg, *Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 97; Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen*, 173.

companies.”<sup>195</sup> The military made major inroads into several of the Egyptian economy’s most lucrative sectors, including tourism, construction, consumer goods, and public utilities.<sup>196</sup> The “military economy” accounts for one third or more of the entire Egyptian economy and the bureaucracy and local governments are full of retired officers eager to take care of their own.<sup>197</sup>

Despite the enormity of such benefits, the military’s declaration of support for the Tahrir Square protesters and willingness to allow the Mubarak regime to collapse reveals that they were insufficient to secure total loyalty from the force. Low wages and poor living standards did little to increase loyalty among lower ranking officers and enlisted personnel. For more senior officers, the primary grievance with Mubarak was likely over the Interior Ministry’s ever-expanding portfolio—and funding. As of January 2011, the security service had ballooned to 1.4 million personnel and the Interior Ministry’s budget was growing at a rate three times that of the armed forces.<sup>198</sup>

For six decades, the competition for political power in Egypt was restricted almost exclusively to these three actors—the presidency, the military, and the security apparatus. The Brotherhood’s successful bid for the presidency represents the most radical change to CMR since at least 1979. For now, the Brothers are caught in a difficult balancing act as the military tries to preserve its privileges, Interior Ministry forces continue to employ harsh tactics to quell unrest, and liberals at home and abroad call for democratic reform. How the Brothers manage these conflicting pressures may well determine the country’s fate for years to come.

## **B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS OF THE BROTHERHOOD**

In order to make sense of how the Brothers have handled political to date and anticipate how they might continue to govern in the future, it is necessary to understand

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<sup>195</sup> Sayigh, “Above the State.”

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> “Egypt’s Democratic Transition,” Legatum Institute and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (July 2011), 8.

<sup>198</sup> Sayigh, “Above the State.”

what the Brotherhood is and how it has evolved since its founding as an apolitical aid organization in the 1920s.<sup>199</sup> Despite the group's earlier embrace of terrorism and radicalism, including a flirtation with fascism during the 1930s, the Brothers have in recent decades settled into a moderate, pragmatic style of politics. This has been done partly out of necessity. Under Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak, the Brothers seemed to be in a constant and "cyclical pattern that usually began with an accommodation or an alliance, and ended with confrontation."<sup>200</sup> This pattern of interaction taught the Brotherhood two valuable lessons: how to effectively temper its politics without alienating core members and how to operate underground. With respect to the former, the Brothers strove to broaden their support base and avoid antagonizing the regime unnecessarily by renouncing violence, declaring support for democracy, rejecting theocratic governance, embracing neo-liberal economic ideas, and expressing support for human rights and civil liberties.<sup>201</sup> As for the latter, the Brotherhood has always been a grassroots social movement first and foremost and a political entity second. Its greatest strength is its ability to recruit, indoctrinate, and retain members even during moments of intense domestic repression.

It is the nature of the Brothers' organizational strength that tends to arouse suspicion from outside observers, and not without good reason. The deep ideological commitment of the Brothers and the secrecy surrounding the group's decision-making processes and organizational structure may have been vital to its survival as an underground organization, but these features do not lend themselves to open and transparent democratic procedures, particularly in a state struggling to transition out of its authoritarian past. All of this suggests a certain duality about the Brotherhood. On the one hand, the group has proven flexible and politically pragmatic—a far cry from the radical

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<sup>199</sup> For information on the early decades of the Brotherhood, see Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Brynjar Lia *The Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement, 1928-1942* (Reading, England: Ithaca Press, 1998).

<sup>200</sup> Hesham al-Awadi, *In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslim Brotherhood and Mubarak 1982-2000* (New York: Tauris, 2004), 30.

<sup>201</sup> Marian Fam and Stanley Reed, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Embraces Business," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 7, 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64834/steven-a-cook/adrift-on-the-nile>.

jihadist network committed to transforming Egypt into an Islamic Republic similar to Iran and overthrowing moderate Islamist governments in the region as they are sometimes depicted by Western observers.<sup>202</sup> On the other, the Brotherhood's insularity provokes valid questions about its political goals—questions that have only intensified during Morsi's first year as president.

## 1. Recruitment Process and Organizational Structure

Precise figures on the Brotherhood's membership numbers are difficult to ascertain; however, most observers inside and outside the organization estimate that there are approximately half a million active members in Egypt.<sup>203</sup> Part of the difficulty in determining an exact number is that becoming a Brother is not simply a voluntary commitment, but is instead a process that can take years to complete. Eric Trager recently published an article detailing how the Brothers identify, screen, and indoctrinate recruits—a process that can begin for children as young as nine years old and take up to eight years to complete.<sup>204</sup> According to Trager, candidates for entry are “indoctrinated in the Brotherhood's curriculum” and monitored closely by senior Brothers to ensure loyalty, piety, and ideological commitment. Trager explains that while the roots of this process stretch back to the group's founding under Hassan al-Banna in the 1920s, it

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<sup>202</sup> In 2007, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney compared the Muslim Brotherhood to Hezbollah, Hamas, al-Qaida, suggesting all were part of “the worldwide jihadist effort to try and cause the collapse of all moderate Islamic governments and replace them with a caliphate.” More recently, U.S. Senator Mark Kirk referred to the group as “the grandfather of Islamic jihad” and a threat to both the global economy and Israeli security. Such concerns are not limited to electoral politics. The Heritage Foundation has called the group “an Islamist movement determined to transform Egypt into an Islamic state that is hostile to freedom,” while Eric Trager, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy suggests the group “move Egypt in a decidedly theocratic, anti-Western direction.” Fam Stanley Reed, “Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Embraces Business.”

<sup>202</sup> Andrew Restuccia, “GOP Senator Says Muslim Brotherhood Poses Threat to Oil Prices,” *The Hill*, February 12, 2011, <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/143667-gop-senator-says-muslim-brotherhood-poses-threat-to-oil-prices>; James Phillips, “Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Lurks as a Long-Term Threat to Freedom,” The Heritage Foundation, February 8, 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/02/egypts-muslim-brotherhood-lurks-as-a-long-term-threat-to-freedom>.

<sup>203</sup> Matthew Kaminski, “Khairat Al Shater: The Brother Who Would Run Egypt,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 22, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304765304577482690379062050.html>.

<sup>204</sup> Eric Trager, “The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68211/eric-trager/the-unbreakable-muslim-brotherhood>.

was formalized in the late 1970s in order to prevent infiltration by Interior Ministry elements under Sadat's direction. What is particularly noteworthy about this process is the Brotherhood's preference for identifying members on its own. Rather than relying on pious individuals to seek out the Brothers, the Brotherhood actively pursues individuals that it perceives as pious and likely to support its vision.

While the Brotherhood's recruitment process undoubtedly aims at producing a certain ideological cohesion, the group is not monolithic. Differing views within the organization on a variety of subjects have been reported for years, suggesting at least partial tolerance for dissenting opinions. While some have argued that "government repression [was] the glue holding the Brotherhood together" and that in the absence of such outside pressure internal disagreements could break the Brotherhood apart into competing factions, others—including Trager—maintain that such predictions are overblown and fail to account for the broader ideological commitment that binds the Brothers together.<sup>205</sup> This is certainly the view promoted publicly by senior Brotherhood leaders. According to Khairat El-Shater, a deputy leader and the Brotherhood's original presidential candidate in 2012, the organization's preference for collaboration makes it "one of the most democratic organizations in Egypt."<sup>206</sup> The Brotherhood's decision to support the Tahrir Square protesters during the Revolution, for example, lends some credence to Shater's argument as the move was almost certainly driven by the insistence of the group's younger members who, at least initially, found themselves at odds with the Brothers' older and more cautious leadership who preferred to remain on the sidelines.

Although the group may have some strive to resolve internal disputes democratically, it would be a mistake to draw any broader conclusions about the Brothers' attitudes towards governance. Indeed, it is not difficult to draw parallels between the collaborative nature of the Brotherhood's Shura and the emphasis on consensus among Iran's clerical leadership. Like Iran's clerical elite, the Brotherhood remains a fundamentally hierarchical structure. The two bodies that drive decision-

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<sup>205</sup> Ursula Lindsey, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: Widening Split Between Young and Old," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 21, 2009.

<sup>206</sup> Kaminski, "Khairat Al Shater: The Brother Who Would Run Egypt."

making in the Brotherhood are a 15-member Guidance Office and a 100-member Shura Council. How exactly these two bodies share authority and determine policy remains unclear; however, a tolerance for dissent within a small, select group of insiders reveals little about how an organization actually plans to govern. Indeed, the extent to which President Morsi remains beholden to the Brotherhood's executive leadership remains an open question.

## **2. Attitudes towards Democracy and CMR**

For more than three decades the Brotherhood has relied on Egypt's limited democratic openings to broaden its influence and become one of Egypt's most vocal advocates for democratic reform. The process can be traced back to 1977 when the Brotherhood challenged Nasser's 1954 decision to outlaw the group on the grounds that the RCC lacked the constitutional authority to impose such a ban. When it became clear that the courts would not rule in the Brotherhood's favor, the group's leader, Umar al-Tilemensani, decided to pursue political participation more directly by seeking seats in parliament. Although Tilemensani's decision to break into party politics was considered controversial by senior members of the Brotherhood, Tilemensani realized that parliamentary representation was the best method for remaining relevant in Egyptian society without provoking a backlash from Sadat. This ambition was not restricted to the Constituent Assembly. Around this same time the Brothers began to campaign for leadership positions within Egypt's professional syndicates and student organizations. Even as Sadat and Mubarak targeted the group in periodic crackdowns, the Brothers continued to pursue legitimization through the democratic process. Even as a formal ban on the group remained in effect, the group emerged as the closest thing to a viable opposition party in Mubarak's Egypt.

It is not hard to identify the impact of democratic participation on the Brothers' rhetoric. Although they have never wavered in their commitment to erecting an Islamist state based on Shari'a, the vision they have promoted is clearly targeted at an audience much broader than the Brothers' conservative Muslim base. The group's emphasis on social justice, religious tolerance, and political plurality was purposefully designed to

“[challenge] the Egyptian regime on its democratic credentials at least as often as on its religious ones.”<sup>207</sup> The younger Brothers who became active in student organizations beginning in the 1980s promoted a vision of Islamism inclusive “all Egyptians, irrespective of race, religion, or ethnicity.”<sup>208</sup> On the Brothers’ English-language website is an outline of the Brothers’ principles, which place a heavy emphasis on democratic ideals. The statement, adapted from a paper drafted in the late 1990s by then-deputy chairman Mohammad Ma’mun El-Hudaibi, identifies 15 “Principles of Agreement” illustrating the overlap between the Brothers’ vision of an Islamist Egyptian state with traditional democratic principles such as the freedom of assembly and religious expression.<sup>209</sup>

Included among Hudaibi’s principles are three that relate specifically to the role of the military and security forces:

Twelfth: Ensuring the independence of the judicial system at all levels...and jurisdiction of the military courts are restricted to cases involving military crimes and violations only.

Fourteenth: The army must stay clear of politics, concentrating only on protecting the country’s external security, and that it should not be used, neither directly nor indirectly, by the governing authority in enforcing its wishes and control, or in prohibiting the people’s rights.

Fifteenth: The police and all other security services must protect the security of the nation and as a whole, and that its utilization in maintaining the government or as a means of crushing opposition opinion should be prohibited. A system overlooks its work and leadership, and ensures the above, should be imposed; more specifically, it (security forces) must not be allowed to intervene in political activities and general elections.<sup>210</sup>

Proclamations such as these were not only a vital part of the Brothers’ legitimization strategy in pre-Revolutionary Egypt, but almost certainly reflected a genuine frustration

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<sup>207</sup> Chris Harnisch and Quinn Mecham, “Democratic Ideology in Islamist Opposition? The Muslim Brotherhood’s ‘Civil State,’” *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 2 (2009).

<sup>208</sup> Mohammed Zahid, *The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt’s Succession Crisis* (New York: Tauris, 2012), 95.

<sup>209</sup> Mohammad Ma’mun El-Hudaibi, “The Principles of the Muslim Brotherhood,” Spring 1997, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=813>.

<sup>210</sup> El-Hudaibi, “Principles of the Muslim Brotherhood.”



with the pressure the Brothers felt from the military and security establishment. However, as the Brotherhood has assumed political control in Egypt over the last two years, many of the group's actions seem to suggest that its support for democratic principles reflected political opportunism more than a serious commitment to reform.

### **C. TRANSLATING PRINCIPLE INTO PRACTICE: UNDERSTANDING THE BROTHERS' GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH TO CMR**

Translating principle into practice is difficult for any political organization, particularly one that has been thrust into power as quickly as the Brothers have. Nevertheless, the speed with which the Brothers have “accommodat[ed] themselves to the authoritarian institutions” developed under Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak has disappointed and alienated the country's secular liberals.<sup>211</sup> Morsi's government has thus far shown little interest in curbing the military's prerogatives or dispatching security forces to suppress demonstrators. Likewise, the Brothers' willingness to undermine the potential checks on its authority, particularly the judiciary, strongly suggests that the Brothers are less interested in democratic reform than in consolidating power.

#### **1. Controlling the Streets**

Since coming to power in July 2012 Morsi's government has had to contend with near-constant street protests over a variety of issues ranging from unpopular court decisions to economic concerns. While many of these protests relate to grievances not directly related to Morsi's administration, the government's heavy-handed approach to demonstrators has done little to improve the Brothers' popular image. Morsi himself has often referred to protesters as “thugs” and enemies of democracy. More damaging than the rhetoric has been the government's tolerance for the same tactics that proved so unpopular under Mubarak. For example, in January 2013 Morsi reinstated a “state of emergency” in certain Suez Canal provinces, dispatching CSF forces to put down the riots with force. In early February, the police were filmed beating a man then stripping

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<sup>211</sup> Dan Murphy, “Muslim Brotherhood's Unlikely New Ally? Egypt's Military,” *Christian Science Monitor*, December 10, 2012.

him naked and dragging him through the streets just outside the presidential palace. The episode drew international condemnation and caused one cabinet official to resign.<sup>212</sup> Critics suggest that the security forces have obliged the regime because they “have no other refuges but the regime.”<sup>213</sup> In addition to the Interior Ministry’s CSF, reports of “Brotherhood militias”—not dissimilar to Iran’s Basij forces—have allegedly been involved in clashes with civilian restive neighborhoods.

## 2. D tente with the Military?

Morsi’s government has made little effort to check the military’s business interests or infringe on its autonomy. In December 2012, Morsi authorized the military to arrest civilians for the purposes of maintaining public order.<sup>214</sup> The country’s new constitution largely protects the military from civilian oversight through vague language about parliament’s ability to review the military’s budget and the establishment of a powerful national defense council.<sup>215</sup> The constitution also reaffirmed the military’s authority to try civilians in military courts for crimes that “harm the armed forces.”<sup>216</sup> In return, the military appears to have thrown its support behind Morsi, at least for the time being. In late January 2013, Defense Minister General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi “sternly lectured” liberal opposition leaders Mohamed ElBaradei and Amr Mousa for their criticism of the regime, insisting that the military would “not be able to reassert control” should public pressure destabilize the government.

A further signal of where Brotherhood-military relations may be heading comes from an allegation made by a former Brother named Tharwat al-Kharabawy. In a new book entitled, *The Secret of the Temple*, Kharabawy claims that a network of

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<sup>212</sup> “Egypt: Culture Minister Resigns Over Abuse,” *Stratfor*, February 4, 2013.

<sup>213</sup> Mohamad Adam, “Brothers and Soldiers: A Weakened Security Apparatus is Implicated in Political Play,” *Egypt Independent*, February 6, 2013.

<sup>214</sup> Murphy, “Muslim Brotherhood’s Unlikely New Ally?”

<sup>215</sup> Zaid Al-Ali, “The New Egyptian Constitution: An Initial Assessment of its Merits and Flaws,” *Open Democracy*, December 26, 2012, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/print/70140>.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

“undercover” Brothers had infiltrated the military.<sup>217</sup> While this claim remains largely unsubstantiated, the notion that the Egyptian military’s nearly 500,000 personnel includes at least a small cadre of Brothers or sympathizers seems well within the realm of possibility. Even if there is no merit to Kharabawy’s claim, the Brotherhood is almost certain to establish a toehold within the armed forces now that it is no longer an illicit organization.

### **3. Undermining Democratic Institutions: The Judiciary and the New Constitution**

Since assuming office last year, no move has drawn more criticism than Morsi’s November 2012 decree that executive and parliamentary decisions were immune to judicial oversight. The declaration drew international attention and prompted the most intense protests of his young presidency. The public response was so overwhelming that Morsi was forced to rescind the declaration just two weeks after first issuing it. Still, the move signaled a willingness to challenge the authority of the judiciary in a manner that seems wholly inconsistent with the pledges of democratic reform the Brothers had promised prior to the Revolution.

While the judicial immunity decree may have been more controversial, the drafting of the new constitution may be more consequential. On the one hand, many critics have argued that the document represents a decisive step towards greater democratization as it restricts some of the executive privileges outlined in the country’s 1971 constitution. Marina Ottaway notes that the powers of the president are “clearly defined and far from dictatorial.”<sup>218</sup> Article 135 limits the president to two four year terms. In a significant change from the Mubarak era, the Constituent Assembly “is protected from arbitrary dissolution and has important oversight powers.”<sup>219</sup> Despite these improvements, the constitution has also elicited some serious criticism from

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<sup>217</sup> Noha El-Hennawy, “Imaginary Secrets: Kharabawy’s Work about the Brothers Had More Conspiracies than Truths,” *Egypt Independent*, February 3, 2013.

<sup>218</sup> Marina Ottaway, “After the Constitution, a New Battle in Egypt,” *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (January 2013) <http://www.insightturkey.com/after-the-constitution-a-new-battle-in-egypt/posts/281>.

<sup>219</sup> Al-Ali, “New Egyptian Constitution.”

constitutional scholars. As previously discussed, the prerogatives afforded to the military certainly seem to undermine effective civilian control of the armed forces. Additionally, the document appears to open the door for greater influence by unelected Islamic scholars from al-Azhar University, as it mandates consultation on matters relating to Shari'a. While these scholars are not afforded any "hard political power," the vagueness of the Article 219 raises questions about how such consultation will be enforced and what it will mean in practice.<sup>220</sup>

More than any particular constitutional provision, the process of drafting the document and the low turnout for the popular referendum that brought it into force is a poor sign for Egyptian democracy under the Brotherhood's stewardship. Nearly one-quarter of the 100-member Constituent Assembly resigned in protest during the drafting process.<sup>221</sup>

#### **D. SUPPORTING DEMOCRACY'S LINEAMENTS BUT NOT ITS VALUES**

Bassam Tibi's assertion that Islamist organizations tend to view democracy instrumentally certainly seems to apply to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brothers' organizational strength far surpasses that of any other political organization in Egypt today. They have not lost a popular vote since 2011 and have demonstrated an eagerness for returning to the polls in order to help legitimize their political objectives. Although the Brothers revealed an ability to make common cause with secular liberals while Mubarak was in power, they have not carried this spirit to the presidential palace. As Amr Elshobaki suggested in 2011, the Brothers' embrace of "the methods and lineaments of democracy" seems to fall short of its "the cultural and political values."<sup>222</sup>

With respect to the military and security forces, Morsi's government has done little to break with the authoritarian tendencies of the Mubarak regime. While this pattern of protecting the military's autonomy and relying on the Interior Ministry to contain

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> "Six More Constituent Assembly Members Resign after Morsi Decree," *Egypt Independent*, November 25, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/six-more-constituent-assembly-members-resign-after-morsy-decree>.

<sup>222</sup> Elshobaki, "Building Democracy or Confronting the Islamists?" 18.

domestic unrest may continue in the near term, over time the Brotherhood is almost certain to try to rely on its organizational strength to co-opt the security apparatus. The educational mission that is central to the Brothers' own recruitment process is likely to be replicated in some form on the national scale and could be used as a means to ensure loyalty and determine promotions within the armed forces and security establishment.

Of course, it is far from certain that the Brotherhood will remain in power over the long term. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, there remains tremendous uncertainty in Egypt. The unity of the Brotherhood, the allegiance of the military, and the organizational capacity of opposition parties will all be severely tested within the next several years and will ultimately determine the fate of Egyptian democracy and the course of CMR.

## VII. CONCLUSION: A MORE DURABLE AUTHORITARIANISM?

As the “third wave” of democratization spread across the globe turning most national governments into democratic ones, Middle East observers began to speak of a “durable authoritarianism” that against all odds seemed to preserve autocratic rule in the region. While the “Arab Spring” revolutions initially seemed destined to finally bring democracy to the region, the early returns suggest that the region may in fact be heading for a yet more durable kind of authoritarianism in the form of Islamist governance. Because Islamist organizations are fundamentally grassroots movements, they are well-positioned to take full advantage of whatever democratic openings they are afforded. Although new Islamist governments are likely to appear more democratic than the authoritarian ones they replace and may in fact enjoy substantial popular support, the Islamist experiences in Iran, Turkey, and Egypt reveal a yawning gap between popular legitimacy and democratic reform. Paradoxically, the popular support enjoyed by Islamist organizations may actually represent the greatest obstacle to democratization, as ballot box success can enable the “dominant party overreach” that leads to the subversion of democratic norms.<sup>223</sup> This tendency is only exacerbated by these countries’ authoritarian pasts and the weakness of their democratic institutions.

It is important to note that it is not Islam or even religiously-inspired illiberalism that constitutes the greatest hurdle to democratization.<sup>224</sup> Neither the AKP nor the Muslim Brotherhood has favored a radical religious agenda. Although religion has assumed a much larger role in public life in post-Revolutionary Iran, religiosity is not driving the country’s deteriorating democracy. The willingness to subvert democratic norms stems not from religion per se, but from the elevation of a set of ideals above democratic ones. Political leaders who practice exclusionary politics and subvert democratic norms cannot rightfully be considered democratic; however, Islamist leaders who do so in the name of Islamizing the state do not betray the cause to which they owe

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<sup>223</sup> Thomas Carothers and Nathan Brown, “The Real Danger for Egyptian Democracy,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 12, 2012, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/11/12/real-danger-for-egyptian-democracy/eg5z>.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

their support. That this appears to be happening in Turkey, where the dominant Islamist movement has rejected the Islamist label and publicly insists that its loyalty remains above all to preserving the state's secular and democratic principles, strongly suggests that Islamists view democracy merely as a useful but non-essential means for maximizing power.

This has important implications for the future of CMR in the region. Perhaps the most fundamental question is whether Iran's success in using the military as a vehicle for expanding its Islamist ideology makes it an outlier or places the Islamic Republic ahead of the curve. In addition to strict oversight of the military, Iran has introduced an intensive ideological indoctrination program as part of conscripted and volunteer service. The intention is two-fold: to ensure the continual spread of the Islamists' revolutionary ideology and to create a force that internalizes those values, including the principle of *velayat-e faqih*, so that civilian oversight mechanisms become unnecessary. In essence, the Iranian model emphasizes a sort of endogenous control of the military. No such effort can be identified in Turkey or Egypt as of yet. The AKP appears to remain focused primarily on weakening the military's political influence and has not attempted any sort of systematic effort to indoctrinate military members in an Islamist ideology. Indeed, Ankara has even allowed more men to opt out of conscription, suggesting that the AKP continues to view the military as more a threat than an opportunity. In Egypt, the Brothers seem focused on more immediate goal of stability preservation. The prospects for overt Islamization of the armed forces in Turkey and Egypt are further hampered by the military's popularity in each country. While Iran was able to accelerate the Islamization of the military due to its unpopularity and close association to the Shah, a similar effort in Turkey or Egypt would almost certainly provoke a backlash from the military and the public. Yet greater Islamization of the force can also be achieved in less overt ways, including the silent infiltration efforts allegedly underway in the Egyptian military and the TNP. This suggests that even in Turkey and Egypt, Islamizing the force and achieving a degree of endogenous control comparable to that of Iran remains within the realm of possibility.

Regardless of whether Islamist governments in Turkey and Egypt prove capable of fully indoctrinating the military, they are unlikely to abandon non-democratic control mechanisms in favor of democratic processes. The Turkish case is illustrative here, as the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer criminal investigations that purged the military's leadership ranks began *after* the AKP had already achieved substantial CMR reform through the EU accession process. Those investigations enabled the AKP to achieve the sort of swift and radical results that are simply not possible through slower and more bureaucratic democratic reforms. Likewise, Islamist leaders are unlikely to cede their authority over the military in accordance with democratic prescriptions in any way that could allow non-Islamist forces to gain influence over the military. In practical terms, this means that Islamists are unlikely to allow substantial parliamentary oversight of the military as this could enable opposition parties to influence military decision-making. With respect to the military's internal affairs, democratic control mechanisms that protect the military's autonomy on certain matters, such as control over training regimens or promotion of junior officers, are unlikely to gain support from Islamists concerned about the potential for non-Islamist ideologies to emerge from within the ranks. Such anxiety has guided military reform efforts in Ba'athist Iraq and Revolutionary Iran, and may ultimately steer policies in Turkey and Egypt.

If Islamism is unlikely to produce to genuinely democratic forms of civilian control of the military, it appears equally unlikely to give way to classical authoritarian or sultanistic patterns of CMR whereby the military effectively decays into a patronage-based network designed to preserve the authority of an individual ruler. Even in Iran where the Supreme Leader can develop a cult of personality, the Guards appear more committed to the concept of *velayat-e faqih* than the individual serving as Supreme Leader. Khamenei did not attempt to purge the military after Khomeini's death nor did he install senior leaders personally loyal to him. Rather, Iran's leadership appears to maintain great confidence in the Guards' ideological adherence. While no such indoctrination program has been put into effect in either Egypt or Turkey, the reports of Islamist infiltration of the armed forces and security sector might suggest that personal loyalty is less relevant than ideological cohesion. Erdogan might be the only Islamist



figure in any of the three countries capable of securing a cadre of personally loyal officers; however, Turkey does not have a history of sultanism and the power and influence of the country's non-military elites—including the Gülenists—would make it difficult for Erdogan to build a sultanistic, patronage-based network.

The Islamist approach to CMR thus seems to be something new for the region: a combination of competitive authoritarian elements and totalitarian ones. Islamists' reliance on ideological officers and willingness to employ "terror, conspiracy, surveillance, and force" to ensure loyalty from the armed forces are the techniques common to ideology-based totalitarian regimes, while the embrace of democratic processes, provided that outcomes can be managed, is consistent with competitive authoritarian trends.<sup>225</sup> Given Islamism's popularity and grassroots appeal, this combination appears fairly intractable and will in all likelihood forestall genuine democratic reform in the Middle East for the foreseeable future.

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<sup>225</sup> Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 82.

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