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# The Historical Evolution of State Capacity and Its Effect on Democratization: a Case Study of Egypt

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# THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF STATE CAPACITY AND ITS EFFECT ON DEMOCRATIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF EGYPT

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Why are some states able to democratize while others are not? This thesis examines the connection between state capacity and democratization utilizing a case study of Egypt and a controlled comparison with Tunisia. Via process tracing, I determine that Egypt has a deeply institutionalized, strong coercive state capacity and a weak administrative capacity. These iterations of state capacity developed during Egyptian state formation from 1805-1840 and were further institutionalized at two critical junctures: early British occupation from 1883-1907, and Nasser's presidency from 1952-1967. Path dependency makes successful democratization unlikely because of the significant legacy left in Egypt during these critical junctures. The coercive apparatus benefits from authoritarianism and sees democracy as a threat to its immense political and economic power and influence. Due to lacking administrative capacity, bureaucratic workforce that could challenge the coercive institutions for state control is either corrupt, underprepared to overcome coercive institutions, or a combination of both. I illustrate these microprocesses through an analysis of the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 and the eventual coup that ended Egypt's democratic experiment in 2013.

KEYWORDS: state capacity; democratization; Egypt; Arab Spring; case study; path dependency

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# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## Argument Summary

Why do some countries successfully complete democratization processes while others do not? There are undoubtedly significant barriers to democratization: autocratic elites will do whatever they can to maintain their centralized grip on power, and would-be revolutionaries need numbers and stamina to win. Some countries have successfully managed to overthrow an autocratic regime and replace it with a consolidated democracy, but many don't make it to the final step.

In this thesis, I argue that state capacity can determine whether a country can successfully complete a democratic transition. In particular, states with a high coercive and low administrative capacity are less likely to democratize. It is difficult to overthrow an autocratic regime in a state with high coercive capacity because, when military and police forces are politically powerful, they are unlikely to abandon an autocrat in favor of revolutionaries whose changes could diminish their power. If an autocratic regime is overthrown, a low administrative state capacity makes democratic elections and transition difficult. Deeply institutionalized corruption and clientelism means that the pool of people with the resources and education required to run state institutions is small and mostly loyal to the now-overthrown regime. Additionally, the presence of a strong coercive apparatus means there will be a significant push to continue having military involvement in the new regime. Without a robust preexisting bureaucracy, getting to the consolidation stage of democratization is highly unlikely.

## Theoretical Significance

Scholars have studied this subject before; specific to the Middle East and North Africa, works by Eva Bellin (2004; 2012) and Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds

(2015) are notable examples. They have each discussed how coercive capacity impacted regime change, specifically democratization in the Middle East. Additionally, Jessica Fortin-Rittberger has done work on the importance of state capacity in influencing democratization outcomes, specifically noting the importance of administrative capacity. This thesis draws on all of these works to argue that the combination of coercive and administrative state capacity impacts democratization outcomes. This theory further illuminates the favorable conditions for successful democratization and explains via process tracing why specific manifestations of state capacity occur in different contexts.

**Methodological Summary**

This thesis relies on qualitative methods to demonstrate its argument. Specifically, I will utilize process tracing beginning with modern state formation and including two critical junctures to establish state capacity's origins, continuity, and legacies. This is a path dependency argument: hence, it suggests that decisions made at a specific time in history, especially at a critical juncture, affect institutional and political outcomes in the future, making some results more likely than others. The independent variable of this thesis is state capacity, and the dependent variable is the degree of democratization success, specifically the completion of a successful democratic transition after authoritarian breakdown. This thesis utilizes qualitative case study of Egypt, including a cross-case comparison with Tunisia, to improve causal validity.

**Roadmap**

The following chapter will explain this thesis' theoretical framework and methodology. Through a literature review, I determine that there is a gap in our understanding of how state capacity affects democratization processes and outcomes. In Chapter 3, I will explore the historical evolution of state capacity in Egypt: its origins under Pasha Muhammad Ali in the 19$^{th}$

century, as well as the decisions of political elites in two critical junctures that helped further shape and institutionalize it. These junctures were the beginning of British colonialism following the Anglo-Egyptian War in 1882, and the Nasser era through the Six-Day War, 1952-1967. Next, in Chapter 4 I will apply the theoretical framework to Egypt's experience during the period of Arab Uprisings in 2011-2013 to test whether its specific state capacity played a significant role in the chain of events. To control for alternate explanations, I will conduct a comparison between Egypt and Tunisia, which also underwent an uprising during this time. The chapter concludes with a more thorough analysis of how state capacity's mark is evident in the outcome. Finally, I will conclude the thesis by summarizing the findings and exploring the potential for further work in this area.

# CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 – Literature Review

### State Capacity and State Formation

One of the two critical concepts of this project is state capacity. State capacity is one of the central concepts of political science; this means there are many views on how to best understand and explain it (Almond and Powell, 1966; Katzenstein, 1978; Migdal, 1988; Wang, 1995). The basis for current literature on state capacity came in the eighties with the 'Bringing the State Back in' movement. This was born from Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol's (1985) edited work of the same name. The authors define state capacity as having or lacking a solid organizational structure. This structure involves having control over administrative and military branches and maintaining a government workforce that is loyal and skilled, with access to capital that is used effectively. They also make the crucial point that various capacities within a state might be uneven: A state's ability to address one issue will differ from its ability to manage another. The relationship between these capacities will affect state actions.

Joel Migdal's *Strong Societies and Weak States* (1988), building on 'Bringing the State Back in' literature, attempts to generalize the critical concepts of capacity further. He defines state capacity more broadly as the state's ability to permeate society, control social relationships, extract resources from the environment and society, and use those resources in a set way. In addition to broadening the ideas put forth by Evans et al., Migdal adds social control to his analysis. This implies a distinct delineation between state and society and frames state capacity as a power struggle between the two.

A more recent and generalizable understanding of state capacity came from Jonathan Hanson and Rachel Sigman's 'Leviathan's Latent Dimensions: Measuring State Capacity for

Comparative Political Research' (2019). The authors define state capacity as "the ability of state institutions to effectively implement official goals" (p. 2). In this way, states set their efficacy baseline, as they are being measured not by what others think they should be capable of but by what they state as their goals. Hanson and Sigman then break down the concept of state capacity into three broad, easily generalizable sub-capacities: extractive capacity, coercive capacity, and administrative capacity. Of course, the constitution of these capacities will necessarily vary across time and space and from state to state. For this reason, and the authors' avoidance of a normative measurement, I find Hanson and Sigman's conceptualization of state capacity most compelling.

Hanson and Sigman's definition of state capacity directly relates to the theory of state formation. Dating back to Weber, a state is defined by having a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, an administrative staff, and a means of collecting taxes and other sources of income to support its administration and military (Evans et al., 1985; Held, 1983; King and Kendall, 2003; O'Neil, 2018). There are two general theories of how states form: through coercion and consensus (O'Neil, 2018). Coercion-based theories assert that rulers, needing a way to finance their continued wars over territorial gains, extract resources from those living within their existing territory of control, hence creating a state (Carneiro, 1970; Tilly, 1985). In these theories, states form as a by-product of war-making. These are the more traditional, and Eurocentric approaches to state formation (Vu, 2010). Consensus-based theories take a more reciprocal approach: individuals want protection and submit to rule in return for that protection (Adams, 2005; Ertman, 1997; Gorski, 2003; Hui, 2005; Vu, 2010). Vu's perspective in the 2010 article "Studying the state through state formation" synthesizes these perspectives and concludes that both sets of theories have merit but are highly dependent on the specific context of particular

states and are not universally applicable. As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, in the case of Egypt, coercion-based theories of state formation are more applicable.

The state and state formation, specifically in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), is a line of inquiry less often explored (Anderson, 1987). However, some critically important works have been conducted on MENA states and how they were formed (Anderson, 1987; Bromley, 1994; Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Hinnebusch, 2003). First, most MENA states, including Egypt, arose from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries. Anderson (1987) applies the Weberian definition of state to the region, arguing that it takes one of at least two forms: A political association with a legitimate administrative and military capability or a rational-legal bureaucracy. There are three key characteristics of how modern MENA states formed: defensive modernization, expediency, and European mandates after World War I (Anderson, 1987; Bromley, 1994; Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Hinnebusch, 2003). The defensive modernization approach argues that reformation and modernization occurred in response to external threats of domination (Anderson, 1987). Second, unlike the European states, most modern MENA states formed relatively quickly in terms of years instead of centuries (Lust, 2019). Finally, state formation in the MENA region cannot be understood without understanding how, after World War I, the collapsed Ottoman Empire was divided into mandates and effectively colonized by France and Britain. While their Mandate powers' official terms of rule over each state vary, their significant influence lasted decades across the region and was highly formative.

**Democratization**

The other crucial concept of this thesis is democratization, at the core of which is democracy. In his landmark book *Polyarchy,* Robert Dahl (1972) laid the groundwork for

defining and measuring democracy (Bernhagen, 2019). He lists the three crucial conditions for democracy; citizens' ability to form preferences, state those preferences, and have their preferences considered in government conduct. To have these opportunities, Dahl lists eight institutional guarantees of democracy:

> "Freedom to form and join organizations; freedom of expression; right to vote; right of political leaders to compete for support; alternative sources of information; eligibility for public office; free and fair elections; and institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference, (p. 3)".

The other essential part of Dahl's conceptualization of regimes is the variance in the proportion of the population allowed to participate in the political process. More recently, Schmitter and Karl (1991) have added two conditions to this list: elected officials must be able to execute duties without override from non-elected officials and the polity must be self-governing.

Huntington's "Third Wave" (1991) follows Schumpeter's (1976) minimal definition of democracy to build arguably the most widely utilized definition of democratization: replacing a government without popularly elected decision-makers via free, open, and fair elections. In addition to defining democracy, Huntington conceptualizes democratization, which is the process of moving from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. His work is part of the literature on transition, also called "transitology."

Transitology focuses on regime change from the distinct perspective that autocratic regimes can become democratic by focusing on free and fair elections and strong civil society (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Rustow, 1970; Schmitter and Karl, 1994). Transitology has plenty of detractors, primarily area studies scholars, and they make solid points. Bunce (1995) takes several issues with transitology: she sees it as an attack on area studies and argues that it is

more helpful to stick to within-region comparisons. She also takes issue with the assumption that transition and consolidation are an inevitable chain of events, common to all regime changes. This is also the central point Carothers (2002) makes. Both arguments indicate that regime change does not necessarily mean the regime type will change. Another autocratic regime can easily replace an authoritarian regime. As early transitology suggested, it will not always liberalize (see also Teti and Abbott, 2016). The position I take falls into the middle between transitologists and its critics: not every regime change leads to a regime transition. Furthermore, regional differences are crucial for understanding and comparing cases, especially when considering the context in which regime change occurs. While not wholly universal, a transition does happen frequently enough to merit intense study and comparison between regions to determine patterns.

The critical components of democratization are ending the nondemocratic regime, inaugurating the new democratic regime, and consolidation – the point at which no actor seeks to overthrow democracy (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Huntington developed the 'two-turnover' test as a marker of effective consolidation. By this measure, a democracy consolidates once power has been successfully transferred via free and fair elections at least twice between different sets of elites. In this understanding, democratic consolidation indicates that multiple parties are committed to upholding democratic processes and peaceful power transfers and that the public and elites operate within them.

In the Egyptian case, the first step of democratization clearly happened: Hosni Mubarak was deposed, and a series of elections occurred before Muhammad Morsi's presidency. Whether Egypt completed step two, democratic inauguration, is not entirely clear. Free and fair elections ushered in a new parliament and president, which could mean a transition. However, the

Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) and the courts constantly hindered their power. A constitution was ultimately finished during Morsi's tenure and approved by the citizenry through a referendum, but it was never really implemented or even recognized as legitimate by the existing elites due to a lack of inter-elite trust (Hassan et al., 2020). Huntington (1991) would classify Egypt's shift as a transformation instead of a replacement or a transplacement: Mubarak's removal was executed from the top by military elites, who then oversaw the transition process and fought the Freedom and Justice (FJP) party for control. Cooperation broke down; therefore, by Huntington's definition, the transition was incomplete. Elections are the most minimal definition of what constitutes a democracy, and most scholars agree that there is more required of a regime to be considered democratic. For this case, Schmitter and Karl's (1991) democratic condition that elected officials are able to exercise power without override is especially relevant. Morsi and the elected parliament never had free reign to exercise control because they were consistently undermined by the SCAF and Supreme Constitutional Court, even before elections happened. The immense power of political actors within these institutions exerted on the democratization process takes us to the discussion of the Deep State.

The basic definition of the Deep State is a "state within a state" with its own rules and structure, which the populace can neither see nor control (Mérieau, 2016; Söyler, 2013). In the case of Egypt, the Deep State comprises actors with a vested interest in maintaining an authoritarian regime. This includes military, police and security elites, the Mubarak-era judiciary, and the state-run media (Masoud, 2020; Smith and Gaviria, 2013). The Deep State aims to bend the official regime to meet its needs by manipulating public opinion. This is especially prevalent during national crises, which may or may not be manufactured. To the latter point, Deep State networks are known to create critical situations to influence which legislation

passes or which person or group gains power. The Deep State concept goes back to Fraenkel (1969), who wrote about the dualism of the Normative (formal) state and the Prerogative (arbitrary) state within Nazi Germany. He argues that without any legal regulation on political bodies, the most powerful political figures operate entirely at their discretion instead of working within any official framework (Fraenkel, 1969). In describing how these actors operate, Paxton (2004) describes uneasy alliances amongst those committed to undermining official institutions, eventually creating "parallel structures" (p. 121). These networks are prone to power struggles and tensions as different members have agendas, and outcomes depend on which faction has the most control at a given time. Both sources examine Deep States within the fascist German and Italian contexts of the 20th century. In current cases, Deep States have been most widely explored in Türkiye (Gingeras, 2010; Gürbüz, 2016; Kaya, 2009; Söyler, 2013), Italy (Ganser, 2009; Hess, 2009), and recently the United States (Ganser, 2012; Michaels, 2017; Scott, 2017).

There is also some work on the Egyptian Deep State specifically. Zeinab Abdul-Magd's *Militarizing the Nation* (2016) analyzes how deeply the Egyptian military has penetrated civilian society, especially the economy, dating back to the 1950s. Hazem Kandil (2012; 2016) has written two books on the Egyptian military's political power. The first, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen* (2012), addresses the importance of military support or neutrality in determining revolutionary outcomes before applying it to the Egyptian context. The second, *The Power Triangle* (2016), compares the military-security-political power struggles of Iran, Türkiye, and Egypt and how that power balance affected regime change in each. The literature on the Egyptian Deep State generally agrees that the military, represented by high-ranking elites, has significant control over all branches of the Egyptian government and the economy. During the 2011-2013 period, the judiciary also proved an adept wing of the Egyptian Deep State capable of

impacting Egypt's elections, constitution, and ultimately its regime (Abdul-Magd, 2016; Elharathi, 2016; Filiu, 2015; Kandil, 2012; Kandil, 2016; Norton, 2013).

**Capacity and Democratization**

This brings us to the specific theoretical intersection of this thesis: state capacity, as it is created through path-dependent state formation, and its impact on democratization and democratic consolidation. State capacity's effect on democratization, or regime change in general, is rarely covered in political science literature (Hanson, 2015). However, there are a handful of key studies on the subject, not all of which agree on a causal direction. Bäck and Hadenius (2008) studied the effect of democracy on administrative capacity. They found that a weak democracy has a negative impact, moderate democracy has no effect, and strong democracy has a positive effect on administrative capacity. Soifer (2013) found that inequality can be a crucial factor in democratic transitions – but only in states with high capacity. In weak capacity states, inequality did not affect the autocracy-democracy shift.

Similarly, D'Arcy and Nistotskaya (2017) found that states fared better at enforcing democratic institutions when they built capacity before the transition. They argue that the capacity-to-democracy sequence has produced better democratic outcomes than the democracy-to-capacity sequence, using predemocratic cadastral data to measure historical capacity. Because they examine capacity that predates democratization, comparing how successful it was, they make a strong case for the 'state first' side of the sequence debate. However, relying solely on one type of capacity measurement is not sufficient. Their focus on cadastral records is reasonable based on their incredibly lengthy time frame (from 1 CE through the date of democratization). Cadasters are "inventories of individual land parcels and land ownership" (p. 194). They are an excellent measure of administrative capacity because they speak to how well-organized the state

bureaucracy is: but they are not particularly indicative of extractive or coercive capacities. Having accurate property records does not automatically mean a state can efficiently collect related revenue from landowners, nor does it automatically mean the state can successfully enforce property laws. Therefore, their independent variable is incompletely measured, tapping administrative capacity but failing to capture coercive and extractive capacities.

Perhaps the most high-profile work on democratization, Linz and Stepan (1996) argue that a minimum level of state capacity must exist for democratic consolidation. Besides this article, Jessica Fortin-Rittberger has done several studies on the state capacity and its interaction with regime change, specifically focusing on post-communist states in Eastern Europe. In 2011, Fortin-Rittberger used quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine whether capacity played a role in the success or failure of democratic transition in 26 post-communist states. She found that a strong infrastructural capacity was necessary for democratic institutions to form and survive. The following year, she found that higher preexisting state capacity increased the probability of a founding election and decreased the projected electoral success of the communist successor party (2012). However, in another piece Fortin-Rittberger (2014) explicitly noted that a strong state capacity does not necessarily mean a country will democratize; in fact, autocracies with a strong state capacity are relatively difficult to change and could thwart democratic transition (see also Herrera and Martinelli, 2011).

One iteration of how strong autocracies can undermine democratization is state capture, or the elite's state resource extraction for private gains (Grzymala-Busse, 2008). These elites, as individuals, oligarchs, parties, factions, or corporations can influence policy and institutions for their gain at the expense of building state capacity (Hellman et al., 2000; Levi, 1988). This concept has primarily been applied to Eastern Europe except in Rijker et al.'s 2016 article using

state capture in Ben Ali-era Tunisia. Building on these works, this thesis will apply the state capture concept to Egypt: the most apparent faction is the military elite, which has seemingly not been studied in this context.

Specific to the MENA region, Bellin (2004; 2012) and Brownlee et al. (2015) have done tremendous work on capacity and its connection to autocratic strength and resiliency. Bellin (2004) argued that the strength of coercive capacity helps explain why democratization in the region has proven so difficult. This is perhaps the best explanation of why Egypt has been unable to democratize, as capacity analysis will show: But it does not explain where these capacities come from and how their unique formation can affect democratization. She returned to this work in 2012, during the Arab Spring, to reevaluate the connection between capacity and authoritarianism. The Arab Spring confirmed her finding that the military, the central coercive apparatus a state has, plays a vital role in the survival of authoritarian regimes. Specifically, the military's will to remain loyal to or defect against an autocrat can determine whether a rebellion becomes a revolution. Brownlee et al. (2015) similarly emphasize coercive capacity for authoritarian survival. However, both Bellin and Brownlee et al. emphasize coercive capacity (with little focus on extractive or administrative capacity) for authoritarian survival without fully extending its explanatory capability to successful or failed democratic transition (inauguration of a democratic regime, in Huntington's terms) and consolidation. In other words, these authors focus on authoritarian survival and not democratic failure. While the revolutionary groups that bring down an autocrat play a role in the success or failure of consolidation, I focus on capacity through the entire regime change process, particularly to examine its effect after the authoritarian breakdown occurs.

## 2.2 – Theoretical Framework

The theory of this thesis is that the combination of high coercive and low administrative state capacity negatively affects democratization. State capacity is highly institutionalized, which means that capacity in the past is predictive of capacity today (Hanson and Sigman, 2019). State capacity forms congruently with state formation and becomes further institutionalized during periods of modernization. This makes state capacity challenging to change.

Certain presentations of state capacity are poorly compatible with democratization: specifically, high coercive and low administrative capacity create conditions inhospitable for democratization. High coercive capacity can harm democratization if the military has more power than the official branches of government. Low administrative capacity also makes democratization difficult because it indicates that the bureaucratic workforce that would need to be involved in the democratization process is weak, fractured, or nonexistent in some way. An inadequate administrative capacity leaves a power vacuum that a strong military could fill. This combination of strong coercive and weak administrative capacity creates an environment where the balance of power tips in favor of the military over the government, the judiciary, and the citizens.

### State Capacity's Longevity

State capacity is highly institutionalized and difficult to change. It is linked to how a state forms and modernizes. How a state forms, and which institutions are created or modernized speaks to the priorities of elites and, to an extent, the populace. If elites are primarily interested in having a strong military, for example, the institutions that contribute to the military will be the priority in terms of time and resources spent. This also means that institutions unrelated to the military will likely be neglected, if addressed at all. Circumstances during state formation and

modernization are also influential. The defensive modernization concept is an excellent example of why elites form specific institutional priorities. Proponents of defensive modernization argue that many states modernized primarily to protect themselves from external encroachment. Undertaking modernization reforms to stave off colonization or imperialism certainly looks different from states that were driven foremost by, for example, economic growth. The priorities are different, and so are the outcomes. How a state forms reflects its capacity to function and achieve its goals.

Because state capacity connects to state formation, it usually does not vary significantly over time. The state and its characteristics transcend regime and government changeover (O'Neil, 2018). Hanson and Sigman (2019) found that a state's capacity in 1960 was strongly predictive of its capacity in 2015, even when controlling for GDP and regime type. Because of its historical longevity, historical institutional methodologies are ideally suited to analyze state capacity.

**When is State Capacity incompatible with Democracy?**

Certain presentations and contexts of state capacity are less compatible with democratization processes. Specifically, a strong coercive and a weak administrative capacity can harm democratization, especially when cooccurring. Coercive capacity has internal and external dimensions: maintaining order and enforcing policy internally while protecting borders against external threats. Within this view, a state with a robust coercive capacity would likely have a well-funded and trained standing military that can successfully overcome insurrections from fringe groups or outside actors and an internal police force that can address day-to-day crime. On the other hand, a state with weak coercive capacity would be unlikely to prevent internal or external hostile groups from committing frequent acts of violence. It would also likely

have a weak or corrupt criminal justice system: in this situation, it is common to see informal actors, like local gangs or militias, enforcing law and order on their terms.

Administrative capacity is a broad subcategory that can overlap with coercive or extractive capacities in specific contexts. There are four dimensions: developing policies, producing goods and services for the public, delivering said goods and services, and commercial regulation (Hanson and Sigman, p. 5). A vital component underpinning all these dimensions is the depth and breadth of a competent and loyal – but not corrupt – bureaucratic workforce. A substantial professional workforce can achieve administrative goals in a high administrative capacity state. They are well-trained and well-funded, and corruption is at a minimum. This means policies are reviewed fairly and timely; government-funded operations, such as the census or public education, have the personnel and resources to function; and the economy from the local to the international level, is tracked and managed. The opposite can be expected in a low administrative capacity state: the bureaucratic workforce is poorly funded and trained and corruption is likely. Those who are well-connected would be able to influence policy and gain high-paying positions or government contracts, while those who are or could become qualified are excluded.

A strong coercive capacity is not necessarily detrimental to a democratic regime. In fact, a monopoly on violence can be crucial for democratic regime stability (Andersen et al., 2014). A strong military can uphold and protect democratic institutions from external and internal threats. A clear example is the United States, a long-standing democracy with the world's largest military budget (Da Silva et al., 2021). However, this does not mean that a strong coercive capacity is universally correlated with democracy, nor is the inverse true. Andersen et al. (2014) found that strong coercive capacity was necessary for regime survival in general, for both

democracies and autocracies. This is especially important, as coercive capacity can be a prohibitive factor to democratization.

While a high administrative capacity does not correlate with a specific regime type, a low administrative capacity is seemingly incongruent with democracy. The Government Effectiveness Rating from the Worldwide Governance Indicators and Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)'s measure of rigorous and impartial public administration are two often-used and well-respected indices for measuring administrative capacity (Hanson and Sigman, 2019). However, in comparing these indices with V-Dem's liberal democracy indices, there appears to be no democratic country with a low administrative capacity. This suggests that a high administrative capacity is not exclusive to any regime type; low administrative capacity indicates an anocratic[1] or autocratic regime. This finding is in line with the work by Jessica Fortin-Rittberger, a scholar of Post-Communist Europe. She argues that, for states to become democratic, they must already have a certain ability to maintain and deliver public goods (Fortin-Rittberger, 2012).

It is necessary to explore whether and how the third dimension of state capacity, namely extractive capacity, impacts democratization. Based on the literature, there does not seem to be any relationship between extractive capacity and democratization. As discussed in the literature review, there is a body of work examining the connection between state capacity and democratization: that literature collectively tends to focus on administrative or coercive capacity, not extractive capacity.

Hanson and Sigman (2019) determined that because massive tax collection operations require a high level of state functionality, the percentage of state GDP of tax revenue strongly

[1] Anocracy was coined by the Polity Project to refer to regimes that are neither democratic nor autocratic. I prefer the term anocratic over others such as hybrid regimes, grey democracies, etc. Because it denotes these regimes as conceptually distinct, rather than a pseudo-version of a democracy or autocracy.

indicates extractive capacity. There are many examples of strongly autocratic states with a high percentage of GDP coming from tax revenue. The most extreme example is Cuba, one of the most repressive autocracies in the world, with the third-highest tax revenue percentage (Hanson and Sigman, 2019; V-Dem, 2021). There are also examples of democracies with low tax revenue rates, including Costa Rica and Argentina. Argentina in particular is an excellent example of a state going through democratization and completing democratic consolidation without significant changes to its extractive capacity. There is no solid evidence that extractive capacity impacts democratization consistently or predictably, positively or negatively.

As such, this thesis focuses on the initial two sub-capacities. So, what happens when a non-democratic state with low administrative and high coercive capacity begins democratization? The current body of work suggests that a state with low administrative capacity is unlikely to democratize successfully. However, it also says that a high coercive capacity is essential for regime stability and plays a significant role in democratization. Still, that role can either be helpful or harmful to the process. This means a state with high coercive and low administrative capacity that undergoes a democratic transition is unlikely to succeed in its efforts.

**Expected Observations**

If this theory is correct, how does the democratization process look in states with this combination of high coercive and low administrative capacity? Military institutions will be the most well-funded and well-organized state apparatus during state formation and modernization processes if the military gets priority. Police or other security forces will be similarly prioritized. Leaders will most likely have a military background and staff critical positions with current or former high-ranking military officials. Additionally, development in other areas – economy,

bureaucracy, industry, political infrastructure, etc. – is done to support the military. Development that cannot reasonably be connected to coercive power will not get the same funding or attention, nor will the people leading these institutions have significant political power.

What does this lead to? A strong military, yes: but also a military that feels entitled to its funding, power, and influence. To take from Power Triangle literature, the military subordinates security and political institutions (Kandil, 2012; 2016). Whether in an official capacity or not, top military officials wield significant political power in this context. Military bureaucracy is well-funded and well-organized, while others are not. Bureaucratic institutions, such as educational or health ministries, are funded and organized only to the extent that they are necessary for keeping officials well-trained and soldiers healthy. These institutions may also be led and staffed by former military officials. While the goal may be efficiency, prioritizing former military officials over civilians with expertise in each field means these institutions are poorly run (Abdul-Magd, 2017).[2] Institutions that have been neglected, such as environmental or housing ministries, will be poorly funded and poorly run. Industry in the country will likely focus on military-related products, such as weapons or armor. Other sectors will likely focus on exports, the profits from which go back into coercive development.

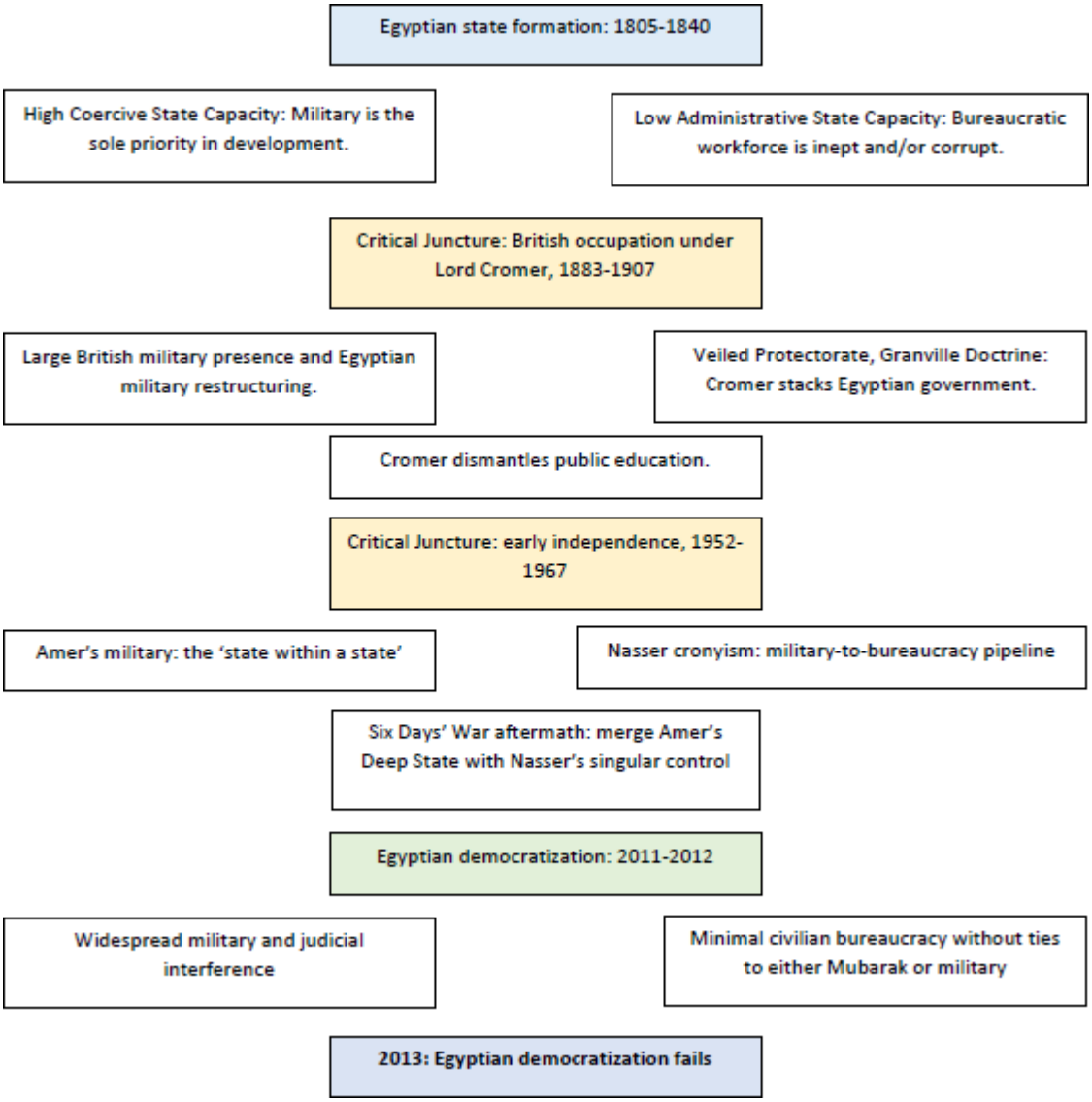
At critical junctures, what happens in this environment? In transitional or high-tension moments, the state's impulse will be to rely on military and coercive power over other potential avenues. Because coercive institutions have consistently been given priority, they are the least likely to fall and the most poised to lead. These institutions are going to focus on self-preservation, so the option chosen will be the option that maintains military power and economic

[2] There was also a fascinating Vice article that came out recently discussing the Taliban's difficult transition from war victor to state bureaucrats: https://www.vice.com/en/article/3ad3z8/taliban-bureaucrats-hate-working-online-all-day-miss-the-days-of-jihad

dominance. Other institutions are less powerful and less efficient than the military, so they will defer to them whether they want to or not. Civilians have never had access to the same levels of training, education, or connections, so they are simply not as well equipped to take control. Significant financial risk is involved in diminishing military power because the state's economy closely aligns with coercive institutions.

All these points are also valid and essential to consider when such a state undergoes democratization. A high level of military control over politics is inherently undemocratic: therefore, out of self-preservation, the military in this environment will intentionally undermine the democratization process. As discussed in the previous paragraph, there is little or no well-trained and meritocratic bureaucracy that isn't intertwined with the military. Most people best suited to step up during democratization are loyal to the military. The private sector relies on the military. Military influence over state apparatus (legislature, courts, political elite) makes corruption likely. Ultimately, the entrenchment of military power over the state and an administrative vacuum will likely stop democratization efforts from succeeding. Figure 1 below shows the expected micro-processes that form the links between state formation, development of state capacity and democratization in the political history of Egypt from the time of Muhammad Ali until the coup against Muhammad Morsi in 2013.

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**



## 2.3 – Methodology

### Variables and Data

#### *Independent Variable A: High Coercive Capacity*

Coercive capacity can easily be measured by the size of the military and its share of GDP. However, this measurement can miss crucial evidence of power and influence. Hanson and Sigman's (2019) data are an example of this gap: they successfully measure military expenditure per capita, and that information would suggest that Egypt's military is weaker than it is. While financial information is important, I suggest that military-civilian enmeshment can capture its influence within a state and that qualitative measures can better capture this. Through process tracing, I will look for characteristics of high coercive capacity during state formation at critical junctures. This will be evident by which people are in charge and which institutions are prioritized in development processes. It will also be apparent how closely non-military institutions, such as educational or financial apparatuses, are connected to the military. In the Egyptian Revolution and subsequent coup, I will examine the military's role in Mubarak's ouster, the democratization process, and the ultimate overthrow of Morsi.

#### *Independent Variable B: Low Administrative Capacity*

Administrative capacity can be measured in several ways, but census data has proven reliable in capturing bureaucratic efficacy. However, I think corruption is critical to address directly. I will examine which bureaucratic institutions are or are not prioritized in development, why, and how leadership positions for those institutions are chosen. Are ministers selected because of their qualifications, professional experience, or their connections to those in power? Which positions seem to be coveted and which ones, due to lack of resources, seem to be

relegations of punishment for detractors or the particularly poorly connected? Who is in charge, and whose perspectives are intentionally excluded during the Egyptian Revolution and coup?

### *Dependent Variable: Degree of Democratization Success*

While Egypt experienced an authoritarian breakdown in 2011, I aim to determine whether it completed a democratic transition after this breakdown. To examine this, I will use Schmitter and Karl's (1991) conditions of democracy to determine whether Egypt ever became a democracy. Each dimension is important, but I am particularly interested in whether the elected officials could govern unhindered by non-elected actors.

### *Data Sources*

I will use primary and secondary sources to complete this project. My main source of information for discussing state formation will be Cleveland and Bunton's (2016) *History of the modern Middle East*. This text is comprehensive and widely respected as a factual and objective account of Middle Eastern history. It also references a wealth of primary sources, which I review independently. As a general regional history text, gaining more information from supplemental sources is necessary. Khaled Fahmy (1998; 2020; 2021) has several works on Ali-era Egypt and Nasser-era Egypt that provide detailed information. For information on Tunisia, Perkins's (2014) *A History of Modern Tunisia* is the most comprehensive source of information and is supplemented with others as needed. Finally, to develop a detailed account of the Egyptian revolution and subsequent coup, Brownlee et al.'s (2015) *Beyond the Arab Spring* and Gelvin's (2015) *The Arab Uprisings* are excellent academic sources of information. Because this revolution happened in the Internet age, I also have access to a wealth of primary accounts through social media posts, online articles, and documentaries.

**Case Study**

The methodology this thesis employs is case-study analysis. George and Bennett (2005) define a case study as "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events" (p. 26). The case for this thesis is Egypt, specifically during the Arab Uprising era from 2011-2013. George and Bennett (2005) outline four primary benefits of a case study. First is conceptual validity: because of the relatively small focus, researchers can narrowly define and explore concepts that are difficult to quantifiably measure while avoiding conceptual stretching. Case studies are also helpful in deriving new inductive hypotheses because they rely on primary sources. On a small-N scale, case studies help in teasing out causal mechanisms within a series of phenomena by focusing on crucial context and differentiating between explanation and causation. Finally, while case studies may struggle with large-scale generalizability, they are relatively robust for understanding complex causal relationships, precisely because they take context and conditionality into account.

According to Lijphart (1971), six case study categories are based on outcome goals: atheoretical, interpretive, hypothesis-generating, theory-confirming, theory-infirming, and deviant. Lijphart notes that no study is likely to fall neatly into one category, as with this thesis. The work has aspects of theory confirmation; there is already work arguing that strong state capacity, particularly powerful coercive capacity, can help explain autocratic survival. However, the existing literature's focus on authoritarian survival does not extend to democratization and consolidation. Additionally, it does not address the importance of administrative state capacity in the democratization process. Therefore, because this thesis addresses this gap while extending existing theories into democratization, it also contains aspects of hypothesis generation.

Case studies to develop hypotheses or test theories can then be formatted in three ways: "controlled comparison, congruence procedures, and process tracing" (Van Evera, 1997, p. 56). This thesis will utilize process tracing, which explores a chain of events or processes in which beginning conditions translate into specific outcomes. This involves determining precise cause-and-effect factors and then looking for evidence of these factors within a case. There will also be an aspect of controlled comparison to understand and control antecedent variables. Case studies, particularly process tracing, are an optimal way to examine path dependence (Bennett and Elman, 2006).

The best way to summarize path dependency is the statement, "history matters" (Pierson, 2000, p. 253). It suggests that decisions made at a specific time in history, especially at a critical juncture, affect institutional and political outcomes in the future, making some outcomes more likely than others. The path dependency concept has four elements: "causal possibility, contingency, closure, and constraint," (Bennett and Elman, 2006, p. 252). Causal possibility requires investigators to consider the other possible outcomes. For example, the path would not matter if the outcome was inevitable. This means different possible results did not occur. Next, the outcome is contingent on a specific, unintended factor. This contingency then closes off certain possible effects while making others more likely. This is part of what causes constraint on the actors: some outcomes are impossible or too costly to consider, so they are, to some degree, constrained to the path previously set out.

### *Case Study Limitations*

There are notable weaknesses in the case study method, which researchers should do well to mitigate. As Van Evera (1997) stated, the most common issues with case studies are lack of control over additional variables and lack of generalizability. Social scientists have developed

ways to account for these weaknesses. Van Evera (1997) recommends mitigating the issue by conducting additional case studies. I include Tunisia as a shadow comparative case and use controlled comparison. To bolster generalizability, one can choose cases with similar background conditions and different outcomes and control for alternative variables, choosing cases with uniform background conditions and extremely different outcomes. Similar background conditions minimize the explanatory power of those conditions to explain different outcomes. The logic behind this approach comes from John Stuart Mill's method of difference. The idea is to compare two similar cases with a critical difference (IV) with different outcomes (DV): the similarities work as control variables and lend explanatory power to the crucial difference between the cases (Mill, 1843).

**Case Selection**

The Arab Uprisings of the 2010s are definitive comparative case studies because, on the surface, there are several similarities amongst a group of countries that each had different outcomes. In 2011 and 2012, 17 MENA countries experienced some degree of unrest: in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya, revolutions toppled incumbents, leading to authoritarian breakdowns (Lust, 2019; see Table 1 below). In addition, the relatively small geographic area and short timeframe of the Arab Uprisings speak to the relevance of time and place for the Uprisings as a whole but also allow control when comparing cases within the event.

**Table 1: Lust's Regime Type, Mobilization, and Resilience during the Arab Uprisings**

**TABLE 3.3 ■ Regime Type, Mobilization, and Resilience during the Arab Uprisings, 2011–2012**

| | Little mobilization | Partial mobilization | Mass mobilization | Violent unrest |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monarchy | Qatar<br>Saudi Arabia<br>UAE | Jordan<br>Kuwait<br>Morocco | Oman<br>Bahrain | |
| One-party (republican) | Algeria | | **Egypt**<br>**Tunisia**<br>**Yemen** | Syria |
| Revolutionary experiment | | | | **Libya** |
| Competitive | Lebanon<br>Iraq<br>Palestine | | | |

*Source:* Author's records.

*Note:* Bold denotes cases in which the incumbent was removed from power.

*Lust, E. (2019).* The Middle East*. SAGE Publications.*

There was a different outcome in the four cases where authoritarian breakdown occurred. Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution was the first uprising in the region during this period. President Ben Ali was overthrown within a month of the first protests, with relatively little violence. It was difficult for the different revolutionary factions to unite, and transition processes nearly failed many times. Despite the difficulty, Tunisia completed a democratic transition culminating in multiple peaceful transitions of power between democratically elected officials. However, it now appears that Tunisia's young democracy is undergoing democratic backsliding, with President Saied's power grab in 2021 and the 2022 constitutional referendum to maintain his new high level of control.

Egypt completed a partial, or by some measures short-lived, democratic transition. Mubarak was overthrown quickly in February 2011, but the new president, Mohammad Morsi,

was not elected until June 2012. The Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) led the interim government. Morsi's presidency was short-lived: after months of protests, the Egyptian military overthrew him in June 2013. The SCAF retook control of the country, and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, a high-ranking military officer and Morsi's former defense secretary ascended to the presidency in May 2014. Yet even during Morsi's presidency, he and the elected parliament could never fully take over, as they were constantly blocked from making substantive democratic progress. Schmitter and Karl (1991) suggest that for a country to be considered democratic, competitive elections are not sufficient; elected officials should be able to govern unencumbered by unelected actors. Based on the importance of this condition, and the influence of the Egyptian military on the Morsi government, I argue that, even after the conclusion of democratic elections, Egypt never successfully completed its democratic transition.

In Libya, Gaddafi's ouster took the most extended time and saw the most violence. He was killed in October 2011, which ended the country's initial civil war. While elections happened swiftly after Gaddafi's death, the country has seen war and chaos. The Government of National Accord (GNA) is the most widely recognized Libyan government outside Libya. Still, numerous political-military groups vie for power, none of which have managed to take control of the country entirely. The second Libyan Civil War technically ended in 2020, but the country remains fractured and largely ungoverned at the federal level (Plummer, 2022).

After Yemeni President Saleh's resignation in November 2011, Yemen's status quo did not change. His Vice President, 'Abd Rabbuh Manşur al-Hadi, took over in February 2012 (Brownlee et al., 2015). However, the country broke into an ongoing civil war in 2014, devastating the people and the state (Center for Preventative Action, 2022).

### *Why Egypt?*

Egypt's high coercive capacity and low administrative capacity fit the scope of this thesis well, as does the durability of the Egyptian state. There were four cases in which MENA states experienced regime breakdown. Brownlee et al. (2015) argue that, due to the heightened security environment of the region, all Arab states have high capacity relative to the rest of the world. Libya has a high coercive capacity in the sense its military is large. Yemen also has a high coercive capacity; it spends much of its GDP on the military. Both states also have weak administrative capacities: According to the Varieties of Democracy government efficacy ratings, both are quite low. However, neither Yemen nor Libya would be strong choices for this thesis because neither is a durable state. More often than not, Yemen has experienced civil war in its history, only unifying in 1990, and has now been in a renewed civil war since 2014. Libya has also been fractured for most of its history. The Libyan state was formed by three previously separate Italian colonies in 1934, was redivided during Allied occupation after World War II, and is arguably now a failed state as there is no clear territorial control (Mundy, 2020). A necessary condition of studying state capacity is the existence of an enduring state. For this reason, Egypt fits best.

Egypt's brief foray toward democratization is empirically distinct. The autocrat was indeed overthrown. There were competitive elections for the legislature, which the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) dominated. Muhammad Morsi became the first (and only) democratically elected president in Egyptian history. But even before those historic elections, the institutions that remained after Mubarak's ousting undermined Egypt's democratic efforts.

### *Controlled Comparison: Why Tunisia?*

Comparison is helpful for causal validity: comparing Egypt to another case with early-stage similarities with different outcomes will help eliminate other potential explanations. The type of controlled comparison in this thesis also helps mitigate selection bias, specifically on the dependent variable. To better understand the independent variables' impact, I chose another case with a different outcome for controlled comparison.

There are three other potential cases to compare with Egypt. Therefore, an initial comparison of Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, and Libya was necessary to determine the best choice. As evidenced by Figure 3 below, all four states have similarities. They each observed large-scale citizen mobilization and saw authoritarian breakdown. Yet there are vital variations that make case selection easier. Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen have lower oil rent percentages than Libya, considered a rentier state. The literature overwhelmingly finds that rentier states have stable regimes, which helps explain why Libya was the only rentier state to experience a breakdown. Resource wealth also increases external interest and involvement in domestic events (Omeje, 2010). External actors heavily influenced Libya and Yemen's outcomes, while others did not. External military involvement in political turnover makes determining causality more difficult.

Critical for this analysis is comparing state formation. Anderson (1987) outlined developmental characteristics that hold true for most countries in the MENA region. In the 19$^{th}$ century, defensive modernization was the primary motivation behind institutional development in the Ottoman Empire and the surrounding areas due to the external threat of European imperialism and colonialism (Rustow and Ward, 1964). Possibly due to the urgency leaders felt to maintain sovereignty, modern institutions formed relatively quickly over decades (as opposed to centuries, as seen in Europe). After World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire,

MENA borders were drawn up by the winning powers, mainly implementing the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Formerly Ottoman territory was divided into British, French, Italian, and Russian spheres of influence. While formal protectorates were generally short-lived, informal imperialist presences remained well into the 20th century. These characteristics – defensive modernization in the 19th century, a short period, and a legacy of imperialism – comprise the modern Arab state formation model. Yemen does not fit the model particularly well of the three potential secondary cases because it existed as two separate countries until 1990, meaning that parts of the state formed in vastly different ways at different times. This leaves Tunisia as the clear choice.

**Table 2: Case Selection**

| Preliminary Case Selection | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Egypt** | **Libya** | **Tunisia** | **Yemen** |
| Succession | Non-hereditary | Non-hereditary | Non-hereditary | Non-hereditary |
| Incumbent term length | 30 years | 42 years | 24 years | 34 years |
| Oil rents (% of GDP), 2009 | 6.1 | 48.2 | 3.2 | 20.2 |
| Coercive break from incumbent | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| Sunni Arab % | 90% | 97% | 98% | 65% |
| Arab state formation model fit | Yes | Yes | Yes | Not quite |
| Main imperial influence | Great Britain | Italy | France | Great Britain (south) |
| Youth bulge? | 30% | 34% | 29% | 69% |
| Unemployment % | 9.10% | 19.40% | 13.30% | 12.70% |
| GDP per capita | $2,331.30 | $9,913.70 | $4,128.50 | $1,116.10 |
| Population | 81,134,789 | 6,133,987 | 10,525,691 | 22,516,464 |
| Democratization stage reached | Inauguration | Regime end | Consolidation | Regime end |
| External actor involvement | Minimal | Significant | Minimal | Some; increased after Houthi rebellion |

## 2.4 – Chapter Summary

This chapter has gone through the existing literature on state capacity and democratization, and work that examines the relationship between the two concepts. There is evidence that state capacity impacts democratization, but there is no precise answer as to how. Fortin-Rittberger argues that high administrative capacity seems necessary for democratization, while Andersen et al. found that coercive capacity can help or hinder depending on specific circumstances. Brownlee et al.'s work examine how pre-existing state efficacy directly impacted

the outcomes of the Arab revolutions. This thesis goes a step further: I argue that the specific combination of high coercive capacity and low administrative capacity are inhospitable to democratization. In the following chapters, I will illustrate my argument via a case study of Egyptian state formation, critical junctures, and finally, its democratization effort after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. To strengthen the causal claim of my argument, I will also conduct a controlled comparison of Tunisia's path to the Jasmine Revolution and explain why the outcomes were so different.

# CHAPTER III: STATE FORMATION AND STATE CAPACITY IN EGYPT[3]

## 3.1 – Egyptian State Formation, 1805-1840

To understand Egyptian state capacity, we need to understand Egyptian state formation. The modern Egyptian state formed in the first half of the 19th century under the direction of Pasha Muhammad Ali. This section illustrates Ali's modernization mentality by discussing how he conceived the creation of high coercive capacity through military power as the way toward complete independence. Independence was the goal, so high coercive capacity was the top priority. All other modernization efforts were to support the military. When Ali could not secure independence and was forced to downsize the military, state infrastructure became unimportant and fell by the wayside.

Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1517. By the late 18th century, the Ottoman state was relatively weak, making its territories vulnerable to attack and invasion. This is precisely what happened in 1789, when France invaded Egypt to secure its trade routes. French occupation continued until 1801 when the Ottoman campaign successfully forced France out. A key leader of that campaign was Muhammad Ali, an Albanian commander in the Ottoman army. After gaining the territory back, Sultan Selim III appointed Ali as viceroy of Egypt, where he received significant freedom to rule. Between Ottoman weakness and Selim's trust in Ali, Egypt gained de facto independence from the empire.

For Middle Eastern leaders, the main takeaway of the French occupation in Egypt was that European countries had powerful armies that could "mount a complex amphibious expedition" (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016, p. 62). Middle Eastern leaders realized that military capacity had to be the priority to gain or maintain independence from European forces. This was

[3] Unless otherwise specifically noted, information comes from Cleveland, W.L. and Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East (6th edition)*. Routledge.

certainly the priority for Muhammad Ali. Despite being named viceroy by the sultan, there was a years-long power struggle for controlling Egypt. Ali was ultimately successful and became Pasha in 1805 beginning a comprehensive modernization effort that would eventually shape the Egyptian state for centuries. Ali's two main goals were achieving complete Egyptian independence from the Ottoman Empire establishing dynastic rule. He made all of his decisions to achieve these two goals.

When Egypt became autonomous from the Ottoman Empire in the late 18th century, the Mamluk caste controlled it. However, when Ali became governor, Egypt became a de facto independent state. The occupation convinced Ali that the path to official independence was through a powerful military with the capacity to protect Egyptian borders and conquer additional territory. He was so impressed by the French and British militaries, he decided to style the modern Egyptian military in European fashion. The first step was wresting power from the Mamluks, the biggest challengers to Ali's control. Originally a slave caste, the Mamluks comprised the bulk of the Ottoman military; they were also the wealthiest landowners in Egypt. Despite their unpopularity with the Egyptian populace, they proved difficult for Ali to overpower. He spent six years trying to institute reforms and get the most influential Mamluks on his side, to no avail. Ultimately, Ali massacred the majority of the Mamluk caste in 1811. Power through violence was Ali's strategy from here on out.

The next step was developing an officer corps inspired by the European model. Ali opened an officer training school in Aswan with European instructors, who took classes on several training missions to France and other European countries. Several educational institutions were also developed and opened in the 1820-1840s, specifically designed to support the new military, including medicine, veterinary medicine, engineering, and chemistry schools. Ali also

developed a new language center to train translators and create educational materials in Arabic. His educational priorities were all military focused because Ali was convinced that coercive capacity was the key to achieving his goals: developing a public administration was secondary, and its aim was to support the military.

A well-trained officer corps was important, but they needed an army to lead. Ali instituted military conscription, a new concept in Egypt: he ordered 4,000 peasants to report for training in 1822. The foot soldiers of the Egyptian army were then comprised mainly of Egyptian peasants from rural areas, forcibly taken to training camps against their will and answering to a Turkish officer class for their contractual three-year service (Fahmy, 1998). Conscription, in particular, influenced Egypt's administrative development. Ali created a conscription registry which eventually developed into a national census. Once again, Ali developed Egypt's administrative capacity to support its coercive capacity. In this way, bureaucratic structures are only as effective as they need to serve the military, no more. Additionally, a portion of the new army comprised of enslaved Sudanese men. With 4,000 Ottoman troops, Ali invaded Sudan in 1820. Egypt was victorious in 1824, and Ali then forced an additional 3,000 Sudanese men to join the Egyptian army. In less than a decade, the Egyptian standing army swelled to 130,000 well-trained men (Fahmy, 1998).

To support this massive military expansion, Ali needed financial resources. Between 1805-1815, he abolished tax farming and nationalized nearly all Egyptian land, redistributing ownership to key loyalists and family members. This allowed most of the agrarian profit to go to the state. The redistribution system reinforced to elites the importance of loyalty to the Pasha: nepotism was the way of the land, so getting and staying on Ali's good side was beneficial. Most of the newly nationalized land was used to grow cotton, Egypt's largest export. Ali also began

taxing waqf endowments. In Islam, waqfs are charitable donations. These can be regular continuous donations or one large donation such as buildings, land, or sums of money in a charitable trust (Islamic Society of North America, 2020). Not only did taxing waqfs create a new revenue stream, but it also checked religious institutional power.

Ali also modernized other industries to support the new military. Egyptian industrialization heavily focused on military-related goods, such as weapons. Non-military ventures were short-lived, which further speaks to Ali's single-minded focus. Ali had a particularly harsh way of staffing nationalized factories. Many peasants purposely mutilated their arms and hands to avoid military conscription. They thought they would be exempt if they could not physically fire a gun. Instead, Ali made these men work in the factories along with other peasants unfit for military conscription (Fahmy, 1998). Egypt eventually developed an industrial workforce of 30,000-40,000 peasants, specifically creating products for his military. Not only was Egypt's administrative capacity focused on coercive support, but the economy was also.

After a military campaign in Greece in 1827, Ali decided it was finally time to push for Egyptian independence. The regional balance of power favored Egypt, with an increasingly weak sultanate in Istanbul and French and British leaders resistant to destabilizing a crucial trade partner and post. After the Ottoman Empire was forced to concede to Greek independence, Ali, irked by the lack of compensation for Egyptian involvement, seized Syria and Lebanon from the Ottoman Empire in 1832. Britain's foreign secretary was hesitant to intervene on behalf of the Ottoman Empire despite the Sultan's requests. After Sultan Mahmud II secured 30,000 Russian troops to defend Istanbul, the British and French finally got involved, and Ali agreed to French mediation. The final deal strongly favored Ali: he remained Governor of Egypt and Crete, and

his son Ibrahim Governor of Damascus, Aleppo, and Adana. Mahmud II spent his final years failing to secure support for a retaliatory war against Egypt (Palmer, 1992).

It wasn't until Ali's second attempt to overtake the sultanate in 1839 that Britain and France saw Egypt as a real threat to their colonial and imperial interests in the Middle East. Ali was, again, unsuccessful, and this time Britain was determined to limit Egypt's political power. While the 1840 treaty established dynastic rule for Ali and his family, it forced him to give up control of Syria and Lebanon and limit the Egyptian military to 18,000 soldiers. The treaty did not address any other reforms or structural changes Ali made within Egypt. Colonial powers cut Egypt's coercive capacity down without addressing its administrative ability because its military force was where they saw a threat. Consequently, most of Ali's bureaucratic framework became obsolete with military depletion because they only served as a means to an end. Egyptian infrastructure fell into disrepair because it was already an afterthought.

Egypt's economic problems began with Ali's failed final attempt to establish an independent Egyptian empire. The forced 18,000 military cap made much of Ali's educational and economic reforms obsolete. Egyptian industry was designed to support a large standing military that no longer existed, so there was consequently less need for the weaponry that dominated Egyptian manufacturing. It also diminished the need for educational and training systems throughout the country, and most institutions fell into neglect. After Ali's reign, there was a growing need for Egypt to integrate into the international economy. This essentially meant shifting the Egyptian economy to fulfill European import needs. Egypt's economy became entirely reliant on exporting cotton and importing European-finished products. Trade deals with European powers limited Egyptians' ability to trade other goods or materials because it would

have dented their profit margins.[4] The stifled economy, combined with the hefty price tag of Ali's military campaigns and some particularly unlucky natural disasters, put Egyptian finances in crisis and led to massive debt.

Egypt owed most of its debt to Britain and France, and both governments were very concerned about getting their returns. In 1875, the desperate Khedive Ismail sold most of the Suez Canal shares to the British government to pay Egypt's debts. The following year, the Caisse de la Dette Commission wrested nearly all financial control from Ismail and redistributed authority between British and French representatives. Increasing European encroachment led to high tension between British citizens settling in Egypt and Egyptians; things came to a head in 1882 when the Anglo-Egyptian war broke out following the Urabi Revolt. Britain won and began its official occupation of Egypt.

### 3.2 – Critical Juncture I: The Cromer Era Reforms, 1883-1907

Following the war, Evelyn Baring, First Earl of Cromer became Egypt's first British consul-general in 1883. He had two primary goals: restore Egypt's ability to receive credit and maintain law and order. However, the context in which he accomplished these goals is essential to understand the outcome. As was standard then, Cromer believed that "Orientals" needed long-term tutelage from "advanced" societies like Britain. This form of cultural racism was used by the British and other European colonial powers to justify their rule. This viewpoint also justified continuing a practice used by Ali: favoritism toward non-Egyptians. This practice was known as the divide-and-rule strategy. By favoring a minority group over the majority ethnic group, casting them as racially or culturally superior to the majority, and giving them prioritized administrative positions, colonial leaders aimed to control the majority population living under

[4] This was the case across the entire Ottoman Empire. European merchants got precedence over locals, which killed a lot of local business outside of whatever crops were being exported to Europe.

their rule. Egypt was strategically important to British economic interests. Great Britain gained significant wealth by exporting manufactured goods all over the world, as well as by controlling trade routes. Alexandria was a crucial port on the trade route between Britain and India. It is in this context that Cromer instituted key reforms in Egypt.

The Earl of Cromer was appointed the first consul-general because of his experience running India; he was trusted to reshape Egypt through a British imperial lens. He entered Egypt with three primary goals: maintaining control over the Suez Canal, restoring Egypt's credit worthiness, and peacekeeping. Britain took control of the Suez Canal in 1875; therefore, this goal was basic maintenance. Repairing Egyptian credit was more complicated. Because the focus was on British, not Egyptian, success, Cromer did not invest in any goods that would threaten British exports. Therefore, he focused the Egyptian economy on cotton exports even more. Egypt's international financial position quickly changed, with debt going down from over 55% of annual revenue in 1885 to 25-35%, at its best (Tignor, 1966). Because of the heavy focus on agriculture, the rural standard of living for landowners improved. However, the most lasting impact of Cromer's agriculture-focused approach was Egypt becoming entirely dependent on cotton exports to support its economy.

Cromer retained the governmental structure created during the Muhammad Ali era but shut Egyptians out of decision-making roles and processes. The Egyptian educated class saw the highest echelons of the bureaucracy and government occupied by British sycophants with little or no qualifications who were paid significantly better than them. Unfortunately, the next generation of Egypt's educated class was considerably pared down due to Cromer's regressive approach to social reform. He cut most of the funding for post-secondary institutions, which caused most of them to close. He also introduced tuition and fees at every level of education to

decrease government funding, and ensure that only elites could participate. Cromer and his counterparts back in Britain believed that "[w]estern style educational institutions, especially universities, would create a group of Egyptian intellectuals imbued with nationalist ideals and a sense of frustration over their inferior status" (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016, p. 99). Cromer's educational priorities and funding went toward low-level civil servants and vocational training. This choice to avoid investing in training Egyptians to create and manage a strong bureaucracy reinforced the notion that administrative capacity is not essential and actively maintained a status quo in which Egyptians disadvantaged in improving public administration.

Cromer's final goal was to maintain public order, which was a difficult task considering how unpopular the occupation was. A surprisingly free press was one way Cromer let Egyptians vent frustration without escalation. Egypt developed a diverse collection of newspapers during the Cromer years. The most popular was a nationalist paper called al-Liwa, which frequently called for the immediate end of British occupation. Egyptian press was widespread and vocal in their dissenting opinions: so why didn't Cromer suppress it? The answer seems to be that he did not think it would translate into physical dissent until it did.

In 1906, a group of British officers went to the village of Dinshaway to pigeon hunt. Pigeon farming was widespread in this village for meat and eggs. The officers got carried away and ended up burning down a threshing floor (a building used to harvest grain) and injured the wife of the village prayer leader. This led to protests in Dinshaway and the surrounding villages, in which many people were injured, and a British officer died. The stick appears here: fifty-two villagers were charged with attempted murder, leading to thirty-two convictions. While most received flogging or hard labor sentences, four villagers were publicly executed. This caused nationwide outrage and ultimately led to Cromer's departure. For the next seven years, his

successors tried to win over the population with reforms, to no avail. Finally, the breakout of World War I gave Britain an excuse to declare martial law and make Egypt an official protectorate. This was an important shift in Britain's approach to the occupation of Egypt: if meager concessions did not work, brute force could.

**Comparison: Tunisian Occupation and Modernization[5]**

The pretext for French occupation in Tunisia was similar to that of Egypt: Tunisian debt got out of hand in the attempt to modernize. Tunisia, under the leadership of prime minister Mustapha Khaznadar, began modernization reforms during the 19th century along with the greater Ottoman Empire. However, the independent Tunisian economy could not support the effort. The Ottoman-imposed Capitulations, tax incentives provided to foreign merchants meant to increase commercial activity throughout the Empire, increased imports so much that local manufacturing died. In addition, massive droughts throughout the mid-19th century severely hurt cereal and olive production, the two main exports. In a futile attempt to fund modernization, Khaznadar doubled taxes. Because of a weak central administration that already struggled to collect taxes, it took until 1864 for the increase to take full effect. The reaction in rural areas was swift: insurrection nearly overthrew the government. The country declared bankruptcy in 1869, with France, Italy, and Britain setting up a finance commission to secure their interests.

The final event that gave France the excuse it needed to act was a series of tribal spats on the Tunisian-Algerian border, culminating in a Tunisian "incursion" into Algeria, under French colonial control, in March 1881. France jumped at the opportunity: the military invaded in April and forced the bey to sign the Treaty of Bardo in May. While the treaty officially acknowledged Tunisian sovereignty, it practically turned Tunisia into a French protectorate. This status became

[5] Unless otherwise specifically noted, information in this section came from Perkins, K. (2014). *A history of modern Tunisia.* Cambridge University Press.

formal in 1883 via the Conventions of La Marsa, with Resident-General Paul Cambon assuming control.

While Egyptian modernization began under informal independence, Tunisian modernization occurred under direct French rule. This strongly influenced the priorities of the modernizing elites. For example, there was no military development during Tunisian modernization; this significantly contrasts Ali's modernization work, which heavily focused on military development. As the central coercive apparatus of the state, Tunisia's lack of military meant it had a weak coercive capacity. General Cambon's priority was salvaging Tunisian finances, and therefore he reformed the Ministry of Finance into a well-oiled bureaucratic machine. The other priority was education. As previously discussed, Cromer made a concerted effort to destroy public education in Egypt because he saw an educated populace as a threat to British occupation. Conversely, Cambon made public education a governmental priority. As in Egypt, most Tunisians did not have access to high-level positions in the new Tunisian bureaucracy, except in a few minor ministries. The critical difference, then, seems to be in education. Britain was a coercive-focused occupier. In Egypt, the primary way to achieve social mobility (or at least a decent salary) was by serving in the Egyptian military. Therefore, those most well-equipped to lead a future independence movement came from the military. France, as an occupier, focused on extractive and then administrative capacity. In Tunisia, mobility was achieved through formal French education available to the public. As we will see in the next section, Tunisian intellectuals would lead their country's independence movement.

### 3.3 – Critical Juncture II: Early Independence, 1952-1967

Life in post-WWII Egypt was opportune for a populist uprising. The wealth gap between Egypt's wealthy elite and impoverished majority grew, with little or no government support for

reform. The top 0.4% of the population owned the same amount of arable land as the bottom 94%, and poorer landowners were increasingly forced to sell their land to elites to pay off debt. Mass poverty across both rural and urban Egypt only fueled distrust toward the elites, primarily seen as British imperialism agents. While Egypt gained formal independence in 1922, it was in name only: the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 maintained British military control of the Suez Canal and stipulated the use of British force in the event of an attack on Egypt; in other words, it largely maintained the status quo of British colonial control, to the chagrin of most Egyptians.

A crucial decision made by the British in Egypt that directly influenced Egyptian independence was prioritizing military training. Britain maintained control over the Egyptian army throughout British occupation, which remained small, but was a well-trained and organized institution. Not only did Britain not dismantle the Egyptian military, but it also improved it. Combining this training with mass discontent over occupation, it comes as no surprise that militant groups within the army were able to organize an effective revolution. The postwar period saw the Muslim Brotherhood, formed as an Islamist anticolonial movement in 1928 by Hasan Al-Banna, reach its peak levels of influence and public support, with half a million members in the late 1940s. Yet the Free Officers, a secret group within the Egyptian army, finally forced Britain out.

The Free Officers operated within the military for several years before attempting to overthrow the British-allied monarchy in 1952. Prime Minister al-Nahhas, trying to muster popular support, declared the abrogation of the 1936 treaty, which Egyptians strongly supported. Beginning in 1951, armed groups of Egyptians started clashing with the British army. When one encounter in January 1952 left 50 Egyptian police officers dead, massive riots and

demonstrations began on January 26[6] all over the country and continued for months. The Free Officers struck on July 23, staging a coup that overthrew the British-backed government and forced King Faruq to abdicate and flee the country. The Free Officers formed the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), which became the executive government during a three-year transitional period. While the group had a clear vision for overthrowing colonial rule, they entered governmental rule with no administrative plan. This approach – military force with no administrative consideration – mirrors the formative idea that a strong military is necessary for independence and power, and that bureaucracy is an afterthought.

The RCC, led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and Muhammad Naguib, focused on consolidating power and gaining popular support to maintain control of the country. The main rival to the RCC was the Muslim Brotherhood, which some Free Officers had ties to previously. These two groups initially tried to coexist, but with each actor vying for different views of what Egypt should be, this did not work. In 1954, a Muslim Brotherhood member tried to kill Nasser, giving the RCC the excuse to take the group out. High-profile members were killed and imprisoned, forcing the group underground. This also enabled Nasser to emerge from his position behind the scenes to become the true leader of Egypt: he successfully accused then-president Naguib of supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, and quickly removed him from power.

Despite the Muslim Brotherhood's fall from grace, Nasser still took a careful approach to take control of Egypt's religious institutions. After all, the Brotherhood had previously gained significant popularity from a faithful populace. Too blatant a display of secularism by the RCC and outright repression of religious institutions could have easily backfired. The first step was to abolish shari'a courts, which happened in 1955. In 1961, Nasser decreed that Al-Azhar

[6] The first day of these demonstrations has since become known as Black Saturday.

University, the preeminent Islamic institution of Egypt, would accept four new secular departments to be appointed by the government. This effectively gave Nasser control over the university's curriculum and personnel. After the decree, Nasser utilized pro-government ulama to praise the compatibility of Arab socialism and Islam publicly. Nasser's intentional power consolidation over administering social services was crucial for garnering and maintaining popular support. Religious institutions were seen as competing power centers whose influence must be minimized.

Due to their unpopularity, the monarchy and colonial elite were relatively simple to contain after the Free Officers coup. The monarchy was abolished in 1953, along with the 1923 constitution and the old parliament. The following year, the RCC "prohibited anyone who had held public office from 1946 to 1953 from doing so again" (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016, p. 291). This effectively guaranteed that the old elite would not return to political power. Instead, "every important position in the state" was staffed by ex-officers who ran the public and private sectors like a "military camp" (Abdul-Magd, 2017, pp.36-37).

While the RCC declared itself a transitional government, its membership had no intention of giving up power. To maintain its control, the RCC needed popular support. Nasser determined the best way to do this was through reforms. Arab socialist ideals heavily influenced Nasser and the new regime; as Cleveland and Bunton point out, Arab socialism was less about sticking to Marxist principles and more about ensuring that capital went to the state instead of private entities.[7] With this idea in mind, Nasser nationalized most of Egypt's commercial enterprise and funneled maximum profits toward development. In an example of the lasting power of loyalism surviving through regime changes, Egypt's ministries and enterprise agencies were led and

[7] Or, as Zeinab Abdul-Magd called it, "socialism without socialists" (p. 36).

staffed by military officers without experience or knowledge in running a bureaucracy. Appointing unqualified loyalists from the military to run a bureaucracy indicates that Nasser did not see the development of a meritorious public administration as a priority, which ensured that the state's administrative capacity would not improve.

Perhaps the most significant policy undertaking of the Nasser era was the Agrarian Reform Law of 1952. It capped land ownership at 200 feddans[8] and redistributed excess land to tenants or peasants owning less than five. This redistribution campaign included property seized from the royal family. While this law did not substantially improve life or wealth for most Egyptians, it did gain popular support for the RCC while limiting elite resources and power. To create more arable land, Nasser also commissioned the Aswan Dam, a massive and expensive project. After Western funding fell through, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956 to fund the dam. Aside from triggering the Suez Crisis, nationalization was very popular among Egyptians, who saw it as the ultimate stand against Western imperialism.

Aside from agrarian reform as a social policy, Nasser focused on education. He aimed to boost literacy and use education to indoctrinate the populace into Arab socialism and unity. He abolished post-secondary tuition, opened several new universities, and guaranteed a government job to every university graduate. However, because the Egyptian state lacked adequate administrative capacity, it did not have or develop the necessary infrastructure to support these changes. Classrooms at every educational level were massively overcrowded and underfunded. And the promised government jobs, far from the prestigious and lucrative positions sold, offered low pay and no social mobility. Since Egypt lacked the administrative infrastructure to support

[8] One feddan equals roughly one acre.

Nasser's educational promises, they did not elicit the same public approval as the Agrarian Reform Law.

Nasser entered power with an already-established Egyptian military, but he needed aid to compete with Israel in the military arena. He first asked a Western alliance for an arms package despite his anti-imperialist ideology. Egypt's request was quickly turned down because of Nasser's negative views of the West and Israel. In 1955, Egypt signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia to modernize its military equipment in exchange for cotton. At the beginning of his presidency, Nasser largely left the military up to his appointed Commander in Chief, Abdel Hakim Amer. Nasser and Amer were old friends who played significant roles in the Free Officers movement. The military was heavily politicized because the new government grew out of the armed forces. Nasser saw the military as "an old boys' network that could dispense patronage" (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 160). Amer evidently agreed as this is how things ran under his leadership. However, Amer had his political ambitions and used the military as his "fiefdom," prizing loyalty to him over expertise or professional performance (Gawrych, 1987, p. 542). He encouraged shilal groups (cliques) that reported directly to him, which nurtured in-fighting and eventually created a fractured military with factions loyal to Amer or Nasser. More than any previous nepotism or loyalism, Amer's military leadership forged a shadow state in Egypt. Amer and his hidden network of loyalists were making military appointments, assignments, and high-level choices behind Nasser's back.

Initially, Nasser was so preoccupied with outward expansion and creating the United Arab Republic (UAR)[9], he did not realize how poorly and secretively the military was being run. The UAR failed in 1961, for which Nasser blamed Amer. This only deepened the fractures in the

[9] Syria and Egypt unified under United Arab Republic in 1958. In 1961, Syria broke from the union, but Egypt carried the name United Arab Republic until 1971.

military. Nasser also chose Mohamed Fawzi for the newly created Chief of General Staff position, which further muddled the chain of command. In May 1967, Amer suddenly made bizarre personnel changes that confused most people. According to many Arab historians, Amer and his followers were planned to stage a coup against Nasser in August (Fahmy, 2020; Gawrych, 1987). Due to the Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel in July 1967, this coup attempt never materialized.

The Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel in June 1967 has become known in Egypt as an-Naksah, or the Setback. It was an unmitigated disaster: Egypt sustained heavy casualties in people and equipment and lost the entire Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip to Israel. Nasser immediately stepped in to get what was left of the Egyptian military back in line. Amer and his 'fiefdom' were removed and arrested. Amer committed suicide while under house arrest, although there is heavy speculation that he was murdered (Fahmy, 2020). Either way, his death went a long way toward reunifying the military under Nasser's command. Nasser brought the military high command under his direct control. He combined Fawzi's role with Amer's former role, making the war minister. Fawzi was loyal to Nasser and was now the sole officer reporting directly to him. Nasser also decreed that he must approve all promotions to the rank of colonel or higher – he hand-picked senior officers who were competent but, more importantly, loyal to the regime.

Nasser's decisions here formally tied regime stability to military elites' power and prestige, thereby strongly incentivizing the military to stay loyal to a regime instead of any potential rebel clique. But this relationship is not one-sided: the regime must, in return, appease military elites because they are arguably the only ones who could undertake a coup. Because the executive in Egypt was essentially consolidated in the hands of one man, it was relatively simple

for Nasser to co-opt the military arm of the Power Triangle. This is the type of coercive capacity – not the traditional ability to protect borders, but the ability to penetrate and uphold systems of power within a Deep State network – in which Egypt continues to excel. As long as the relationship between the executive and Deep State military elites remains symbiotic, there is political stability. If the executive becomes too much of a liability for the Deep State, discussed in the next chapter, the distinction between executive and military, and which one wields real power, becomes apparent.

**Comparison: Tunisian Independence[10]**

Like Egypt, mid-20th century Tunisia was controlled by an unpopular foreign power and led by a pro-colonial ruler surrounded by a sycophantic class of elites. Unlike the Free Officers in Egypt, the frontrunners of the Tunisian independence movement were not military, nor did they operate covertly. A nationalist group called Neo Destour led the independence movement for decades. Habib Bourguiba was a very public leader in the movement. Since he was seen as a threat to French interests, Bourguiba spent 20 years being bounced around French prisons. He ended up in an Italian prison during WWII and was released back to Tunisia in 1943.

Also, dissimilar to Egypt, Tunisian independence was a drawn-out process. Bourguiba developed a careful, gradual approach to Tunisian independence that gained the support of most Tunisians and ultimately ended up being implemented (Brown, 2001). Initially, France was against any independence plan, no matter how gradual. Neo Destour's militant factions spent years attacking Tunisia's colonial facilities to force France out. This continued until 1954 when Pierre Mendès France became the new French Prime Minister. Intending to stop the violence, he immediately declared support for a gradual transition to Tunisian independence. This transition

[10] Unless otherwise specifically noted, information in this section comes from Perkins, K. (2014). *A history of modern Tunisia*. Cambridge University Press.

was completed in 1956: but like Egypt, there was a gap between formal and practical Tunisian independence. Under the pretext of its ongoing war against Algerian independence, France maintained a significant military presence in Tunisia even after gaining official independence. It was not until October 1963 that France completely withdrew from Tunisian territory. Tunisia's independence trajectory involved violence but did not include formal Tunisian military involvement because there was no formal Tunisian military. Gaining independence without a military did not incentivize the new regime much incentive to increase its coercive capacity.

Bourguiba, the hero of Tunisian independence, naturally became the leader of the new state. He was Prime Minister for a year and then became president when he abolished the monarchy and established a presidential republic in Tunisia. He would hold this position until 1987 (Brown, 2001). Unlike Nasser, Bourguiba's ambitions were squarely focused on Tunisia instead of regional issues. Tunisia was far removed from the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Bourguiba took a less contentious stance on the state of Israel. This enabled him to more easily secure diplomatic ties with and economic assistance from the West. The relationship between Tunisia and France was significantly better than between Egypt and Britain, as there had been clear cooperation during the independence process. Perhaps due to these contextual differences – domestic focus, stance on Israel, and maintaining better relations with its former colonizer – Tunisia's state formation during the post-independence period focused so little on developing coercive capacity.

A formal Tunisian military was established with independence in 1956, but the military was small. Personnel increased incrementally: from "8,000 troops in 1960 to 22,000 in 1978" (Anderson, 1986, p.236). There were also a small domestic national guard and national security police force. While soldiers for the military were conscripted, members of the national guard and

national security police force were volunteers. Bourguiba intentionally kept the military small and politically insignificant while growing the bureaucratic workforce to 80,000 by 1960. Maintaining the government, not the military, as a significant job supplier and crucial part of the Tunisian economy kept the balance of power with Bourguiba and the Neo Destour party instead of the military (Anderson, 1986).

Bourguiba's two early policy areas of focus were education and keeping religious factions in check. Within two years of gaining power, Tunisia had a free public education system and invested significant resources into training teachers. This required investment in developing a bureaucracy to support public education. Specifically, the Tunisian Ministry of Education became an efficient administrative arm that ensured a well-trained educational workforce could accomplish official goals.

In contrast to Nasser's careful approach to controlling Egyptian religious institutions, Bourguiba did not hesitate to make Tunisia politically secular. He put firm limits on habous (another name for waqfs) and abolished religious courts. He made the Ez-Zitouna Mosque, the center of Islamic education in Tunisia, obsolete by creating Ez-Zitouna University, which, along with Koranic schools, was controlled by the Ministry of Education. Perhaps his most comprehensive move against conservative Islamic power, Bourguiba undertook a massive and successful gender equality campaign. He abolished polygamy, declared that husbands could not divorce their wives without cause, got rid of head-covering mandates, and emphasized gender equality in education and the workforce (Brown, 2001). While there were conservative religious groups that opposed these reforms, the campaign was a success. As discussed in the Egyptian context, complete regime control over administrative capacity in the form of social services was vital to maintaining popular support and power. This meant Bourguiba had significant reason to

usurp services traditionally rendered by religious institutions because, unlike in Egypt, Tunisian social services were well-funded and well-run by a competent bureaucracy.

### 3.4 – Chapter Summary

Egyptian state capacity begins with its modern state formation in the first half of the 19th century. Pasha Muhammad Ali designed the modern Egyptian state to have a strong military apparatus around which all other institutions were crafted. Coercive capacity was the key to independence and power, and all other state functions were a means to this end. When European powers diminished Ali's military goals, the administrative functions created to support it quickly fell into neglect. Under British occupation, the importance of the military, and the relative insignificance of bureaucracy, were further institutionalized by Cromer's decision-making. Dissent was met with swift, harsh action while administrative functions were neglected. Cromer outright feared a well-educated populace and intentionally decimated public education. Egyptian independence was won by the only institution that received adequate funds and training: the military. Nasser's Egypt was built through connections and backdoor deals, as was the independent military under Amer. After the Six Days' War, these separate informal networks converged to create one military-dominated Deep State that continually prioritized military institutions over everything else.

Despite similarities, Tunisia's state formation created a very different state capacity. Because the bulk of Tunisian modernization happened under colonial rule, no coercive capacity existed. During the occupation, the French banned military formation in Tunisia because France was concerned about training soldiers to commit an armed uprising against them. The French also focused significantly more on education and bureaucratic development than Ali or the British in Egypt. Consequently, when Tunisia gained independence, there was no precedent for a

strong military to ensure freedom and power. Bourguiba continued the chain of Tunisian decision-making, which focused on strong, secular bureaucratic institutions and a modest coercive apparatus.

In the following chapter, I will examine how these diverging state capacities affected each state's respective democratization routes during the Arab Uprisings of 2010-2013, with very different outcomes.

# CHAPTER IV: STATE CAPACITY'S EFFECT ON DEMOCRATIZATION

As discussed in the previous chapter, Egypt's state capacity is characterized by overbearing coercive and neglected bureaucratic institutions. Masoud (2020) summarizes the current state of Egyptian politics well:

> "Throughout the last 60 years, Egypt's political landscape has been marked by three interrelated phenomena – strong executive authority concentrated in the president (and before him, the king), the overweening role of the military in the country's politics and economics, and the endemic weakness of institutions charged with maintaining the rule of law" (p. 367).

The Deep State, controlled by military elites, can successfully forward their interests, and keep their hand on the executive. But what happens when the executive becomes a liability to the rest of the Deep State network? Or when the elected executive is not part of the Deep State? This section analyzes the Egyptian revolution in 2011, following the chain of events through its 2013 military coup, to examine how Egypt's coercive and administrative capacity directly impacted its democratization outcome. I will also conduct a cross-comparison of Tunisia's revolution to highlight how, despite their many similarities, the differences in these states' capacities influenced their varied outcomes.

## 4.1 – Before the Revolution

### Egypt in the 2000s

Hosni Mubarak became president of Egypt following the assassination of his predecessor Anwar Sadat in 1981. Mubarak's incumbency saw tremendous economic growth largely dependent on the US but also saw a population boom and growing inequality as a wealthy minority got richer, and most Egyptians stayed poor. Mubarak significantly expanded various

security forces, such as the State Security Investigations Service (SSIS) and the anti-riot Central Security Forces (CSF). Under police and security forces, human rights violations were endemic; political prisoners were regularly tortured in custody (Kirk and Mangini, 2011).

When Mubarak became president, he also faced a military dilemma. Once Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel, it did not need the same troop numbers as it had when the two countries regularly fought each other in the previous decades. At the same time, Mubarak did not want to discharge a significant percentage of the Egyptian military. So, in line with the neoliberal economic changes Egypt was undergoing, Mubarak helped the military shift its focus. Alongside privatization, the Egyptian military became one of Egypt's largest and wealthiest business entities. The military bought masses of land at marked-down prices and began leading many industries in Egypt, including agriculture, tourism, construction, and manufacturing. Similar to how Muhammad Ali handled conscripts unfit for duty, jobs could quickly be staffed by low-level soldiers, maintaining the Egyptian military as the largest job supplier in the country while also making the institution and its leaders incredibly wealthy (Blumberg, 2011).[11]

The military elites formed the core of the Egyptian Deep State, described as such by Masoud (2020): "Indeed, if the parliament is subordinate to the executive, both are subordinate to the 'deep state' (which is comprised of the military and the assorted security and intelligence services)" (p. 369). Because of its immense economic and political power, Egypt's military has shifted away from the traditional definition of coercive capacity. While it has the expansive budget indicative of coercive capacity and it is still able to use force when necessary, the crux of its capacity lies instead in its power to infiltrate, manipulate, and ultimately control the state and whichever regime it hosts. Egypt's Deep State is a strong example of the state capture concept

[11] This NPR story draws heavily from the work of Robert Springborg, who is interviewed in the broadcast.

discussed in Chapter 2. The informal elite network, primarily those within the military and security institutions, had significant influence over institutions and policy decisions and used that influence for their personal gain often at the state's expense.

Even outside of the Deep State, Mubarak's regime was highly corrupt. While reports vary, Mubarak and his sons gained a net worth of at least $40 billion from military contract kickbacks, bribes, private business ventures, and policy profiteering (Inman, 2011). This is why Mubarak and his sons were tried and convicted of corruption after he left office. Elections in Egypt under Mubarak were neither free nor fair. Mubarak's attempts to liberalize Egypt ended in the 1990s and elections became increasingly fraudulent as Egypt returned to 'one party, one leader' rule. The 2005 multiparty elections were a farce, with Mubarak winning 88% of the vote, and the 2010 parliamentary elections were the "most fraudulent yet" (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016, p. 541; Masoud, 2020).

The late 20th century saw a global shift towards neoliberal policies that, aside from promoting privatization and deregulation, largely defunded government programs aimed at social welfare. Mubarak's Egypt was no exception; government spending plummeted through the 1980s and 1990s, further limiting the capability of Egypt's bureaucracy to administer public goods and services (Cammett and Diwan, 2013; Soliman, 2012). As a result of Egypt's systemic neglect of social services, Egyptians underwent a 'Quiet Revolution' through the 1980s and 1990s. Volunteer religious organizations, often connected with Islamist groups, provided the bulk of social services to the Egyptian public to fill the gaps in care left by the government. These service centers also became popular places to express popular dissent (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). Consequently, Islamist groups built tremendous goodwill with the public and strong organizational networks nationwide in urban and rural areas. This did not necessarily form

higher membership numbers: most Egyptians remained unaffiliated with any civil society group (Brownlee et al., 2015; Wickham, 1996). Instead, the Brotherhood was able to build passive support from a mostly apolitical populace (Wickham, 1996).

Poverty is a natural side effect of widespread corruption because fewer people have access to capital and opportunities for economic growth. Poverty is also strongly correlated with political unrest (Miguel, 2007). In the decade leading up to the Egyptian Revolution, GDP per capita was trending upwards but was still not high: in 2010, the average Egyptian earned USD 2,509 annually (World Bank). On its surface, unemployment did not seem too high, averaging 9.6% from 2000-2010. However, this is when the youth demographic becomes important for understanding unrest. Evidence suggests that youth bulges, or "countries with youthful age structures", correlate with increased unrest, crime, and violence (Urdal 2007, p. 90). As has been discussed by Arab Spring scholars, many parts of the MENA region, including Egypt, experienced a youth bulge: 30% of the Egyptian population was between the ages of 15-29. Gelvin (2015) describes a trend of "waithood" among younger Egyptians, putting their lives on hold because everything is too expensive and there aren't enough well-paying jobs. According to World Bank data, an average of 26.2% of the Egyptian youth population was unemployed between 2000-2010. Poor economic conditions, a repressive regime, and a large, disenfranchised youth population eventually created a perfect storm for widespread unrest.

There were strikes for several years preceding 2011, mostly among workers in the textile industry based at the Egypt Spinning and Weaving Plant. This facility was the largest manufacturing plant in the MENA region (Gelvin, 2015). A youth movement, Kefaya[12], formed in 2004 as Egypt's primary anti-war movement (El Hamalawy, 2007). Spurred by poor economic

[12] Kefaya means 'enough' in Arabic.

conditions in 2006 and 2007, textile workers and youth from Kefaya joined forces to create the April 6 movement. It began as a large-scale strike across multiple industries, scheduled for April 6, 2008. Information about the strike spread primarily through a Facebook group, which swelled to 70,000 members (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). April 6, 2008, arrived, and with it thousands of protesters. The security police broke up the protest by force, killing four and arresting 400. Some key lessons were learned from the experience: the regime clearly did not understand social media, making it an excellent place to continue building a popular movement against the government. After being released from prison, April 6 leader Ahmed Maher uploaded photos of his injuries sustained in police custody. Having this visual representation of the regime, they thought, could shock and galvanize support enough over time to build a real revolution (Kirk and Mangini, 2011).

**Tunisia in the 2000s**

Conditions in Tunisia leading to the Jasmine Revolution were similar to those in Egypt. Long-time president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali also led the 'one party, one leader' government. Under Ben Ali's leadership, Tunisians experienced a relatively high quality of life and repeated development projects. However, every level of government practiced some embellishments to make economic stability and development look better than they were. An untimely drought and inflation in the 2000s hit Tunisians hard, and the cost of living and personal debt levels followed. Tunisia's far-reaching food subsidy program helped. Still, the government had to make harsh cuts to pay its bills. While Tunisia had retained near-total literacy for decades, its public education system had failed to keep up with the demands of the job market, leaving many to find unsatisfactory jobs or unable to find any work. Tunisia underwent a large privatization effort in the 1980s and 1990s, but the work culture was crippled by "ingrained cultural issues, including

nepotism, bribery, graft, extortion, and other forms of corruption" (Perkins, 2014, pp. 218-219). Even the most well-educated and qualified Tunisians struggled to find work. The national unemployment rate before the revolution was 15%; for young adults, it was 40%. Tunisians experienced the same "waithood" that young Egyptians did, accompanied by a spike in suicide rates (Perkins, 2014).

While most Tunisians struggled, they witnessed Ben Ali and his inner circle thrive. His extended family controlled significant portions of the private sector and lived incredibly lavish lifestyles. Ben Ali, his extended family, and their most connected contacts successfully captured the state (Cammet and Diwan, 2013; Gelvin, 2015; Rijkers et al., 2016). Corruption and clientelism were endemic in Tunisia, trickling down from the executive branch to every public and private sector level. Some Tunisians reached a breaking point in 2008 due to the hiring process at Gafsa Phosphate Company. In what some now consider a precursor to the 2011 revolution, and in a parallel to how the Egyptian April 6 movement began, there were protests all over the Gafsa region from people who lost out on these jobs along with the more extensive network of the Union of Unemployed Graduates. This youth activist group started at Tunis University (Perkins, 2014). While police and security forces ultimately stamped out the protests, activists would remember the lessons learned when a new opportunity presented itself.

Morale in Tunisia was made worse by the police and state security forces. Police officers tripled under Ben Ali's leadership while the state security and intelligence apparatus employed 130,000 people. Their treatment of civilians was harsh: those unwilling or unable to bribe officers were subject to regular harassment, surveillance, and threats. This sometimes even escalated to imprisonment and torture (Perkins, 2014). It was the combination of a bleak economy, lacking job prospects, and regular police harassment that led fruit stand seller

Mohammed Bouazizi to commit a fatal act of self-immolation that inspired the Jasmine Revolution (Gelvin, 2015).

### 4.2 – Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt

Mohammed Bouazizi's suicide on December 17, 2010, triggered local protests as word spread. Predictably, the security response was severe, which only inspired more anger. Protests quickly spread throughout the country despite heavy-handed police and security responses. As demonstrations grew larger – and closer to Ben Ali – he ordered the Tunisian army to fire on protestors. In the final blow to Ben Ali's legitimacy, army commander Rashid Ben Ammar refused, noting that if Ben Ali stayed in power against the country's wishes, the army could not guarantee his safety. His reign ended when he fled the country with his family on January 14, 2011.

This turn of events speaks to the complexity of Tunisia's coercive capacity. While the police and security forces were an arm of Ben Ali's government, the military was not. Police and security forces, already accustomed to harassing the populace, had no issue using violence and, sometimes, lethal force against protestors. Ben Ammar refused a direct order from the executive in favor of the citizenry because he recognized the army as an institution to serve the state, not the government. As Perkins (2014) wrote, "[The] commander's refusal to accede to the army's politicization as a compliant tool of the dictatorship underscored its heritage as a well-trained, highly professional force, with no history of meddling in politics" (p. 228).

The Egyptian Revolution began with a protest against police brutality on January 25, 2011. It took place, fittingly, on National Police Day. Young activists from the April 6 movement organized the protest. One of their leaders, Ahmed Maher, specifically cited Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution as a spark for them to take a chance: but they also took advice from

successful Ukrainian and Serbian activists who taught Egyptian activists how to organize, maintain nonviolence, and keep up momentum (Kirk and Mangini, 2011). Social media proved essential in getting around government censorship while reaching a broad audience. The Muslim Brotherhood, no friend to Mubarak, was quick to join in demonstrations. Secular protestors were worried about the Brotherhood taking over the movement, but young Brotherhood members like Mohammad Abbas intentionally tried not to 'Islamify' the movement (Smith and Gaviria, 2013; Wickham, 2011).

With each day and each new protest, the movement gained more and more support from the population despite violence from police and security forces. An encouraging sign for them was the military's lack of violence. It is unclear why the military did not respond with force, but Cleveland and Bunton (2016) have a few theories. Although there is no indication, it is possible that they faced pressure from the United States to avoid deadly force. It is also possible that military elites worried about troops' willingness to follow orders. If officers ordered soldiers to fire on the protestors and they refused, it would seriously damage the elites' legitimacy. It is also possible that military elites were quietly supportive of toppling Mubarak. As he got older, rumors swirled for years that Hosni's son Gamal Mubarak would succeed him as president. Aside from undermining the admittedly farcical Egyptian electoral process, allowing Mubarak to restart hereditary rule would undoubtedly damage the power and influence of the Deep State. Whatever the reason (or reasons), the military soon recognized the liability of Mubarak's continued rule amid protests that were only growing stronger. On February 10, 2011, the military convened the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) without Mubarak present. The next day he was arrested, ending his rule (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; The New York Times, 2011).

On its face, there are similarities between the Tunisian and Egyptian military responses to widespread popular protests. Both institutions sided with the protesters over the executive when it became clear that the population would not back down. But they did so for different reasons. While Tunisia's military was uninvolved in politics and revealed significant autonomy from the regime, Egyptian armed forces severed ties with Mubarak when he became a liability. Bellin (2012) describes the difference as motivation rather than ability. As we will see in the respective transition periods, their differing motives and power levels had significantly impacted the two countries' divergent paths after ousting a dictator.

## 4.3 – The Transitional Period

### Transition in Egypt

After forcing Mubarak out of office, 21 top military officers comprising the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) took control of the country. The SCAF dissolved parliament and suspended the constitution, pledging to stay in power until new elections could be held. This meant the SCAF was now acting as both executive and legislative in the interim government (Masoud, 2020).

Aside from the army, the group best positioned to gain power in the immediate aftermath was the Muslim Brotherhood (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Smith and Gaviria, 2013). As described earlier, being outlawed had not stopped the Brotherhood from growing in numbers over the years, nor had it prevented it from cultivating some public goodwill by filling some of the social service gaps left by the government. However, given its tumultuous history, many Egyptians were concerned about the prospect of the Muslim Brotherhood gaining power. Even before Mubarak was forced out, secular protestors, especially those in minority groups, were concerned about the Brotherhood's ambitions. During the protests, young Brotherhood members

led by Mohammad Abbas emphasized that this revolution was an Egyptian one, not a Muslim uprising. In the early post-Mubarak period, the Brotherhood was very careful not to criticize the military as Brotherhood leaders tried to work with them. This was not unique to the Brotherhood, as most moderate and conservative political groups followed the military's lead to gain or maintain proximity to power (Brown, 2013). They held this even as the SCAF violently cleared Tahrir Square on March 9, 2011, after the bulk of the international press was gone, and again when the military disbursed a Coptic Christian protest that killed 27 people on October 20, 2011. The Brotherhood's inactions drew criticism from its members, including Abbas, who was expelled from the Muslim Brotherhood's political party for his public comments condemning their silence (Smith and Gaviria, 2013).

There were definite warning signs about the military's lethal tactics leading to parliamentary elections, but organizers pressed on. In preparation, the Muslim Brotherhood formed the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) as its Islamist political party, technically separate from the Brotherhood only in name. Thanks to their already-strong organizational networks nationwide, this was accomplished quickly compared to secular and leftist groups. Initially, several liberal and secular groups formed The Bloc coalition. Aside from the FJP and the Bloc, the other significant groups leading up to the parliamentary elections were the Party of Light (Al-Nour), a more conservative Islamist group, and the remnants of the imperial-era Wafd party. Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) was forcibly disbanded, and its former members could not organize in time for the parliamentary elections (Masoud, 2020).

Two rounds of parliamentary elections were held, in November 2011 and January 2012. Thanks to their organizational advantage, the FJP did far better than any other party, winning 217 out of 498 seats. Combined with the Party of Light's 107 seats, Islamists controlled 65% of

seats in the new parliament. This new parliament took control of Egypt's legislative duties. Still, the SCAF retained executive authority and the power to appoint a Prime Minster and cabinet until the presidential elections were held (Masoud, 2020).

The Muslim Brotherhood's success made the other major players nervous. Coptic Christians, a long-repressed minority group, were especially apprehensive. Brotherhood officials publicly tried to reassure Copts and other secularists that they would govern fairly without regard for religious beliefs. However, it was difficult to reconcile their public statements while FJP members insisted on including sharīʿah policies in legislation and the new constitution. Secularists were concerned, too, about the possibility of an Islamist majority government shifting Egypt into a theocracy. The military elites were primarily concerned with keeping the Deep State intact. According to Masoud (2020), the military institution sees itself as the "natural ruler of Egypt and... is eager to maintain its political supremacy" (p. 369). Islamist popularity indeed threatened the military's grip on power, even if the legislature did not have significant ability to propose policy independently. For example, parliament appointed the 100-member Constituent Assembly (CA), to draft a new constitution (Gelvin, 2015). The CA was subsequently stacked with an Islamist majority, who now had the power to completely alter the military's budget and level of government oversight at the institutional level.

A push for a democratic shift towards civilian oversight of the military increasingly put the SCAF at odds with the Muslim Brotherhood (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). But for a brief time, the Brotherhood assuaged their fears by declaring they would not put forward a presidential candidate. The Egyptian legislature is weak, but the executive is not: an Islamist president represented a more significant practical threat to military interests than an Islamist parliament. The military favored former general Ahmed Shafiq, a Mubarak loyalist and former NDP

member, as its presidential candidate (Smith and Gaviria, 2013). Career diplomat and former International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director Mohamed ElBaradei was favored to run, but his lengthy history living abroad put him at a disadvantage (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). Before candidacy registration had even opened, ElBaradei withdrew his name in protest, arguing that Egypt should focus on building its new constitution before holding elections (BBC, 2012a). Beginning in 2011 until the presidential election candidate deadlines, the Muslim Brotherhood insisted it would not field a candidate. That was until March 31, 2012, when the FJP announced Kairat El-Shater as their presidential candidate (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Due to El-Shater's prior convictions associated with his Muslim Brotherhood membership, he was ultimately barred from running; at which point, the FJP named Brotherhood chairman Muhammad Morsi as its candidate (Al Jazeera, 2012a).

Morsi and the military-backed Shafiq won the most votes in the first round on May 23 and 24, 2012, and proceeded to a runoff election in June. Right before the final election, the Deep State made it clear they were worried about losing: On June 14, two days before the runoff, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) ruled that the Islamist-majority parliament was elected unconstitutionally. The SCAF then dissolved it, returning legislative authority to itself (Smith and Gaviria, 2013; Brown, 2013). The runoff commenced on June 16-17, and Morsi was declared the winner on June 24. While the FJP had easily won a majority in parliamentary elections, Morsi’s 52% of the vote was a slim victory over Shafiq’s 48%.

Morsi was well aware of the dynamic he was entering. As discussed by many commentators in the Frontline documentary *Egypt in Crisis*, many votes for Morsi were largely against Shafiq and the former regime (Smith and Gaviria, 2013). The slim margin also speaks to Egypt’s hesitation and increasing polarization over Islamist governance during this time

(Masoud, 2020). Egyptians are, by and large, religious, but they voted for the FJP because Islamists had garnered goodwill under Mubarak by supplying public goods and services. Voters were more concerned with economic issues than with electing an Islamist president (Masoud, 2020). Morsi also had a scorned military to contend with. On June 18, before Morsi was officially declared the winner, the SCAF used its renewed legislative authority to severely restrict executive power (Brown, 2013). The Deep State was fighting hard to retain control, and Morsi had to decide the degree to which he would fight back.

**Transition in Tunisia**

Despite similar conditions, Tunisia's transition period after Ben Ali's ouster was quite different from Egypt's. The military's role was significantly smaller, with the transition to a new government led by a collaborative group of parties committed to a unified government. Immediately after Ben Ali left the country, Prime Minister Muhammad Ghannouchi took charge. Within days, he ceded control to the Constitutional Council, which named Fouad Mezbaa as interim president (Chomiak and Parks, 2020). Mezbaa was a longtime bureaucrat and the sitting president of the Chamber of Deputies. Perkins (2014) noted that, at 78 years old, he was a safe choice because the Council assumed he would not have any long-term goals for power. Ghannouchi remained Prime Minister and took on a leadership role right away. Mezbaa named legal scholar Yadh Ben Achour as head of the commission on political reforms, the interim governing body which ultimately became the High Commission for the Realization of the Objectives of the Revolution, of Political Reform, and Democratic Transition (High Commission) (Perkins, 2014).

Similar to the quick timeline in Egypt, Ghannouchi initially aimed to hold an election within six months. Because of the tight schedule, Ghannouchi sought to take a shortcut by

appointing people from Ben Ali's Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD) party. This angered the public and inspired a new wave of protests, eventually taking place outside the Prime Minister's residence. The military, once again, sided with the protesters, leaving Ghannouchi no option other than to resign on February 27, 2011. In complete contrast to the Egyptian military, this was the extent of the Tunisian military's involvement in the transition process. Mezbaa appointed Beji Caid Essebsi as the new interim Prime Minister. Like Mezbaa, Essebsi held a long career in government but was not well-connected under Ben Ali (Chomiak and Parks, 2020). He quickly dissolved the RCD, making way for new parties for the first time in decades (Perkins, 2014).

While not to the same extent as in Egypt, an Islamist group in Tunisia that was previously forced underground had managed to build some goodwill among Tunisians in the years leading up to the revolution (Perkins, 2014). Ennahda, led by Rached Ghannouchi, had been forced underground by Ben Ali in the 1990s. While they did commit good works in their communities, members had not contributed the same social services in Tunisia as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Still, Ennahda was allowed to reform as a political party on March 1, 2011, and had the name recognition to be politically successful. The group was represented in the High Commission, which eventually incorporated representatives from new political parties and other civil society organizations into the interim government. Ennahda's notoriety was certainly not all positive. Secularists were very worried about the potential of Ennahda gaining power: many remembered some of their more violent tactics from the 1990s. No matter how much its leadership preached compromise and unity, they simply could not trust Ennahda. Women were especially concerned about losing the high degree of gender parity achieved in Tunisia if an Islamist party gained power (Marks, 2015). Ghannouchi was often at odds with others on the

High Commission and pulled Ennahda's representatives from the Commission twice over disagreements. Despite many difficulties, the Commission successfully prepared elections for a constituent assembly (Perkins, 2014).

While elections for the constituent assembly were initially scheduled for July 24, 2011, they were postponed until October to give the High Commission time to organize. This was one of the main issues for Ennahda, as they felt ready for a July election, but all of the other parties, both old that had no power under Ben Ali and the multitude of new parties, could not prepare in the short time frame. Ennahda eventually put the issue aside to continue working, but another potentially fatal issue arose in September 2011. There was significant debate over the powers vested in the constituent assembly. After many debates, the Commission released a Declaration of the Transitional Process defining the assembly's role and responsibilities. Once elected, the constituent assembly solely focused on revamping the constitution for no longer than one year, after which the country would hold legislative elections. Additionally, the Commission created the Independent Higher Authority for the Elections (ISIE), which monitored freedom and fairness while setting election rules. The ISIE instituted gender parity for all parties fielding candidates in the constituent assembly elections, with which Ennahda complied without complaint (Perkins, 2014). In addition to all the sentiment Ennahda put forth to ease the public's fears, its easy acceptance of gender parity was a clear signal of willingness to cooperate.

Unlike Egypt's SCAF, which never entirely relinquished control, Tunisia's caretaker government was incredibly willing to cede power to an elected government. With constituent assembly elections set, Essebsi pledged that he and his cabinet would step down by November 9, which they did. One hundred and twelve parties qualified to go on the ballot, competing for 217 seats. Aside from Ennahda, a couple of parties put up strong campaigns. Of the preexisting

parties Ben Ali stifled, the left-wing Ettakatol party led by Mustafa ben Jaafar was the strongest. The center-left Congress for the Republic (CPR) party led by Moncef Marzouki was the most competitive new party. Tunisia's first-ever democratic elections were held on October 23, 2011. Ennahda, like the Egyptian FJP, was by far the most successful, gaining 89 seats in the constituent assembly. The CPR party came in second with 29 seats, followed by Ettakatol with 20 (The Carter Center, 2011). Across all parties, women won 23%, or 49 of the seats (Perkins, 2014). While still concerned about Ennahda's intentions, secularists could take a breath, knowing that they had not won a majority of seats, meaning they would have to form a coalition. For all of the hesitation and outright skepticism aimed at Ennahda leading up to the election day, the other parties had to prepare to work together. Perkins (2014) suggests that the overwhelming number of parties split the left-wing secular voting bloc, earning them fewer seats. He also argues that the lack of professional or political opportunities afforded to most political activists under Ben Ali meant that few political parties had the experience to challenge Ennahda.

While those running for office may not have had adequate professional experience in politics, the Tunisian bureaucracy ensured that the electoral process went smoothly and without major fraud attempts. Despite being equally new to free and fair elections, Tunisia's comparatively well-trained bureaucracy prepared and efficiently executed the country's first free and fair elections. The transition process leading up to these first elections seemingly went incredibly well, which can only be attributed to the professionalism of those in charge and their commitment to a successful democratic transition. This is a clear testament to the significant role a state's administrative capacity plays in the democratization process, particularly in conducting free and fair elections. The success of the democratic transition can also be attributed to the fact

that no single actor could usurp others: even if one actor had ambitions to consolidate power for themselves, there was no clear way for them to do so.

The constituent assembly opened for session on December 22, 2011. As the leading party, Ennahda named Hammadi Jebali as Prime Minister, while CPR's Marzouki served as interim president and Ettakatol's ben Jaafar was appointed as speaker of the assembly. The three parties formed a coalition government, nicknamed the Troika (Chomiak and Parks, 2020). Ministerial positions were similarly divided: Ennahda appointed 19 ministers, CPR and Ettakatol appointed six each, and the remaining positions were filled by "technocrats selected for their professional expertise" (Perkins, 2014, p. 253). Campaign fearmongering had left many people worried that Ennahda would use its power to push through Islamic legislation that would diminish civil rights and hurt tourism, such as hijab mandates or alcohol restrictions: but this did not happen. In contrast to what later happened in Egypt, Tunisia's constitution would not be based on Islamic law. It defined Tunisia as a secular state and even included an article securing freedom of conscience, a first for any Arab country (Netterstrøm, 2015). Ghannouchi, Jebali, and the rest of the Ennahda leadership were acutely aware that, despite winning over 40% of seats in the assembly, they did not have the power required to force their position (Marks, 2017).

As the constituent assembly and the Tunisian people discovered, cooperation is difficult and takes time. It took months to revise the constitution, debating and compromising at every turn to develop a document that all polarized factions could agree on. By April 2012, Tunisians were getting tired of waiting. A demonstration in downtown Tunis, partially a commemoration of independence but also a protest, turned violent between anti-assembly opposition groups and Ennahda supporters, during which the police's reaction made things worse. As the year wore on, tension continued to brew, especially as continued reports of police brutality circulated. In May,

the assembly announced that the constitution would be completed by October 2012 (Perkins, 2014). In October, it announced that elections for president and the National Assembly were set for June 2013. Both announcements, which should have been cause for celebration, were met with apathy. In February 2013, public apathy turned to anger after Salafists assassinated liberal politician Shukri Belaid. The outrage intensified in July, when a secular assembly member, Mohamed Brahimi, was murdered. The public had lost patience: they demanded that the assembly's work be suspended, which ben Jaafar granted, in addition to postponing elections (Reuters, 2013).

This crisis could have easily ended Tunisian democratization: as we will see later, it was overcome through dialogue, compromise, and cooperation. Unlike in Egypt, no one actor or group – not the military, not Ennahda, no charismatic secular figure – that had a clear pathway to seizing power. Ben Ali's party, the RCD, had been successfully dissolved, its former leaders effectively barred from civic participation, and its remnants performed poorly in elections. Most crucially, the effective and well-trained bureaucracy, corrupt as it had been under Ben Ali, had successfully shifted course to integrate into the new democratic political climate instead of transforming into a force opposing democratization. This suggests that, while corrupt, Tunisia did not have an entrenched Deep State network in the same way Egypt did.

## 4.4 – Transition Outcomes

### The Egyptian Outcome

As shown earlier, Morsi entered the presidency aware of his precarious position. The Egyptian people, who largely voted for him despite his platform rather than in support of it, were deeply divided. The Deep State, comprising the supreme court, high-level judges, state-run media, security forces, and military, was displeased that its candidate had lost the election. The

army in particular had a clear interest in keeping the status quo intact as it controls anywhere from 5-40% of the Egyptian economy (Childress, 2013; Gelvin, 2015). The military is one of the top landowners in Egypt, controls substantial portions of the private sector, allegedly utilizes conscript labor to manufacture everything from cars to bottled water in army-owned factories, and receives over $1 billion annually in aid from the United States with no government oversight (Blumberg, 2011; Gelvin, 2015; Smith and Gaviria, 2013; Tadros, 2012). There was no question that power in Egypt was concentrated in the hands of the armed forces. So initially, Morsi continued the Muslim Brotherhood strategy of allying with the military to gain and maintain power. The newly drafted constitution, over which Morsi had substantial input, maintained the hefty military budget, and did not add any policy or structure to improve accountability or civilian oversight. Morsi did this with the implicit expectation that, in return, the military would not interfere in his government (Brown, 2013; Smith and Gaviria, 2013).

Morsi's government faced an uphill battle even without the military. When he took office, Egypt was dealing with a "wasteful and corrupt bureaucracy, failing government services, massive unemployment, rising government debt, and crippling fuel shortages" (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016, p. 545). In addition to significant structural problems, Morsi's alliance with the military alienated other revolutionary groups, who were hoping for better checks and balances on the state's coercive institutions (Smith and Gaviria, 2013). An important lesson that the Muslim Brotherhood had seemingly learned from Mubarak's presidency was that social welfare programs were an effective way to garner public support and loyalty. However, this was not a lesson that Morsi took into his presidency. While revolutionaries wanted a government that focused on pluralism and building strong institutions, Morsi focused on staffing key bureaucratic and political positions with Brotherhood members and ensuring that sharīʿah was a guiding

principle in the new constitution, which put him at odds with other oppositionists. Being an underground organization for so long, the Muslim Brotherhood also deeply distrusted Egyptian elites, whose support could have been very beneficial for maintaining power. Morsi seemed more interested in consolidating power than in building alliances with elites. Instead of potentially collaborating with elites to incorporate the Muslim Brotherhood into the Deep State, Morsi gave the Egyptian elites and the Deep State an excuse to undermine the democratic transition (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Kandil, 2012).

Morsi was able to slightly shift the balance of power more in his favor after a group of radicalized Bedouins attacked a military base in the Sinai Peninsula in August 2012. This deeply embarrassed Egyptian intelligence and military forces, and Morsi took the opportunity to fire some high-ranking officers. This included Mohamed Tantawi, the chairman of the SCAF. He was replaced by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, whom Morsi handpicked due to his purportedly strong Muslim faith and after many assurances of wanting to work with the Brotherhood (Smith and Gaviria, 2013). While el-Sisi may have gone along with Morsi for the moment, he would be the leader who brought about Morsi's downfall.

By some accounts, Morsi made two critical decisions that caused his removal. As discussed earlier, the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) ruled the 2011 parliamentary elections unconstitutional. Attempting to save the Constituent Assembly from the same outcome, Morsi issued a decree on November 21, 2012, granting himself emergency powers over all other state institutions. This meant that his decisions and the decisions of the Constituent Assembly were not bound by any judicial review until a new constitution passed. A quarter of the Constituent Assembly members resigned in protest to Morsi's overstep, at which point the remaining assembly, now almost entirely Islamist, pushed the constitution through in a very

short period (Brownlee et al., 2015; Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Smith and Gaviria, 2013). These two decisions triggered protests that lasted months, growing in intensity. These protests were fanned by the incendiary and fear-mongering media (Lynch, 2015). A group called Tamarod[13] led efforts to hold early elections and convince Morsi to resign. They distributed a resignation petition that allegedly amassed 22 million signatures and planned a large protest for June 30, 2013, the anniversary of Morsi taking office.

At first, Morsi did not take the demonstrations seriously. As they continued to grow to the brink of a civil war, el-Sisi finally sat down with Morsi to discuss concessions. Morsi was ultimately willing to make concessions but refused to resign, fearing the precedent it would set. On July 1, 2013, the military decided for him. El-Sisi told Morsi he had 48 hours to step down voluntarily. Morsi refused and was placed under arrest and removed from office on July 3 (Smith and Gaviria, 2013).

The military's coup did not immediately end the fierce polarization across the country. The Brotherhood's electoral success convinced many secular political groups that Islamists would always win elections, and therefore elections were not in their best interest. Those in this camp supported and welcomed the military coup, calling el-Sisi a hero for saving Egypt from Morsi and Islamist rule (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Masoud, 2020). Others thought it set a bad precedent for democracy by forcing a democratically elected president from office instead of letting the FJP be voted out of office (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). For the Brotherhood and its supporters, this was a dangerous military coup they now had to fight against. The Brotherhood supporters immediately occupied the Rabaa Al-Adawiya mosque in downtown Cairo, converting it into a makeshift headquarters from which to protest. Every day and night for weeks, the

[13] Tamarod means 'rebellion' in Arabic.

Brotherhood and its supporters engaged in protests and squared off against the military. On July 24, el-Sisi declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization once again, issuing a call to arms for citizens to fight against them. The standoff ended brutally: on August 14, the army literally bulldozed the Brotherhood encampment full of civilians, killing hundreds and forcing the group underground once more (Smith and Gaviria, 2013).

With the Brotherhood gone, the Deep State quickly reconsolidated its power. The new constitution, passed in December 2013, expanded military privileges even further, stating that no civilian can serve as defense minister and that all military regulation will be handled by a council of generals (Masoud, 2020). The new constitution also gave the Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) the power to select its own members at its discretion (Gelvin, 2015). The complicity of the judiciary no longer in doubt, Adly Mansour, the president of the SCC, was named interim president. At the same time, the court sentenced hundreds of Morsi supporters to death (Brownlee et al., 2015). Mohamed ElBaradei was named interim Vice President, but he resigned after two months to protest against the military's violent tactics against protesters (Morocco World News, 2013). El-Sisi, already Defense Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, also became interim Deputy Prime Minister in July 2013. In March 2014, he stepped down from all his positions to run for president, an election he won with a suspiciously high 96% of votes (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016; Kingley, 2014). Solidifying itself as a military police state, the army and security forces brutally stifled dissent from the surviving Muslim Brotherhood or any other source (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). This is where Egypt currently stands.

**The Tunisian Outcome**

After the murders of two left coalition constituent assembly members in the spring and summer of 2013, Tunisia was in chaos. A new movement, Rahil[14], emerged, demanding the end of the assembly. They were supported by a new coalition called the National Salvation Front (NSF), controlled primarily by Essebsi's new party Nidaa Tounes (Nidaa). The NSF was soon joined by the scorned UGTT, and sit-in demonstrations began numbering over 100,000. At this point, the Troika approached the NSF, ready to deal (Chomiak and Parks, 2020).

Ghannouchi, eager to further separate Ennahda from Salafi groups, declared Ansar al-Sharia a terrorist organization. The parties then came to a compromise, announced in October 2013. The Ennahda-led government stepped down voluntarily and handed control over to a temporary technocratic government charged with organizing legislative and presidential elections in a timely manner. In return, the NSF agreed that the constituent assembly would finish the constitution by early 2014 (Gelvin, 2015). The constitution was indeed finished and passed on January 26, 2014. As promised, the technocratic government organized and held legislative and presidential elections before the end of 2014.[15] Essebsi's Nidaa Tunis was the most successful party, winning a plurality in the legislature, and Essebsi himself won the presidency. Nidaa Tunis then surprised some by creating a coalition government with Ennahda. Ennahda has since abandoned the Islamist title, announcing its new designation as a Muslim Democrat party in May 2016 (Chomiak and Parks, 2020).

As positive as this outcome was, we cannot leave the Tunisian case here. Tunisia's current president, Kais Saied, has taken the country in a sharply authoritarian direction since 2021. In response to protests against continued corruption and police brutality, Saied dissolved

[14] Rahil means 'departure' in Arabic.
[15] October and December 2014, respectively

parliament and the judiciary before putting up a referendum on a new constitution, which gives him significantly more power (Yee, 2021). Scholars have begun calling this a self-coup (autogolpe) (Tamburini, 2022). The apolitical military has not intervened, upholding its pattern of supporting the will of the people. After its historic democratic transition culminating in peaceful transitions of power, Tunisia backslid into anocracy.

Egypt did not complete a transition. It held relatively free and fair elections in 2011 and 2012, but there was never a peaceful power transfer between elected officials, and the democratically elected government was overthrown. On a deeper level, neither the parliament nor the president ever had the ability to govern without interference from unelected factions, namely the SCAF. Tunisia did complete a transition, then backslid under Saied in 2021. In Egypt, the military undermined the democratization process, and there was no group to challenge their control over the process. The pool of people who were qualified to take on leadership positions was largely tainted by corruption. The Deep State was strong enough to ensure that leadership positions went to those who would cooperate with it. In Tunisia, the military supported the democratization process, and no one group had enough power to monopolize the process. This outcome was a direct result of Egypt and Tunisia's respective state capacities. The following section will analyze Egypt's revolution from January 2011 through July 2013, demonstrating the causal role Egypt's state capacity played in this outcome. I will also examine how this state capacity translates quantitatively and compare it to Tunisia.

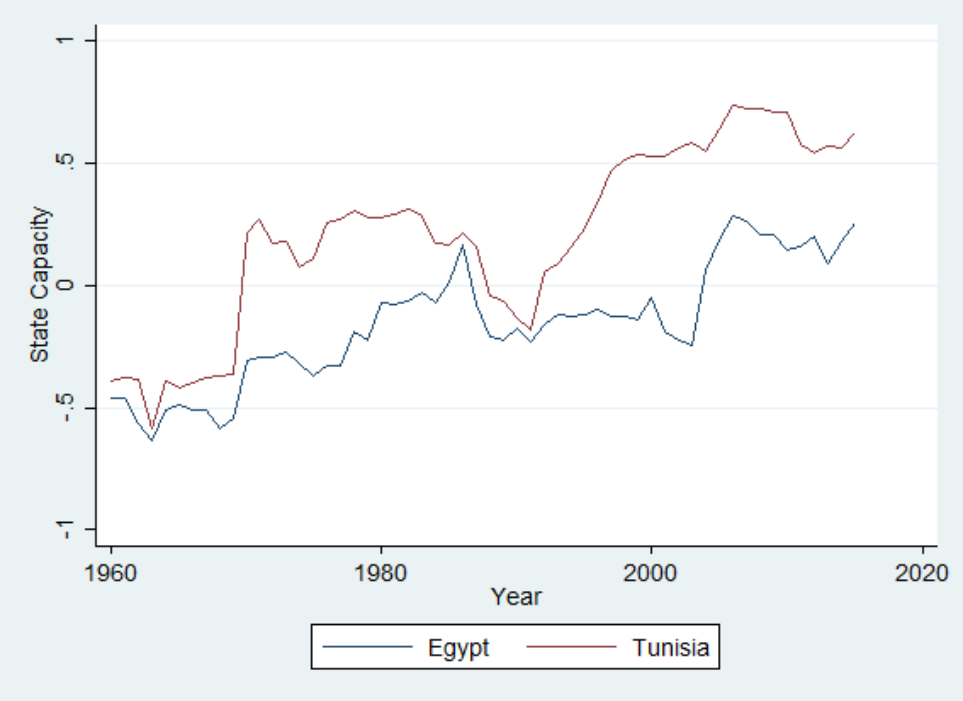
## 4.5 – Analysis

### Egypt vs. Tunisia State Capacity

The first step towards understanding why Egypt and Tunisia's democratic transitions ended so differently is to examine their respective state capacities as the independent variable. I

will begin with their general state capacities before examining sub-capacities. As shown in Figure 2, Tunisia's state capacity has consistently been higher than Egypt's state capacity. Within Hanson and Sigman's (2019) indicators to measure state capacity, Egypt generally scores higher in the military-related categories, while Tunisia scores higher in the administrative categories.

**Figure 2: Egyptian and Tunisian State Capacity**




*Created from Hanson and Sigman (2019) Data.*

Now I will break this down into coercive and administrative capacities. Some indicators are widely accepted to directly compare coercive state capacity, such as military spending and enrollment data. Brownlee et al. (2015) developed a table, shown below, examining military centrality in both countries, which includes the same measures used to measure coercive state capacity in the classic sense.

**Table 3: Brownlee et al.'s Indicators of Military Centrality in Egypt and Tunisia**

**Table 5.1.** Indicators of Military Centrality in Egypt and Tunisia

| Measure | Egypt | Tunisia |
|---|---|---|
| Size of armed forces | 835,500 | 47,800 |
| Total military spending (millions of USD) | 4,560 | 534 |
| Military spending as share of GDP | 2.0% | 1.3% |
| Military spending per capita | 57.8 | 50.9 |
| Soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants | 10.6 | 4.6 |
| Global Militarization Index Rank (150 countries, 2012) | 27 | 79 |

Sources: World Bank Development Indicators, 2010; International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance*, 2010; Bonn International Center for Conversion Global Militarization Index, 2012.

*Brownlee, J, Masoud, T, and Reynolds, A. (2015). The Arab Spring: Pathways of repression and reform. Oxford University Press.*

As we can see, Egypt's military outpaces Tunisia's in every way. This vast difference in military centrality speaks to how differently each country's military formed and the extent to which it was prioritized. Egypt's military has always been the primary focus of modernization and development, while Tunisia's military has never been a priority. This then impacts the relative coercive capacities in each state, which is why size and spending are effective ways to measure coercive capacity.

Something that traditional measures of state capacity do not explicitly address, and which is critical to understanding these cases, is the ability of the coercive apparatus to exert control over the state and society. I have found two good ways to approximate military political power: military autonomy and coup-proofing strategies.

The concept of military autonomy has been studied but it has not been explored as a dimension of coercive state capacity. Pion-Berlin (1992) outlines two dimensions of military autonomy as institutional and political. Military institutional autonomy refers to a military's level of independence and insulation. Military political autonomy can be defined as an "aversion towards or even defiance of civilian control"; in other words, the degree to which the military

can accumulate power and avoid being held to civilian standards (Pion-Berlin, 1992, p. 85). While military autonomy seems to be a well-studied concept in certain cases or regions, there has been little macro-level examination. Zeinab Abul-Magd, Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz, Sharan Grewal, and Yezid Sayigh have referenced military autonomy in their scholarship studying MENA states, but not in a quantitative, measurable way. Based on qualitative information, both Egypt and Tunisia have relatively independent militaries, but only Egypt's military is truly autonomous. This means that Tunisia's military is separate from civilian politics but also has a fair amount of legislative oversight over its insular operations. Egypt's military dominates civilian politics and demands complete control over its own oversight along with exerting power over other aspects of state operations (Cammett and Diwan, 2013; Grewal, 2018). From the earliest constitutional declaration granting the SCAF legislative authority to the final constitution passed under Morsi, the military retained control over its own budget and oversight, with no civilian input. After El-Sisi took power, a council of generals was given solitary oversight responsibility. It is because of the military's political power that it has been able to retain its military autonomy.

Another potentially helpful way to understand military political power is to examine the coup-proofing strategies implemented against them. Grewal (2018) explains Egypt and Tunisia's revolutionary outcomes in terms of militaries that had been coup-proofed differently. Egypt's military was coopted by prior autocrats, essentially buying their loyalty with significant economic and political incentives, while Tunisia's was counterbalanced. Counter-balancing is a type of divide-and-rule strategy specific to military control, in which a parallel security force, sometimes within the existing military, is consistently given higher status and budgetary power than the general military in order to funnel public resentment of the regime towards the security

force (as opposed to the regime), keep the military relatively weak, and give the autocrat a small, loyal security force to protect them (Grewal, 2018). I do not doubt that these differing strategies impacted the respective militaries and their reactions to the revolution: I do argue however that coup-proofing strategies are not chosen randomly. Before Mubarak and Ben Ali each took office, their countries' militaries already possessed certain levels of coercive capacity that made one strategy better suited than others. Egypt had a large, well-trained military when Mubarak took office. While his predecessor had signed the Camp David Accords, a long-lasting peace with Israel was still uncertain. Trying to counterbalance the Egyptian military would have made no sense (Arafat, 2017). Similarly, the apolitical and small Tunisian military could be counterbalanced because they were already relatively weak. There was no need to coopt the military when Ben Ali could more easily and cheaply develop a parallel security force that was entirely loyal to him (Escribá-Folch et al., 2020). The coup-proofing strategies implemented indicate the existing coercive state capacities which preceded them, hence they are also path dependent.

Tunisia and Egypt's respective military autonomy and coup-proofing types help paint a picture of their different levels of military political power. But as became clear in completing this thesis, this concept requires additional research. It is outside of the scope of this thesis to definitively determine whether military political power is an additional aspect of the larger coercive state capacity concept and how that power should be operationalized and measured.

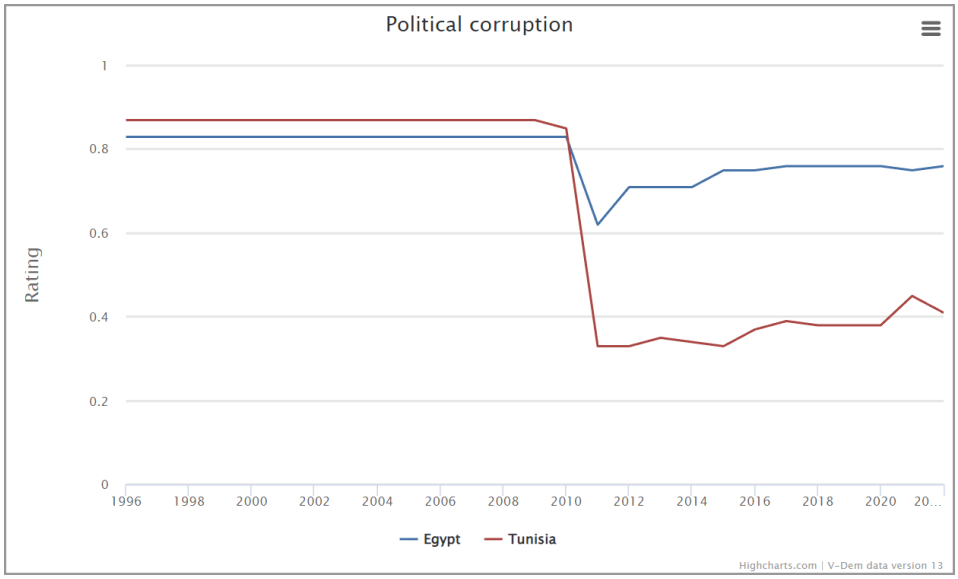
**Table 4: Military Political Power in Egypt and Tunisia**

| | **Egypt** | **Tunisia** |
|---|---|---|
| **Military autonomy** | Highly autonomous military | Independent, not autonomous, military |
| **Coup-proofing strategy** | Coopted military | Counterbalanced military |

Another aspect of military power that is important for this study is the military's control of the economy. The Egyptian military exerts significant control over the Egyptian economy. Materially, the military owns and operates several businesses throughout Egypt, especially in manufacturing (Abul-Magd, 2021). The military is also a principal shareholder in Egypt's largest publicly traded companies, making it a bulwark on Egypt's Wall Street. This arrangement seems unique to Egypt and the high degree of secrecy around exactly how much of the economy the military holds makes it difficult to measure it. The massive economic implications of the Egyptian military's societal status changing cannot be separated from the analysis of its actions during Egypt's revolutionary period.

Administrative capacity measurement is more straightforward. To compare Egypt and Tunisia's administrative capacities, I will look at both government effectiveness and political corruption. Political corruption diminishes administrative capacity, and considering its importance in both countries' democratization efforts, it seems prudent to highlight it here. However, it is imperative to note that corruption is only one dimension of administrative capacity. As evidenced by Figure 3, both Egypt and Tunisia had highly corrupt regimes leading up to their revolutions. Therefore, looking at a broader measurement of administrative capacity is necessary.

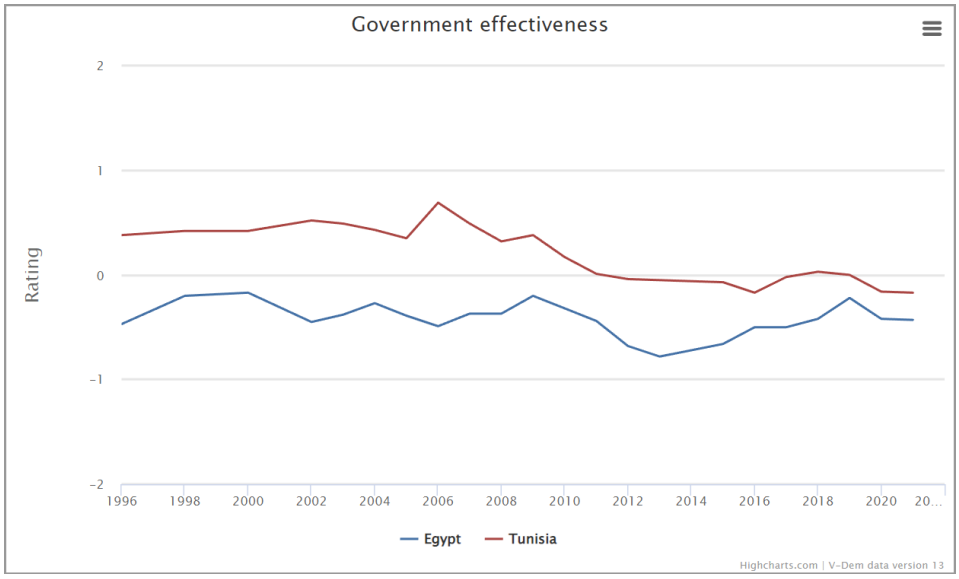
**Figure 3: Political Corruption in Egypt and Tunisia**




*Created from the Varieties of Democracy (2021) Political Corruption Index.*

Varieties of Democracy's Government Effectiveness indicator includes, "quality of public service provision, the quality of the bureaucracy, the competence of civil servants, the independence of the civil service from political pressures, and the credibility of the government's commitment to policies" (V-Dem, 2021b). As shown in Figure 4, despite being slightly more corrupt than Egypt before the Arab Spring, Tunisia has consistently been the more effective state. Egypt had a consistently low administrative capacity, leaving citizens less prepared to take power after the revolution and leaving room for the Muslim Brotherhood to gain influence by filling the gaps left by government ineptitude.

**Figure 4: Government Effectiveness in Egypt and Tunisia.**




*Created from the Varieties of Democracy (2021) Government Effectiveness indicator.*

How specifically did this state capacity manifest? Egypt's coercive strength, especially its military's political power, along with corruption and a bureaucratically weak state created a Deep State which successfully diminished democratic reforms in order to hold onto power. The following section investigates in-depth how Egypt's coercive and administrative capacities affected its revolution and democratization process.

**Analysis and Examples**

Egypt's military retained significant control throughout the democratization process. Democracy was a threat to the Deep State and therefore needed to be minimized. As Lynch (2015) described, every move toward democratization was seen as a loss in a zero-sum game. From the outset, it seems there were two primary goals for undermining democratization in Egypt: keeping the opposition groups divided and limiting the power – and potential power – of elected institutions. These goals were two sides of the same coin. Divide-and-rule strategies are used to make sure the opposition does not get strong enough to challenge the military. Then, even if one group has significant electoral success (I.e., Islamists), they will not have sufficient

power to dismantle the Deep State. By painting democratic moves as Islamist encroachment, these tactics sowed intentional divisions between Islamists and secularists to prevent the elected Islamist government from securing the political support of the other groups in implementing democratic reforms and challenging the Deep State's power (Lynch, 2015).

The two most prominent examples of power limitation happened surrounding the presidential elections. The Supreme Constitutional Court ruled the democratically elected parliament unconstitutional days before presidential elections began. Then, while voting was happening, the SCAF issued a constitutional declaration that significantly limited presidential authority and centered itself in the ongoing constitution-writing process (Brown, 2013). Meanwhile, there was a steady undercurrent of division throughout the entire two-year period. Security forces and police would either escalate conflicts or stand by and let them spiral, fueling chaos and violence; while the media unleashed a stream of incendiary information, first about the more progressive wing of revolutionaries such as April 6 and Kefaya, and later on the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamists in general (Brown, 2013; Lynch, 2015).

Egypt's Deep State was significantly helped along by the weak administrative state capacity in Egypt. Egyptian bureaucracy is not primarily influenced by skill or qualification; it is staffed based on cronyism and nepotism. The government has never prioritized education outside of the military context, so there was no loyal, competent workforce. Top bureaucrats either rose up the ranks of Egyptian bureaucracy due to their loyalty to the regime, or they were competent but not well-connected, and therefore less successful. The former group was the larger one inside the Egyptian bureaucracy. The educated class was not given the opportunity to become a loyal competent workforce within the bureaucracy. Because of the lack of a strong civil society as discussed by Brownlee et al., this educated class that was kept out of the government was also

not organized into a coherent opposition group that could seize power from the SCAF (see also: Brown, 2013). Egyptian education was inadequate to prepare people for bureaucratic careers. The educated class was kept out of the bureaucracy or in low-level positions where they were unprepared for civic leadership. Lacking a vibrant civil society meant that they were not well organized, therefore not well prepared, to seriously challenge the Deep State.

As I will show in the following paragraphs, trends throughout the transitional period suggest that, during periods of popular unrest, the Deep State was willing to cut off a weak aspect to keep the rest of the network intact and in power. First, they approached unrest defensively, with sticks followed by carrots. Whenever a protest was dispersed in a particularly violent manner or a SCAF decision came out that was particularly unpopular, it would be followed with a, usually minor, concession. They eventually switched to an offensive approach, giving a concession directly before doing something they knew would be unpopular or before a major planned protest. They aimed to do the bare minimum to appease the population. There were instances where minor concessions were insufficient. Then, the SCAF would sacrifice a piece of the network, such as the Prime Minister and cabinet resignations and trials for Mubarak and his inner circle. Arrests of Mubarak and his inner circle were gradual, beginning with lower-level officials and eventually ending with Mubarak. This indicates that these arrests and prosecutions were also part of the larger strategy to keep the Deep State intact as much as possible, but to sacrifice specific actors at opportune moments to protect the larger network.

At the same time, it was crucial to keep the core revolutionary group as isolated as possible, primarily by using state media to portray them as violent or unreasonable, or even as foreign agents (Lynch, 2015). During the initial transition period in 2011, this was most often directed at protesters who continually pressured the SCAF to follow through with demands. It

also effectively demonized Coptic Christians who had hoped democratization would ease societal discrimination. Through the election period and especially after Morsi won the presidency, the tactic was primarily used against Islamists. In addition to heavy fearmongering against Islamist rule, the media successfully blamed Morsi for electricity and gas shortages. When demonstrations against Morsi began, the state media heavily favored the protesters and the coup against him in July 2013 (Lynch, 2015).

This strategy has many examples. Early in the revolution, Mubarak dissolved his highly unpopular cabinet and appointed his first-ever Vice President, Omar Suleiman, who took over most governing responsibilities (CBS News, 2011)[16]. When that was insufficient, the target of the Deep State had to eventually become Mubarak himself. February 10, 2011, seems to be the day that every branch of the Deep State made a calculated decision to turn on him: state newspaper Ahram Online published an opinion piece praising the protesters and criticizing Mubarak and Suleiman; the new Interior Minister announced he would investigate officers' use of force against protesters; the SCAF convened without Mubarak and leaked to the press that he would resign in his televised address that night, and when he did the opposite, they leaked another story that Mubarak was defying the military.

In the transitional period between Mubarak's resignation and Egypt's elections, the Deep State continued implementing its strategy of appeasement, repression, and personnel changes when necessary. Brown (2013) refers to this surviving network as the infrastructure of authoritarianism. The judiciary and state media made Mubarak's arrest, trial, and sentencing into a national public spectacle which took over a year in total. For example, their announcement that

[16] I would have preferred to utilize the Middle East News Agency as a source but unfortunately their database only goes back to 2013. They are the most-often state media source cited by Al Jazeera and other international agencies. There is more material available through Al-Ahram but no centralized database. In both cases, there are noticeable gaps in news coverage archives that sometimes span several days.

Mubarak would be charged with murder for the deaths of protesters during the revolution came three days before a nation-wide protest was scheduled against military trials for civilians (Al Jazeera, 2011b). Similarly, Mubarak's August 3, 2011, court arraignment was aired on state television two days after a Tahrir Square protest was dispersed in a particularly violent manner (Ahram Online, 2011a; Smith and Gaviria, 2013).

Meanwhile, civilians who continued to protest for changes throughout 2011 were continually brutalized by police, security officers, and now soldiers. They were also subjected to military arrests and trials, often without representation or due process. Al Jazeera correspondent Evan Hill wrote an expose describing thousands of Egyptians being detained and abused by military police before facing military trials that happened so fast defendants' families and attorneys often did not know about them until after they were over (Hill, 2011).

The state media consistently portrayed these people as unreasonable, violent, thugs, or even foreign agents, in an effort to minimize their national impact. This started with Communique no. 5, released by the SCAF three days after Mubarak resigned, in which the SCAF urged public employees to stop nation-wide strikes: a SCAF spokesman said in a televised address, "Noble Egyptians see that these strikes, at this delicate time, lead to negative results" (Al Jazeera, 2011a). In October 2011, a viral video depicting army officers torturing civilians in their custody was declared a fake, but the army simultaneously justified the video by claiming the detainees were thugs (Ahram Online, 2011b). At the same time, a series of Coptic Christian protests against a church demolition turned deadly in Cairo due to military police overreaction, eventually becoming known as the Maspero Massacre. The Prime Minister suggested it was a conspiracy by groups trying to undermine national unity (Al Jazeera, 2011d).

However, some incidents galvanized the population enough that the Deep State had to sacrifice individuals. The most notable example was in November 2011, right before the parliamentary elections. Egyptians returned to the streets en masse to protest the SCAF's super-constitution, which would retain SCAF control over political decisions even after elections and remove all budgetary oversight over the military from the legislature. When repressing the protests failed, the Prime Minister and the cabinet resigned (Al Jazeera, 2011e). This effectively diffused the situation and kept the Deep State intact.

When the public ire was not directed at members of the Deep State, they did what they could to keep the attention elsewhere and use it to further consolidate power. After the elections, it became easier for the SCAF to minimize scrutiny because the elected officials became the new primary target. The Islamist parties performed even better than expected, which made the fear of Islamist overreach the new focus for most people in Egypt. State media was instrumental in stoking those fears: an Islamist majority meant that the parliament-appointed Constituent Assembly could enshrine sharīʿah principles in the constitution, and once Morsi won the presidency – by a considerably narrower margin than was seen in the parliamentary elections – it did not take much effort to paint Islamists as the true danger. State media was consistently anti-Morsi and used his especially heavy-handed decisions to paint him as a would-be autocrat. When Morsi granted himself significant powers and pushed the constitution through in November and December 2012, the military response was to hang back while the polarized masses fought in the streets and the judiciary continued to stoke fear in the press (Al Jazeera, 2012b). Soon after, the Tamarod campaign to hold early presidential elections swept the country. It was called a grassroots campaign but was allegedly created by the SCAF to force Morsi out of office (Taha, 2013).

Aside from manipulating the general population, it was crucial for Deep State survival to control other groups with the potential to challenge its authority. After Mubarak's removal, real, tangible change with civilian input was not on the agenda; but alienating groups too far could escalate the situation. In post-revolutionary Egypt, these groups were comprised of political parties, religious organizations, and other civil society groups like unions. To keep parties small and divided, the SCAF scheduled elections as fast as possible and did not respond to calls from the multitude of new parties to postpone them to give groups more time to organize and campaign (Al Jazeera, 2011c). This also served to diminish the population's faith in democracy's ability to serve them, which in turn helped the Deep State prevent democratic changes in key areas (Brown, 2013). The SCAF and state media were also firmly anti-strike before elections, framing them as disastrous for the country's stability and safety.

While all these types of groups played a role in the Egyptian revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood and its Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) was the biggest threat to military hegemony because of their well-organized national network and relatively high public support. The Deep State's approach to the Brotherhood changed over time along with its perceived ability to threaten the existing power structure. During the revolution and the early transition, the Brotherhood was eager to curry the military's favor to shift from an unofficially accepted religious organization into a legitimate, politically powerful organization. The military, traditionally anti-Islamist, was happy to maintain an outwardly friendly relationship with the Brotherhood initially, showing the public that the military was willing to work with civilian groups during the transition period.

The SCAF shifted its approach to dealing with the Brotherhood after the FJP's massive success in parliamentary elections because their apparent popularity, combined with the power of

state institutions, could threaten the status quo. While the Deep State did not attack the party itself at the time, it went after the institutions they were entering to give them less authority and power. The military and the judiciary were especially important. On April 12, 2012, six days after the filing deadline for potential candidates, the Supreme Presidential Election Commission disqualified several candidates, including the Brotherhood's supreme deputy guide Khairat El-Shater (Al Jazeera, 2012a). The reason given was his criminal record though El-Shater had already been pardoned by the SCAF. Fearing this type of move, the Brotherhood added Morsi as a candidate a week before the deadline, just in case, which is the only reason the FJP was able to field a candidate (Al-Akhbar, 2012). In addition, the Supreme Constitutional Court dissolved the democratically elected parliament days before the presidential election, on the grounds that the conduct of the election was unconstitutional. This technical "excuse" to dissolve the legislature clearly aimed to curtail the power of the incoming democratically elected president. On the last day of the election, the SCAF released a constitutional declaration severely restricting presidential authority (BBC, 2012b). Had Morsi's challenger won, this would not have mattered because the president would have been part of the inner circle. Because Morsi won, the move ensured that it maintained Deep State control over the regime.

Morsi then spent his presidency fighting the SCAF and the courts, trying to reinstate parliament and pass a constitution. This is when we can also observe the Deep State's economic manipulation. When Morsi attempted to reinstate the democratically elected parliament, state media claimed it caused the Egyptian stock market to plummet. State-owned gas and electric companies diverted resources to cause blackouts and fuel shortages, which could then be blamed on Morsi, who was continuously called incompetent (Childress, 2013). When Morsi made moves to try and regain some power from the SCAF, the media and courts were quick to accuse him of

dictatorship. After Morsi's ouster by the military, gas and electric shortages magically resolved, and police and security forces returned to work en masse (Childress, 2013). With Morsi's downfall, the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists were once again framed as extremists and persecuted by the state on a massive scale. As Muslim Brotherhood spokesperson Gehad El-Haddad said after the coup, "We never realized what Mubarak was standing in front of, and that was the military... The military was the real face of Egypt and its deep state" (Childress, 2013, p. 1).

Morsi made several decisions that, in hindsight, were unwise; and we will never know for sure whether the Brotherhood had purely democratic ambitions or not. Ultimately, it does not matter. Any person or group outside of the Deep State gaining power through democratic (or other) means was a threat in this zero-sum game. Because of the institutionalized state capacity in Egypt before the revolution, it seems unlikely that any person or group could have succeeded.

# CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The foundation for Egypt's failed democratic transition goes all the way back to the state formation period. Muhammad Ali funneled his attention and resources into creating a strong standing military and neglected any infrastructure that did not explicitly support that. When Egypt came under British rule, Lord Cromer continued to neglect Egypt's administrative capacity and maintained a standing army to protect British interests. These priorities were reinforced again when the Free Officers ended British imperialism. Just as Ali and Cromer did, Nasser based appointments on loyalty instead of competence, reinforcing the cycle of neglectful workforce training. He also successfully integrated his role as Head of State into the newly established Deep State, which continued to expand in power and influence. Egyptian revolutionaries were fighting nearly 200 years of deeply entrenched military entitlement and bureaucratic neglect: no group was strong enough to topple that.

The closest thing revolutionaries in Egypt had to a contender was the Muslim Brotherhood, which included a lot of the educated class and was well-organized throughout the country. However, the Muslim Brotherhood and its political offshoot the Freedom and Justice Party didn't have the support necessary to overthrow the Deep State. Islamists have never been the seat of power in Egypt, and they've often been the antagonist to the government. Because of the Brotherhood's checkered history, the populace who didn't support them were inclined to be skeptical. The Deep State then took every opportunity to spur division between Islamists and secularists. Sowing division and mistrust were a successful part of the divide-and-rule strategy to maintain the existing status quo.

Tunisian transition, in contrast, was never led by the military. It was led by the Constitutional Council and bureaucrats, who then brought in representatives from old and new

political parties as well as civil society leaders. It was collaborative from the beginning, and the military stayed out of it. Cooperation was difficult and nearly failed: but the parties avoided a collapse by making sacrifices. Whether they wanted to or not, no one group had the power or support to act unilaterally the way the SCAF did.

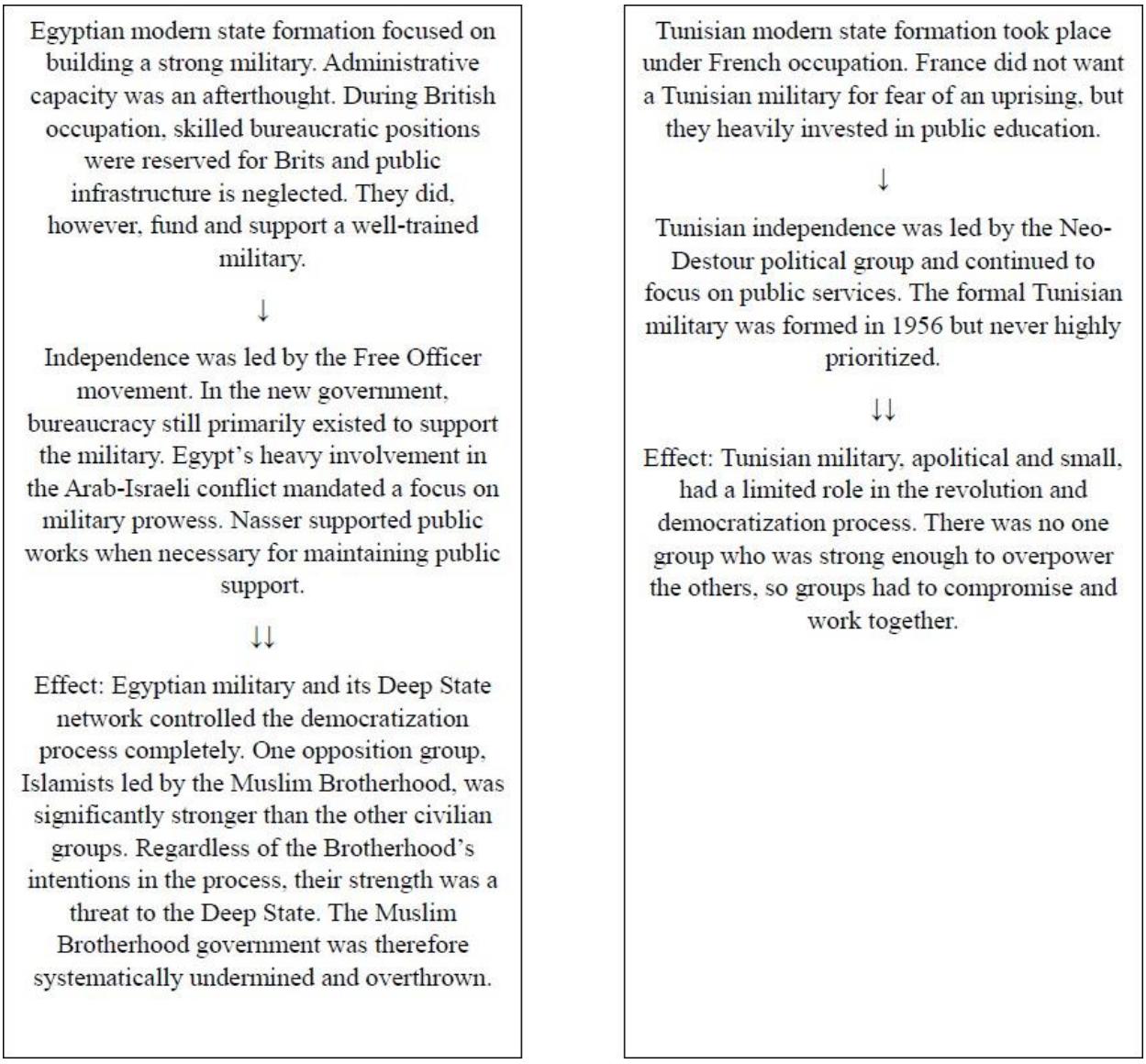
Tunisia's successful outcome can be explained by the context of its state capacity. In Egypt, the military was the constant focus of development. Tunisian modern state formation, which began under French occupation, did not include a military at all. In Tunisia, a formal military did not even exist until 1956. Largely due to Tunisia's distance from the Arab-Israeli conflict, there was never a need to focus on coercive capacity even after independence. Tunisia's military is small and has never been politically powerful, so there was no agenda to take any sides apart from maintaining national security. As a counterbalanced military under Ben Ali, the Tunisian military benefitted from democratization and was therefore not threatened by it (Grewal, 2018).

The administrative similarity between pre-revolution Tunisia and Egypt was corruption. Corruption in Tunisia was just as bad as in Egypt. Top leadership positions in government and connected businesses were filled by cronies. However, the elite crony network in Tunisia was much smaller than in Egypt. That actually could have made it easier to oust Ben Ali and his elite crony network, because there were relatively few of them (Cammett and Diwan, 2013). Tunisia's network was possibly more blatantly corrupt than Egypt's, it was easier to take down because it was so insular. Both Egypt and Tunisia were examples of state capture: but where Tunisia's network was dismantled, most of Egypt's remained in power even without Mubarak. This combined with the apolitical nature of the military reveals why Tunisia does not have a Deep State.

Tunisia's administrative capacity played a significant role in its successful democratic outcome. Tunisia had better infrastructure in place than Egypt; this was perhaps most apparent when both countries held free and fair elections for the first time. While Egypt's elections were chaotic, Tunisia's went smoothly. Additionally, Tunisia has strongly prioritized education since independence, and its educational infrastructure is not tied to the military. It is true that Tunisian education didn't keep up with workforce demands, but this was primarily an issue in the private sector, not the public. The bureaucratic workforce was more well-trained and worked more efficiently than in Egypt. Because of this, Tunisian bureaucracy could more easily shift away from Ben Ali-type corruption after the revolution.

Utilizing process tracing techniques, I followed the divergent paths Egypt and Tunisia took in forming state capacities during state formation all the way to democratization outcomes. Egypt prioritized coercive capacity development during state formation at the expense of administrative capacity. This was reinforced and institutionalized during the British occupation, meaning that the group most suited to leading the Egyptian independence movement came from the military. The Free Officers, accustomed to the relatively elevated status afforded to military officials, continued and deepened the military-to-government pipeline. In the context of past precedent as well as the height of the Arab-Israeli conflict, institutions that did not explicitly work to support the military were continually neglected. Nasser also effectively incorporated the burgeoning Deep State into a broader network which included the Head of State. Because of the historical context in which the Egyptian revolution and democratization processes happened, its outcome was something of a foregone conclusion: the overly powerful military was never going to allow substantive democratization that would threaten its power, and because bureaucratic processes and services had been so neglected, citizens were ill-equipped to challenge it.

**Figure 5: Summary**




Within the state capacity-democratization literature, this thesis builds on the work of Eva Bellin, Jessica Fortin-Rittberger, Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. A state with a high coercive and low administrative state capacity is unlikely to democratize successfully. The military's decision to support or abandon the executive can determine whether a regime survives. I argue that, after a regime is overturned, the coercive apparatus is just as determinative in whether the country will successfully democratize. I also argue that a state's

administrative capacity is determinative to its democratization success, as a competent workforce and well-established institutions are necessary to build a coherent regime. In the case of Egypt, the military and associated elite network was stronger than the formal government and was threatened by democratization, so it deliberately and successfully undermined the process. Mubarak's formal regime fell, but the informal Deep State stayed intact.

More broadly, this thesis holds implications for studying democracy and democratization processes. The actors included in leading a democratic transition will shape its trajectory. Coercive institutions that have thrived under autocracy will not favor a regime change that diminishes their position, so substantive regime change is unlikely if those institutions are monopolizing the process. There must be a strong, diverse civilian presence in the democratization process for it to be successful.

I can see how this thesis is pessimistic about the odds of democratization success. Authoritarianism is robust, even when specific autocrats are not. It's a structural argument, but I do not totally discount the importance of human agency. Democratization under high coercive and low administrative state capacity is unlikely – but not impossible. In my view, human agency often represents the margin of uncertainty that comes with studying social science. Humans are rational and make certain decisions for certain reasons. But regardless of how rational a person is, their emotions will always factor into their decisions. Additionally, I think there is an important caveat to rational choice theory that people often overlook: the choice only has to be rational in the mind of the person making it. By that standard, there is significantly more room for unpredictability in human behavior than we give ourselves credit for.

### *Further Potential*

This thesis illuminated several potential research avenues to consider. As discussed in Chapter 4, the political dimension of coercive capacity has yet to be studied. There seems to be a clear conceptual link between a physically strong military and a politically powerful military. I am curious if they can fit into the coercive state capacity concept without stretching. Military autonomy addresses this in part, but that is also a concept that has yet to be well studied on a macro level. In the future, I think there is a potential research avenue to develop an operational definition of military political power and determine whether it fits into the coercive state capacity concept.

I also think there is potential to study the Deep State concept further. While there is some solid work on the subject, there is space to solidify its definition as well as to operationalize it for further analysis and comparison. Like military autonomy, the research on Deep State is sparse and has only been applied to small-N case studies, so there seems to be a lot of room for new research in the area. Deep State actors and the power dynamics between them; the role of state formation in Deep State formation; and the role of state capacity in Deep State robustness, are all potential avenues for further research.

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