

# Guardians or Oppressors



# Guardians or Oppressors:

*Civil-Military Relations  
and Democratisation  
in the Mediterranean Region*

Edited by

Amany Salaheldin Soliman  
and Gülçin Balamir Coşkun

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-7618-6

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7618-6

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Civil-Military Relations in the Mediterranean Region: A Difficult Puzzle Gülçin Balamir Coşkun	
Chapter One.....	7
Civil-Military Relations in the Democratization Process: Searching for a Conceptual Framework Gülçin Balamir Coşkun	
Chapter Two.....	21
The Spanish Military and Democratic Transition (1975-1982) Amany Salaheldin Soliman	
Chapter Three.....	45
Analyses of Civil and Military Relations in Turkey through a Concept of the Rentier Security State Uğur Kaya	
Chapter Four.....	65
Demilitarization of the Public Sphere in Turkey: Lessons for Future Democratic Transitions in the Middle East Bezen Balamir Coşkun	
Chapter Five.....	85
Civil-Military Relations in Egypt: From the Republic to the Coup Alper Y. Dede	
Chapter Six.....	105
Iran: Towards a Military Dictatorship? Özüm Sezin Uzun	
Chapter Seven.....	121
Civil Wars and the Fragility of Democracy in the Arab Middle East: Notes from Lebanon Nur Köprülü	

Conclusion.....	135
Amany Salaheldin Soliman	
Bibliography.....	141
Contributors.....	151
Index.....	155

## INTRODUCTION

# CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: A DIFFICULT PUZZLE

GÜLÇİN BALAMIR COŞKUN

Education regarding militaries and their place in society has been an important issue in political theory since the times of the Ancient Greeks. In the Funeral Oration, Pericles despised Sparta, where every citizen grew up as a soldier. According to Pericles, Athenian democracy was exalted because of the direct participation of citizens in political life. The interesting point of this discourse is that Pericles never made reference to his long-term status as a military leader. Gradually, civil-military relations have become an interesting political issue and research area with the emergence of the modern-state. The reinforcement of the division of labour by the modernization process has also brought the necessity of defining the duties and prerogatives of militaries. Over the course of time, the non-intervention of militaries in the political decision-making process has been defined as a condition *sine qua non* of democratic consolidation. The realization of this condition emphasized by theoretical and empirical studies on democratisation has never been an easy task. It is necessary to remember that even in the history of contemporary consolidated democracies, there were military coups d'état or latent attempts of intervention in politics.

We have to admit that it is more difficult and painful to keep military forces out of political life in recently democratising countries. The examples of the Mediterranean countries are very illustrative for revealing the problems which arise during the removal of militaries from the political arena. Turkey and Spain, which are also studied in the different chapters of this book, are cited as examples of the third wave of democratisation. In the Turkish case, the military forces which had labelled themselves as precursors to modernisation since the last decades

of the Ottoman Empire, were defining their active place on the political scene as natural and essential for the future of the modern state. All state apparatus, especially the national education system, was used for facilitating the recognition of the military's dominance by citizens. In Spain, democratisation started with the defeat of Franco. Spanish democratisation has been taking place in a society fragmented by the hatreds of the past and worries about the future. This fragmentation had repercussions among the military. It was not so easy to keep military forces out of the political arena. Interestingly, the Spanish political system found ways to overcome this difficulty and pushed the military into barracks. In the same period, authoritarian regimes were enhancing their powers and blocking democratisation attempts. It is evident that the position of militaries differs from one country to another. Nevertheless, the role played by militaries against colonial states can be defined as a common denominator for all these countries, which has important repercussions for the future of civil-military relations.

Therefore, the historical experiences of Mediterranean countries concretise two fundamental problems concerning civil-military relations during the democratisation process. The first problem concerns the place of military forces in the modernisation/democratisation process. In many cases, due to technical and military reasons, the modernisation process is initiated by the military elite. The main aim of this modernisation is to stop military defeats and to protect the country. It is believed that if institutional and technical modernisation within the army becomes successful and if officers adapt to new technologies and systems, the state would be better off. This line of thinking also requires the reformation of military schools. Obviously, the new education system has introduced modern institutions and ideas to young officers too. At the same time, more educated military officers will have more opportunities to elevate to higher level public positions. Gradually, as the most educated and modernized sections of society, military forces identify themselves as protectors of the modern state, hence they have been assigned the mission of the protection of modernization against the reactions of so-called backward sections of society. In such contexts, military officers tend to see themselves as guardians of society. This line of thinking is based on the assumption that society is not mature enough and needs military guidance in order to reach the accepted levels of modernisation and to protect democracy. To be able to realise this mission, they can use force and organize a coup d'état to "protect democracy" and for modernization. Although it constitutes a very controversial situation, they defend the legitimacy of their acts.

The second problem arises from the liberator position of the army in the countries which have been democratising lately, where the democratisation process starts or accelerates after the victory against colonialist or occupant states. The role of the army during the liberalization war is seen as precious, thus the prestige that militaries have gained during the war helps them to have a privileged position in the eyes of the public, at least for a while. That is problematic in this situation. As long as militaries seek to protect this privileged position in peace time, they may slow and complicate the democratisation process. On the other hand, the army, using the international context and presenting itself as the only actor to combat external threats/enemies, benefits from excessive financial support. The non-accountability of these financial transfers constitutes another problem for democratisation.

During the workshop which was the preliminary work of this manuscript, the starting questions were derived from these problems. Can the military forces be defined as guardians of a regime in a democratic state? Or how will it be possible to limit armies only with military prerogatives and competences? In other words, which system can help to block the intervention of military forces in the political arena in democratising countries? It is easy to ask these questions, but finding answers is difficult. The more difficult task is to put into practice the answers that are found in theories or historical examples. What happened after the Arab Spring has demonstrated again how civil-military relations constitute an important pillar of the democratisation process. Consequently, this book aims to rethink and re-examine civil-military relations, focusing on examples from the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

In the first part of the book, Gülçin Balamir Coşkun clarifies the meaning of democracy and explains the criteria that are useful for depicting a consolidated democracy. She also examines previous research on civil-military relations in the democratisation process. It is important to understand these theoretical evaluations deriving from the Latin America examples and to discuss this framework with regard to the Mediterranean countries.

In the second part, Amany Soliman examines the history of civil-military relations during the transition to democracy in Spain. Her study focuses especially on the first period between 1975 and 1982. Although Spanish democratization took place within the Third Wave, the democracy was consolidated relatively quickly. Therefore, the Spanish example may hide important clues on how to normalize civil-military relations.

The third part deals with a neglected part of civil-military relations as a result of the Turkish case. Uğur Kaya underlines how international security plays an important role in the definition and framing of civil-military relations. Kaya's study focuses on the Cold War period where the relationship between economics and politics took a particular form. The concept of the "rentier security state" proposed by Kaya will offer a good starting point to understand civil-military relations in the Middle East, where security issues are always at the top of debates.

The fact that Turkey had experienced three military coups d'état since its foundation makes it an extraordinary case study in the domain of civil-military relations. In this context, Bezen Balamir Coşkun proposes another important aspect of the demilitarization problem in the fourth part of the book. Coşkun starts by explaining that the civilian political elite gained control over political life with the Justice and Development Party's rule after 2002. However, she warns that the demilitarization of the political sphere does not always lead to a full-fledged demilitarization process in the public sphere. Coşkun clarifies the difficulties in the demilitarization of the political arena and public sphere simultaneously by way of the Turkish experience.

In the fifth part, Alper Dede deals with a very real issue. Dede's study emphasizes that the armies played a crucial role during the Arab Spring and determined the outcome of the transitional processes after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes in the region. His analysis focuses on civil-military relations in Egypt since the establishment of the Egyptian Republic after the Free Officers ousted the monarchy. Dede explains the origins of the military's involvement in Egypt's politics and economy. This study proposes a brief but multifaceted analysis to understand what is going on in Egypt.

The sixth part examines civil-military relations in Iran, which is an important political actor in the Middle East. At first glance, since it is not possible to classify Iran as a liberal democracy, this case seems to be a deviation from the scope of this book. However, Özüm Sezin Uzun elucidates how the Iranian army has become a political force and one of the strongest apparatuses for suppressing democratic demands over the last twenty years. The transformation of Iran into a military dictatorship illustrates the points the intervention of the military into politics can attain.

In the last chapter, Nur Köprülü studies the case of Lebanon. To understand the Lebanese political system and to discuss its sustainability represents a primordial importance because it illustrates the possibilities and difficulties of having a pluralist democracy in societies with highly differentiated sectarian identities. Devastating civil wars increase the

power of armed forces. Nur Köprülü underlines the importance of regional crises for debating the future of democracy and civil-military relations in the Middle East.



CHAPTER ONE

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS  
IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS:  
SEARCHING FOR A CONCEPTUAL  
FRAMEWORK\*

GÜLÇİN BALAMIR COŞKUN

History needs dates which indicate the breaking points of social, economic or political transformations. Although the rise of the modern state is the fruit of a long process, the Peace of Westphalia is often used as a point of reference. The French Revolution is cited as a starting point of nationalist movements. All of these dates are largely symbolic, but symbolism sometimes helps to contextualize historical phenomena. In the same way, the Carnation Revolution in 1974 is considered as the first step of the third wave of democratization. Since this date, a considerable number of studies have focused on democratization issues. Could the uprising movements that started in Tunisia and spread within the Arab world be defined as a continuation of this Third Wave? Or do they constitute a new phase? These questions are now open to debate. However, it is clear that democratization issues will be an important part of the political analyses of this geographic area. Therefore, it is valuable to understand some key concepts for analyzing the actual phenomena and facts.

It is possible to classify the studies of democratization into two main categories: those concentrating on the transition to democracy and those focusing on democratic consolidation. This distinction has become more visible after Rustow's important study underlining the different conditions

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\* The first draft of this chapter had been presented at the Fourteenth Mediterranean Research Meeting, Mersin, Turkey 20 – 23 March 2013, organised by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

and actors of transition and consolidation (Rustow 1970, 337-363). A lot of studies have focused on the democratic transition of the Latin American countries from the perspective of transition and have tried to find the common problems of this process in order to propose alternative solutions. The list of problems is long and diverse. The role of militaries in politics or the presence of “reserved domains” has settled in the higher rank of this list.

Our study is directly related to the recent developments in the MENA region. Different countries of this region have been living in a transition period. Nobody can guarantee that this transition will be from an authoritarian to a more democratic regime. On the contrary, events which have been lived since the beginning show that this transition period harbors a lot of dangers for democratization. One of these dangers derives from the risk of the increased power of military forces. For this reason, our book concentrates on civil-military relations in the MENA region.

This article aims to propose a conceptual framework for analyzing civil-military relations within the countries which are testing a democratic transition. The first part will seek to define democracy. These definition attempts will also help us to differentiate the democratic transition period from the consolidated democracies. The second part will review the different approaches to civil-military relations in democratization.

## **Some Definitions of Democracy**

Before evaluating the different problems of democratic transition, it is necessary to clarify a sense of the concept of democracy. Yet, this is not always easy. Sartori begins his classical work with a quotation from George Orwell, who underlines the difficulty of definition with the following words:

“In the case of a word like democracy, not only is there no agreed upon definition but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides ... the defenders of any kind of regime claim that it is a democracy and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning.” (Orwell 1957, 157 cited by Sartori 1973, 3)

Nevertheless, we need to understand the meaning and consequences of democracy to analyze the recent developments in the MENA region. The definition of democracy as a “government of the people, by the people and for the people” is possibly the most known formulation of this ambivalent concept. However, it shelters some problems.

First of all, the definition of people is not as simple as is expected<sup>1</sup>. The people do not form an organic whole which easily defines their needs and the means of satisfying them. The needs of minority groups and the difficulty in finding a balance between the majority and minority constitute one of the crucial points of a democratic government. Then, this formulation neglects the organization of the idea of self-government. In the modern age, it is not possible to govern by means of direct democracy. It implies the organization of elections to assign representatives of the people. A long path has undoubtedly been traversed since the first democratic elections which were organized in Europe in the 19th century. But at the same time, the elections began to be conceived as a synonym for democracy itself, especially in the countries which started the democratic transition in the 20<sup>th</sup> century while following the European model. Even if the elections constitute a first step in the constitution of a democratic government, they do not absolutely guarantee the democratization of the regime. Lastly, as for the part “for the people”, this is at least as problematic as for the first two. This design of democracy supposes that there is “a common good” or “a common will of the people”<sup>2</sup>. This assumption is based on the idea of the existence of common goals which can be reached by means decided rationally by rational individuals. However, individuals are neither entirely rational, nor do their interests add up in all the cases.

For overcoming these difficulties, Schumpeter has proposed a definition that has deeply influenced democratic theory. According to the famous economist, “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (Schumpeter 2010, 241). Schumpeter’s definition is generally labeled as a “minimalist” (or “processualist”) approach. However, by explaining this definition, Schumpeter stresses the importance of the opposition and the participation. In his words, “If, on principle at least, everyone is free to compete for political leadership by presenting himself to electorate, this will in most cases though not in all mean a considerable amount of freedom of discussion for *all*. In particular, it will normally mean a considerable amount of freedom of the press” (Schumpeter 2010, 243). This definition thus implies the need for civil and political freedoms which constitute the basis of a democratic elective struggle. Nevertheless, Schumpeter’s definition remains concentrated on competitive elections, at

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed debate of the problem of the definition of people, see Sartori 1973, 17-25.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed critique of this conception, see Schumpeter 2010, 225-230.

least at first glance. His references to political and civil freedoms stay implicit. Yet, the examples of democratization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century illustrate that fair and regular elections are not always enough for a working democracy.

Another eminent political scientist, Robert Dahl, tries to give a more detailed study of the idea of democracy. According to Dahl, in order for a regime to be defined as a polyarchy<sup>3</sup>, it has to meet seven criteria. These criteria include:

“1) *Elected officials*. Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials. 2) *Free and fair elections*. 3) *Elected officials* are chosen [and peacefully removed] in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon. 4) *Right to run* for office for practically all adults. 5) *Freedom of expression*. 6) *Alternative information*. Alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law. 7) *Associational autonomy*. To achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups” (Dahl 1996, 296).

As is seen, Dahl emphasizes both holding free, fair and regular elections and the existence of alternative channels – apart from the election periods – to influence public decision-making as the basic features of polyarchies. Countries meeting these criteria are most commonly labelled as “liberal democracies” (Schedler 1998, 92). Schmitter and Karl proposed to add two additional criteria, which are also significant in evaluating civil-military relations. First of all, they stress the importance of the decisional autonomy of elected institutions and officials. This means that “popularly elected officials must be able to exercise their constitutional powers without being subjected to overriding (albeit informal) opposition from unelected officials” (Schmitter and Karl 1991, 79). These “unelected officials” are an explicit reference to military forces. According to Schmitter and Karl, military forces, especially, constitute a danger to democratic regimes if they try to involve themselves in politics and veto the decisions of the elected persons. The second criterion added to Dahl’s list concerns interventions coming from the international system. “The political system must be self-governing; it must be able to act independently of constraints imposed by some other overarching political system” (Schmitter and Karl 1991, 79). In fact, Schmitter and Karl’s definition of democracy is based on the accountability of political rulers.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Dahl suggested avoiding the use of the concept of democracy due to its contested nature and proposed an alternative concept: a “polyarchy” (Dahl, 1996).

External forces cannot be held accountable. Thus, they must be left out of democratic rule.

The final definition that will be helpful in analysing the last transformation in the region is proposed by Linz and Stepan (Linz and Stepan 1996). These researchers, working especially on Latin America's democratization problems, define three basic conditions for democratic transition. Firstly, the organization of elections, the healthy functioning of the representative system, and the protection of fundamental civil and political rights and freedoms would require the existence of a state. "No state, no democracy". The second condition is the holding of regular, fair, and transparent elections which meet the seven institutional criteria defined by Dahl. The third criterion emphasizes the importance of the democratic routine.

"If freely elected executives (no matter what the magnitude of their majority) infringe the constitution, violate the rights of individuals and minorities, impinge upon the legitimate functions of the legislature, and thus fail to rule within the bounds of a state of law, their regimes are not democracies" (Linz and Stepan 1996, 13-14).

In light of the various definitions and criteria, we can summarize in the following way what it is necessary to understand regarding the concept of democracy when we try to analyze the democratization process in the MENA region. A democratic system means that political power is in the hands of freely elected representatives as a result of fair and transparent elections. However, the power of elected representatives is not unlimited. Their political power is under the control of bodies such as the constitutional court, constitutionally fixed according to the principle of the separation of power. This means that any intervention by military forces in politics is completely contrary to the idea of democracy. On the other hand, the control of political power assumes the transparency of the system and requires a proper application of the principle of the rule of law. In a functioning democracy, the rule of law protects the rights of minorities and opponents, promotes the participation of citizens in the decision-making process and respects fundamental rights.

After having clarified the concept of democracy, it is necessary to overview different points of view on civil-military relations during the democratic transition.

## Transition to Democracy and Military Forces

It should be noted that the term *democratization* is used generically to express both the transition to democracy and democratic consolidation. In fact, Dawnkart Rustow was the first to draw attention to the difference between these two concepts. He underlined the necessity of finding different tools to analyze the establishment of a democratic regime and its consolidation, because factors and actors maintaining the stability of a democratic regime may be different to the ones that brought it into existence (Rustow 1970, 346). If the role of military forces during the breakdown of the old regime is considered, Rustow's preoccupation seems more meaningful. Military forces may have a guardianship role for the previous authoritarian regime. Or, in contrast, they may play a revolutionary role against this regime to move towards a more democratic regime. But this does not guarantee that military forces will accept the change to civilian control as soon as the first popular elections are held. So, different actors can take different positions during the democratic transition or consolidation.

O'Donnell prefers to theorize the processes of democratization as implying two transitions.

“The first is the transition from the previous authoritarian regime to the installation of a democratic government. The second transition is from this government to the consolidation of democracy or, in other words, to the effective functioning of a democratic regime.” (O'Donnell 1992, 18)

Neither of these two transitions is easy; they hide different complicated risks. The first transition refers especially to the holding of fair and regular elections and to the preparation of a legal basis for civil and political freedoms. It may take time. The second transition means the acceptance of democracy as “the only game in town” (Przeworski 1999, 26). Unless the losers continue to act within the framework of the democratic institutions, the second transition will not be successful. O'Donnell proposes two conditions for moving toward a democratic regime (O'Donnell 1992, 19-20).

Firstly, all authoritarian regressions must be non-existent. This regression can take different forms. It may be a sudden attack against democratic institutions through a military coup d'état. Or, it may be a “slow death” which indicates the decrease of civil and political freedoms and rights. This case would be more invisible and because of this invisibility, it would maybe be more dangerous. But at the end of these two regressions too, the second transition would be impossible.

The second condition for the establishment of a democratic regime is the ability to exceed obstacles in different domains. For example, economic crises may impede the process. But more frequently, the authoritarian heritage tries to stop or at least decelerate democratization. The prevalence of authoritarian tendencies constitutes a major obstacle. Democratization needs “democrats among the population”. Nevertheless, the development of this democratic reflex needs time. However, it is necessary to underline that, “in no known case does there appear to have been a majority of democrats before the advent of political democracy” (O’Donnell 1992, 20). This means that the establishment of democratic institutions in political spheres creates democratic attitudes. The acquisition of democratic attitudes in the political sphere has a spillover effect and creates more democratic values in other spheres. It helps the expansion of “democrats”.

It is obvious that military forces might be classified among the authoritarian institutions. They could have direct relations with the previous authoritarian regime (i.e. in the Latin American countries). Or, they could found the democratic regime and define themselves regime guardians (i.e. in Turkey). In both cases, they are used to get involved in politics. They conceive their explicit or implicit intervention completely within the limits of political struggle. They justify their actions by claiming to protect democracy. However, in order to progress toward a democratic regime, authoritarian actors/institutions, including military forces, must be excluded from politics. This means that civil-military relations constitute an important part of the transition from a democratic government to a democratic regime.

In this regard, several eminent theorists, such as Przeworski, Valenzuela or Agüero, include the military forces in the elements to be analyzed when questioning the consolidation of the democracy. To elucidate the major problems resulting from military dominance, it is useful to summarize some points underlined by these eminent researchers. In his significant study, Przeworski made some evaluations of the place of the armed forces during the transition to democracy. The first problem concerning civil–military relations results from the traditional dominance of militaries over civil authorities (Przeworski 1999, 76-77). In the majority of cases, the general staff was traditionally accountable only to the president of the republic and this accountability had its limits. Yet, democratic transition necessitates accountability for every institution including the armed forces and a limitation of the prerogatives of the military. During the transition period, different social forces and political actors have diverse expectations and points of view about the military

forces. On the other hand, the military forces present themselves as the representatives of national interests. They communicate the message that “the army wants to serve not a party, but the nation” (Przeworski 1999, 75). Through nationalistic reflexes, they try to have and protect their tutelary role. This tutelage may be welcomed by some political actors; however, it slows down the transition. Even military forces do not intervene directly in politics anymore, though they are there. At least, the potential of their intervention could impede a really democratic bargaining from taking root between other social and political actors.

As for Valenzuela, he seeks to explain which institutions slow down democratic transitions. He names these as “perverse elements” (Valenzuela 1992, 62-70). Although it is possible to extend this list according to the definition of democracy which has been adopted, he prefers to concentrate on four principal factors which impede even the minimalist conception of democratization. These factors are namely: tutelary powers, reserved domains, electoral discrimination and the risk of military coups or insurrections. In fact, these four perverse elements often coexist and feed each other. Only electoral discrimination, which hampers the representation of minority parties and candidates, is not directly related to the armed forces. The other perverse elements are related to the implicit or explicit intervention of the military in politics. To grasp the different dimensions of civil-military relations, it is useful to give short explanations for these three elements.

*Tutelary powers* are constituted by non-elected political elites or militaries. They are active in politics because they claim to represent national interests and they generally use the historical background, as Przeworski has explained in his study. In the recent examples of the third wave of democratization, these tutelary powers are largely composed by militaries. The military-controlled Council of Revolution in Portugal ambiguously defined the armed forces as the “guarantors of [the] Constitution and the laws” (Valenzuela 1992, 63). In some cases, a security council, mostly dominated by the militaries, has the last word on important national policies. The Turkish National Security Council, where military representatives were the most important decision-makers up till the last constitutional changes, is very illustrative in this context. In the different examples from Turkey or Latin America, we can observe the same consequences. The existence of tutelary power hampers the effective working of democratic decision-making institutions. If elected people have to consult the tutelary power – usually the military representatives – in every key political issue or if they have to keep in mind their preferences,

it means that they do not have real power to decide. It damages the basic right of elected representatives on behalf of the people<sup>4</sup>.

The second perverse element observed by Valenzuela is the existence of *reserved domains* in politics. This refers to the problem of some political issues being completely closed to the authority of the elected politicians. The control of the military budget, the acquisitions of armaments, the promotion of officials, or the supervision of military intelligence services create important problems in countries trying to realize democratic transition. The trial of military staff constitutes an important part of this problem. In this context, the limitations posed on the investigation of human rights abuses by militaries during the military intervention or martial rule deeply impedes the democratization process.

The third problem related to civil-military relations concerns the elections. Free elections must be conceived as *the only way* to constitute a government (Valenzuela 1992, 67). If a military coup d'état remains a real possibility in the moment of crisis, the democratic negotiation process cannot work. It automatically closes the ways to find consensus. The risk of military intervention also enforces the preservation of the tutelary system and reserved domains. Even if there isn't an open intervention, the threat of intervention or implicit manipulation causes the development of self-censorship in the democratic actors. This self-censorship closes all possibilities of participation, which is accepted as the keystone of a working democracy. In contrast, when there isn't an explicit or implicit threat of military intervention, the various actors react according to their interests and they participate. This helps democratic institutionalization. Every group knows that they can influence democratic competition. In other words, the democratic system must permit all groups to represent their interests and to have an impact on the decision-making process. The holding of fair and regular elections constitutes the lynchpin of the democratic system. Consequently, the threat of military intervention looks like dynamite which has been put in the foundation of the democratic system.

Another important researcher who places civil-military relations at the heart of his research is Felipe Agüero (Agüero 1998; Agüero 1995). He underlines that the prerogatives of armed forces represent a critical factor in democratic transition. The transition period must involve two stages for the military structure. Firstly, it is necessary to leave military forces out of politics. This means that the military forces must remain outside of the

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<sup>4</sup> Valenzuela reminds us of Schumpeter's expression of "acquiring the power to decide" and the impossibility of real decision-taking in this situation (Valenzuela 1992, 63).

political arena. In other words, all of the prerogatives of military forces giving them a tutelary role must be cleaned up. The armed forces must go back to their barracks. Given the significance that military institutions have had in the history of almost every democratizing country, it is not an easy task to clean up all traces of the military in the political arena.

In the second stage, the military forces must accept coming under the control of the civil government on military affairs. This stage is as problematic as the first one. In every country of the third wave of democratization, the armed forces had almost complete autonomy vis-à-vis political authority. They continued to preserve this autonomy during and after democratization. This autonomy had different dimensions. It included the “power to make decisions regarding four areas: promotions, appointments, and punishments of junior personnel; levels in the armed forces; military education and doctrine; and military reform and modernization” (Sakallioğlu 1997, 152). At first glance, the professional independence of military forces can be conceived as natural. The modernization and professionalization process of military forces helped the formulation of this concept. It also signified that the general staff was dominant in the military decision-making process. The internal working system was only controlled by military unities. In this autonomous structure, generally, the chief of general staff was accountable to the President or the Prime Minister. However, the major risk is the fact that this professional independence easily transforms into “an instrument for limiting the government’s prerogatives by strengthening the military’s own decision-making powers” (Ball 1981, 575 cited by Sakallioğlu 1997). Yet, to realize real democratization, it is necessary to replace the autonomy of the armed forces using the approach of accountability. The chief of general staff must be accountable to the Minister of Defense and the decisions of the general staff must be accountable before civil servants working within the body of ministry of defense<sup>5</sup>. It is generally called the “democratic control of armed forces” (DECAF) (Cizre 2004). However, the military forces usually resist this transformation. They seek to protect their autonomy. As long as the armed forces preserve their autonomy and do not accept accountability before the civil authority, they constitute a risk against democratic consolidation (Przeworski 1999, 76-77).

According to Agüero, to accomplish democratic transition, it is also essential to change the mentality and values of militaries (Agüero 1995). Certainly, this change needs much more time. In many cases, the armed forces describe themselves as the founders and guarantors of the state.

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<sup>5</sup> This accountability problem was also underlined by Dahl, who also thought about the composition of this civil control structure. Dahl 1996.

They perceive it to be completely normal to intervene in politics and to decide on behalf of the nation. It is more difficult to change the values of military forces. But in the end, to complete democratization, democracy must be accepted as the “only game in town” by military officers as well. Another aspect of the problems of values is that the predominance of military values and the intervention of militaries in politics are also normalized by civilians. In the other words, it is not only military officers, but also a majority or an important part of the population who perceive the armed forces as the guardians of the state. The relative weakness of civilian institutions and civil society, internal ethnic/religious disputes, or external images of the enemy helps the dominance of military values to persist.

## Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed different definitions of democracy and democratic transitions. It has tried to understand the evaluation of civil-military relations during democratic transition. The literatures overviewed in the chapter are largely influenced by the wave of democratization in Latin America. Today, the Arab countries are testing a new movement of democratization. This new movement can be analyzed as a continuation of the third wave of democratization. Or, maybe it will create a new cycle. All of these events are so fresh. For this reason, the correct analysis of the Arab region’s movements is very difficult. However, using the theoretical approaches proposed in the reviewed articles, we can suggest a list of points to be considered.

1. The holding of fair and regular elections constitutes a *sine qua non* of democratization.
2. Fair and regular elections necessitate the recognition of the civil and political rights of all opposition movements within in the framework of the rule of law. This means that the holding of fair elections is only possible if civil and political rights are accepted and put into application without the threat of oppression.
3. The armed forces constitute a major risk to democratization if they have historically had a tutelary role or they try to establish a dominant position in politics using the transition period’s traumas. The intervention of the military forces in politics must be prevented absolutely. This process usually needs to deconstruct the institutions permitting the dominance of military forces. The

deconstructive period can take time because of the values which have penetrated within the society.

4. Regardless of the history or the geographical location of the countries, the autonomy of military forces must be limited.
5. Military forces must be held accountable before an institution composed by civilians. The scope and responsibilities of this institution must be determined within the framework of the rule of law.
6. The democratization of institutions is necessary, but not enough. The completion of the transition period requires the internalization of democratic values by the military forces.

Aside from this, it is necessary to also underline three important points:

Firstly, the breakdown of an authoritarian regime does not guarantee the transition to democracy. In the same manner, democratic consolidation is not the only possible conclusion to the democratic transition process. In other words, the democratic transition might fail. Moreover, it might turn into a more autocratic regime. It is always necessary to remember that democratic transition is not a linear process.

Secondly, in various cases, military forces have had a tutelary role before the democratic transition. Therefore, the democratic transition literature usually makes reference to the removal of the armed forces from politics and to the democratic control of the armed forces. However, if the army is democratically controlled, but a new tutelary institution is instated in its place, democratic transition will not be achieved. The success of democratic transition is connected to the democratization of all regimes and to the protection of meta-rules promoting the rule of law.

Thirdly, it is not guaranteed that every anti-authoritarian movement work for the consolidation of democracy. Sometimes, the slogan of democracy is used by different political forces only to combat the old regime. The only way to fight against these latent authoritarian movements is to protect the rule of law.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# THE SPANISH MILITARY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION (1975-1982)\*

AMANY SALAHELDIN SOLIMAN

After forty-six years of Franco's rule following the end of the bitter Spanish Civil War in 1939, the Spanish military that Franco had alienated from political life found itself transformed into a critical component in the Spanish ambitions towards democratization.

The Spanish military enjoyed a mixture of respect and fear in Spanish society during the Franco years. The old Caudillo did his best to maintain that mixture and tried to force the Spaniards to forget the role of the military in the civil war and the massacres of revenge that were committed afterwards.

After Franco's death in 1975, a relatively smooth transition to democracy occurred in Spain. The political polarization was very tense and it was something that the international press and foreign diplomats reported on. The king, the politicians and the people wanted to achieve political modernization while avoiding the threat of a civil war that could resemble the catastrophe of 1936-1939 that caused the death, injury, exile, imprisonment and disappearance of hundreds of thousands of Spaniards.

This paper will discuss the stance of the military regarding the transitional process that took its first and fiercest steps in the period between 1975 and 1982. The democratic consolidation in Spain was not completed until the late 1980s. Hence, the research presented here does not tackle the process that occurred from 1983 onwards. The time frame of the research stops with the beginning of Felipe González's government.

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\* The first draft of this chapter had been presented at the Fourteenth Mediterranean Research Meeting, Mersin, Turkey 20 – 23 March 2013, organised by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

## **The Military and Politics: Who Guards Whom?**

Robert Dahl gives an important account of the military in the process of democratization. He refers to the military as one of the most important factors that can either develop or prevent polyarchy in some countries. Dahl asks an important question about the use of physical coercion in politics. In other words, to what extent should a leader use physical coercion instruments (i.e. military and police) to establish and maintain a non-democratic regime? (Dahl 1989, 244)

In order to avoid the threat of using the military and police against the people as a means of oppression, Dahl says that two processes should be applied. First, there should be civilian control of the coercive instruments (military and police), and second, a mechanism should exist to ensure that the civilian leaders themselves are subject to the democratic process. Dahl makes sure to highlight that civilian control itself is not enough to ensure alignment with democratic criteria. In many cases, civilian leaders themselves used the military and/or police against democratization (Dahl 1989, 245).

Looking back at the Spanish political scene in the mid-1970s, we notice an ambition for democratization in a fragmented society, torn between hating the past and worrying about the future. The sources of polarization were everywhere: civilians and military, conservative and liberal, right and left as well as old and young. Among the politicians in particular, the first source of polarization was between those who wanted the continuity of the Franco regime and those who wished for a democratic transition. The supporters of the old regime were mainly the Falange and other pro-Franco hardcore members of the nationalist movement. The second source of polarization was among those who supported the transition who were split into two groups: the first group was the reformist or so-called Moncloa Pact<sup>1</sup> led by the Prime Minister Adolfo Suárez. They were a group of politicians who thought that a slow and steady reform would deliver the desired democratic transition while making use of the then-current institutions, laws and figures in a safe way that would not jeopardize the stability of the state and its economic development. The second group was the Rupture Pact that called for a total breakdown of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Moncloa Pact was named after the Moncloa Palace which had been the headquarters of the Spanish prime minister since 1977. When Adolfo Suárez moved the PM's residency from Villamejor Palace to Moncloa Palace, the latter was considered the operation room for Suárez and his men, and hence their political front of reform was named the Moncloa Pact.

old regime's institutions, coupled with a fresh revolutionary start. This trend was mainly led by leftists and regionalist powers.

The military was one of the institutions that were undergoing inevitable change. For more than five years, the main trends of politics – whether conservative, reformist or even revolutionary – were all represented in the military in the same way that they were in all regions, factions and institutions of the country. The military had both difficult and easy moments with the sweeping change. They accepted some of the changes while objecting to or even resisting others.

The years 1981 and 1982 witnessed the real start to the reform of civil-military relations in Spain. The constitutional kingdom of Spain was welcomed to NATO. It directed its armed forces towards professionalism, concentrating on their constitutional role of defending the national borders, and not intervening in the dilemmas of domestic politics which were always unstable and complicated in Spain.

## **The Spanish Military under Franco (1939-1975)**

In order to understand the reaction of the Spanish military to the democratic transition, we have to take a wide step back. Understanding the mentality and role of the military under Franco is essential for analyzing their view of the transition for two main reasons:

First: The Franco regime was established during the 1936 coup d'état on the shoulders of the military – or at least the part of it that joined Franco during the Civil War. The armed forces and their victory in the Civil War were the main source of the alleged legitimacy of Franco and the persistence of his regime.

Second: The long duration of Franco's rule meant that for almost four decades, Franco and two generations of his loyal leaders were the leaders of the military. We cannot ignore the established principles and faith that were formed, rooted and sustained over such a long period of time, especially when supported with the euphoria of victory.

## **The Aftermath of the Civil War**

When the bitter civil war ended with Franco's victory in March 1939, the Spanish military was composed of a massive land army with a wreck of equipment and very modest funds. By the end of the war, the Spanish military consisted of a million troops, of which there were 35,000 Moroccan soldiers and 32,000 Italian soldiers. A major effort was exerted to collect all the equipment and weapons left in the hands of the two rival

groups. The total sum of that equipment was useless in both quality and quantity. Even the modern weapons that were tested or experimented with in Spain by the Germans and the Italians had no longer been supplied to Franco's troops since the end of the war.<sup>2</sup>

In his analysis of how military technology and organization affects civil-military relations in the Western world, Dahl states that "the more the military superiority has depended on the capacity of a state for mobilizing large numbers of lightly armed foot soldiers, the greater have been the prospects for popular government" (Dahl 1989, 245).

According to Dahl's assumption, the Spanish military – of which the infantry and land army were the largest in number – should have been a catalyst for democracy in Spain. However, we have to relate to the Civil War and its aftermath in order to understand why this assumption doesn't apply to the Spanish case. First, it was an army that was divided because of a coup d'état. Those who chose Franco and the coup generals were the ones who stayed in service during and after the war. They had already chosen their loyalty in 1936. Second, the military was one of the few institutions to be kept in functional, working shape after the war. It guaranteed the basic needs of its men of all ranks in a society with a devastated economy and a destroyed infrastructure. Lastly, we have to remember that many of the officers and soldiers of this enormous land army were involved in Franco's revenging massacres and that any act towards democratization would hold them accountable as much as he. It would also set many of them for trial as war criminals, with charges of genocide, torture, etc.

Francisco Franco used his so-called nationalist army in order to finish his work of getting rid of what was left of the republicans and leftists in Spain. He issued the law of political responsibilities of 1939 that held the republicans responsible for the destruction and chaos of the Civil War and accused them of being directly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Spaniards between 1936 and 1939. Franco used the military to implement the law and he imprisoned almost 400,000 republican activists from all factions. It is estimated that the victorious Franco's troops killed around 200,000 Spaniards, either instantly or in concentration camps in the few months following the fall of Madrid in March 1939 (Encarnación 2009, 9).

The Spanish military had always been a source of national pride and it was an imperial task force that Spain had used to rule half of the world. Although this romantic vision might have been distorted during and after

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<sup>2</sup> For information on the Spanish military in the aftermath of the civil war, I reviewed the fourth chapter of Preston 1995 and the third chapter of Payne 1967.