

## Conceptualizing Military Defection

Few scholars have examined the phenomenon of rebel groups emerging from the regime military. However, several similar processes have been explored in the literature. Albrecht and Koehler (2018) distinguish between atomized and collective

In this section I review these concepts and discuss their relation to military rebellion.

Castillo views these as a spectrum, whereas others like Singh view them as largely distinct processes.

### Rebellion

These definitions of rebellion do not preclude the possibility of such groups emerging from the state. However, the point at which an actor becomes disassociated with the state has not been fully articulated.

### Coups d'état

- Does address dissent in regime
- But doesn't account for action outside the regime.

Scholarly definitions of coups d'état often explicitly exclude revolts that occur outside existing military structures. For instance, Powell and Thyne (2011, 252) define coups as “illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites *within the state apparatus* to unseat the sitting executive [emphasis added].” As such, cases of military rebellion including the Free Syrian Army and M23 are not coded as coups in their widely-used dataset. Similarly, many theories of coups focus on the behavior of military or political elites (e.g. Roessler 2016; Bove and Rivera 2015; Casper and Tyson 2014). Many coups, however, are initiated by non-elite members of the military. Singh (2014) distinguishes between coups from the top (military elites), middle (unit commanders), and bottom (enlisted men), finding that coups initiated by lower-ranking military members tend to be motivated by their treatment within the military rather than broader political concerns. While the coups from the bottom in Singh's case studies largely resemble traditional coups in the sense that the plotters attempted to seize control of the existing military apparatus, he hints at the possibility tactical diversity in this category, noting that low-ranking officers lack the ability to divert existing procedures and structures to their cause. Albrecht and Eibl (2018) similarly distinguish between coups attempted by elite and combat officers, finding that the two categories have different causes. Whereas the probability elite officer coups is largely a function of the structure of the regime and military, combat officer coups are associated with societal concerns such as low levels of welfare spending and the absence of political liberalization.

In summary, this literature shows that revolt can come from any level of the

military. While these works focus on cases where this dissent manifests in attempts to seize control of the regime from within, they raise the possibility that dissident soldiers, especially those from the lower ranks, could form organizations that challenge the state from the outside. Indeed, Singh (2014) finds that coups typically result from covert organizations of plotters within the military.

## **Mutiny**

Nepstad

Book

## **Defection**

Seymour

Staniland

Christia

## **Desertion**

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