Armed Forces & Society
1-29

DOI: 10.1177/0095327X14544518
afs.sagepub.com

The Myth of Coup-proofing: Risk and Instances of Military Coups d'état in the Middle East and North Africa, 1950–2013

Holger Albrecht[1]

Abstract

This article argues that coup-proofing does not necessarily reduce the general propensity among military officers to stage coups d'état against authoritarian incumbents. Sophisticated coup-proofing terminates coup cascades and buys incumbent rulers time in office, but general coup risk remains high even if they maintain power for long periods of time. The article uses a new data set on coups in the Middle East and North Africa covering the period 1950–2013. The data reveal that the number of coup instances has decreased over time, but the risk for incumbents of falling to a coup during their extended time in office remains constant, even in coup-proofed autocracies. When autocrats apply coup-proofing measures, timing and agency become increasingly important. Plotters attempt coups either immediately after power turnovers or when incumbents turn into lame ducks after excessively long periods of rule. Success rates increase when coup plotters are supported by central military leaderships.

Keywords

coups d'état, coup-proofing, Middle East and North Africa, authoritarian regimes

[1] Department of Political Science, American University in Cairo, Egypt

Corresponding Author:
Holger Albrecht, Department of Political Science, American University in Cairo, P.O. Box 74, New Cairo 11835, Egypt.
Email: albrecht@aucegypt.edu

Coups d'état are a classic indicator for measuring a military's involvement in politics. For Comparative Politics in general, regime change and democratic transition inspire the focus on civil–military relations in nondemocratic regimes. The underlying puzzle asks when and why armies would return to the barracks and allow for the rise of elected, accountable political officials. With political regimes—including autocracies and new democracies—increasingly institutionalizing throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, coups d'état seem to have become a phenomenon of the past. Conventional wisdom has it that the consolidation of those regimes includes the successful application of coup-proofing by civilian incumbents, designed to provide disincentives for power-hungry officers.

This article finds that coup-proofing in authoritarian regimes is only partially successful in that it reduces the number of coups and coup attempts. Yet, general coup risk remains high as long as authoritarian rule persists. In the absence of regular, competitive, and constitutional succession of incumbents, coups remain attractive for politically ambitious elites and officers as a vehicle for assuming power.[1] Coup-proofing works to buy incumbents time in office but does not reduce the general risk of falling to coups.

One prominent argument in the more recent debate maintains that coup-proofing can diminish the triggering causes of coups, while leaving structural underpinnings for a military's involvement unaltered.[2] The argument is intuitively compelling, but difficult to trace empirically. How can we account for general coup risk at a time when the number of coup instances decreases owing to the successful application of coup-proofing measures? A simple example illustrates the puzzle: in the period 1960–2010, no single coup attempt was reported in either Egypt or Germany; yet, most scholars would agree intuitively that general coup risk was higher in the former country than in the latter, even before the Egyptian military's interventions in politics in February 2011 and July 2013.

Coups d'état are "illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive."[3] Coup risk does not necessarily indicate the weakness of authoritarian *regimes*, but rather the likelihood of regime *incumbents* to experience coup attempts. The likelihood for coups increases when opportunities exist and/or when military or political elites breed increasing motivations to oust the incumbent. Coup-proofing contributes to the consolidation of authoritarian regimes. Yet, it reduces coup risk for incumbents only insofar as opportunities for coup plotters taper off, while incentives and motivations to stage coups remain high.

The aim of this article is two-fold. I use a new data set on coups in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to show that coup-proofing does not reduce general coup risk for regimes and incumbents. Using data from the MENA region allows for a cross-time comparison of coup-proofed autocracies (CPAs) with authoritarian regimes vulnerable to coup cascades. A test of authoritarian coup-proofing is facilitated by the fact that authoritarianism has remained a persistent phenomenon, while in all other world regions the absence of coups might as well

be the result of democratic consolidation. Second, I discuss the conditions under which incumbents in CPAs become vulnerable to coups. Their successful execution becomes increasingly conditional on two factors: timing and the organizational resources of coup agents. Coup-proofing helps to institutionalize militaries and hence incentivizes coup plotters: first, to introduce centralized military leaderships among their ranks and, second, to execute coups shortly after the accession to power of a new autocrat or when he turns into a lame duck after a long period of rule.

Theorizing Coup Risk in Authoritarian Regimes

A theoretical point of departure is to study CPAs in the context of authoritarian power maintenance. Scholars suggested that authoritarian regimes consolidate as a result of their adaptive capacities. Autocrats would arrange their coercive capacities,[4] craft ruling coalitions and regime parties,[5] establish political institutions,[6] and frame contentious relations with domestic opponents[7] in a way conducive to regime resilience. The assumed consolidation of authoritarian regimes remains a contested subject, mainly since some of the seemingly most durable autocracies have collapsed, such as during the breakdown of the Soviet bloc or the Arab Spring. I therefore refrain from studying authoritarian regime consolidation. I am more interested here in the strength and weakness of incumbencies, that is, the ruling coalitions in authoritarian regimes rather than their institutional infrastructures.

In mature autocracies, sophisticated coup-proofing is part of a larger menu of strategies applied to keep incumbents in power in that it helps to balance intra-elite interests and thus replace "contested" with "established dictatorships."[8] Coup-proofing includes the establishment of loyalties between officers and incumbents through ethnic, religious, and personal bonds; the recruitment of military personnel from among privileged minorities and mercenary soldiers; the counterbalancing of divided security apparatuses; the frequent rotation of officers to avoid the emergence of alternative power centers; and buying off the officer corps through economic privileges and opportunities for self-enrichment.[9] The crafting of alliances with international powers, including the stationing of foreign troops, also helps to avoid coups since plotters would have to assume that status quo oriented foreign powers would stand by their allies.[10]

Autocrats have an even stronger interest to adhere to power than their democratic counterparts, mainly since their own personal fate is often grim when they fail.[11] Among a whole variety of different challenges, coups d'état are the most eminent threat to an autocrat who will develop a preference for coup-proofing over any other power-saving strategy. Yet, coup-proofing remains a double-edged sword and carries serious risks. The preference of incumbents to avoid coups d'état at any cost often leads to the establishment of identity-based militaries, ethnic exclusion, and consequently increasing risk of civil war.[12] Authoritarian rulers' anticipation of the dire consequences of losing office through coups might lead them to employ

extraordinary measures, such as diversionary wars or violent repression.[13] Coup-proofing can also reduce military effectiveness, with detrimental effects on combat capacities[14] and on the military's deployment against domestic unrest.[15]

There is also reason to assume that coup-proofing, irrespective of its sophistication and duration, does not guarantee the complete absence of coups d'état. Mehran Kamrava reminds us that military "professionalization enhances the autonomy of the military and, if politically unchecked, can increase its tendency to intervene in the affairs of the state."[16] Coup-proofing—along with other power-saving strategies—serves to reduce a regime's imminent vulnerability.[17] Using the terminology of Samuel Finer, successful coup-proofing reduces the *opportunities* of coup plotters, but not necessarily the general *disposition* of military personnel to intervene in politics.[18] Hence, the absence of coup attempts indicates the successful application of coup-proofing in so far as opportunities are reduced—declining imminent coup risk—but not coup risk as a general propensity of officers to target authoritarian incumbents.

It is rational for military elites in authoritarian regimes to maintain a credible coup threat. At times, officers even resort to formulating explicit warnings in order to deter incumbents from diverting resources pledged for the military.[19] In the absence of electoral contestation, the threat of insubordination has a disciplining effect on political elites who are encouraged to maintain established distributive practices.[20] General coup risk therefore remains a constant danger for regimes as long as nondemocratic rule persists, and irrespective of the extent of coup-proofing measures. This contention turns the puzzle expressed in Zoltan Barany's seminal study on its head:[21] rather than wondering how a military force would be crafted to allow for democratic transition, it is consolidated democracy and the accountability of incumbents to their citizens which will ultimately keep armies in their barracks.[22]

Measuring coup risk is difficult when coup instances are rare or absent over an extended period of time. Moreover, the literature on coups d'état lacks agreement on the relative weight of potential causal variables, including endogenous factors (e.g., regime type, military grievances, and organizational cohesion) and exogenous factors (e.g., economic crises, civil society activism, and prior instances of coups). In order to account for general coup risk, I propose to depart from simply counting the number of incidents of coups over time. Rather, I measure the likelihood for executive incumbents to experience a coup attempt during their terms in office.

Hypothesis 1: Coup-proofing in autocracies leads to the containment of coup cascades. While the number of coup incidents decreases, the share of regimes and incumbents affected by coups d'état remains constant over time.

I define coup cascades as rapid sequences of multiple coups d'état, which allows for limited periods of tenure between turnovers of up to three years. Incumbents will

usually have stabilized ruling coalitions within three years of takeover. Coup cascades make a good indicator for weak ruling coalitions. New incumbents remain vulnerable to challenges from army officers and elite segments, particularly in the early stages of their ascent to power. Succession constitutes the moment in time when ambitious members of the political and military elites feel sidelined and might act to take power themselves. Coup-proofing diminishes coup cascades. Coups do not disappear but remain isolated incidents.

Scholars of civil–military relations have largely ignored the effects that coup-proofing has on the political capacities of militaries—beyond the implicit assumption that it will keep them out of politics. While authoritarian regimes acquire adaptive capacities in their quest for power maintenance, potential coup plotters do too, and they learn from past errors. Upon thorough consideration, coup-proofing endows militaries with additional organizational resources.[23]

It leads to the growth and institutionalization of armies which enhances hierarchical chain of command, task cohesion, and functional separation of units in the coercive forces, including armies, praetorian guards, domestic security forces, and intelligence services. Hence, superior coordination and organizational capacities are required for coups to succeed. Coup plotters refrain from attempting coups when they perceive that success is unlikely. Coup-proofing therefore incentivizes plotters to include the military leaderships among their ranks, because it is the upper echelon in hierarchical apparatuses that commands over sufficient information and superior organizational capacities.

Coup-proofing measures can have paradoxical effects: while they reduce the number of opportunities for coups d'état, an investment is made in the organizational capacities of potential coup plotters. The result should indicate a positive effect on the likelihood of success whenever a coup is executed.

Hypothesis 2: Learning and adaptation result in the increasing execution of coups d'état by agents representing the core military leadership. This correlates with a higher success rate of coup attempts.

Authoritarian incumbents' strength and popularity are difficult to measure—let alone the military officers' perceptions of incumbent strength. I employ the duration of incumbents' tenure as a proxy variable.[24] Timing is crucial for coup plotters and "captures variables that in practice we cannot measure independently, such as leaders' ability to build political networks and to acquire and use information."[25] Scholars have provided overwhelming evidence that authoritarian incumbents are most vulnerable in the immediate aftermath of their takeover of power.[26] The reason is that they have not yet reconfigured elite coalitions. Scholars also found that ruling coalitions enjoy greater stability over the medium term than newcomers: "initially an autocrat's coalition is relatively unstable since members fear exclusion. However, as the learning process continues, it becomes increasingly unlikely that supporters will be replaced, and so their fear of exclusion diminishes and the loyalty norm

strengthens."[27] Accordingly, "as a rule the longer each chief executive stays in power, the more power will be concentrated in his or her hands."[28] This explains why the rate of coup-induced turnover declines with an autocrat's extended term in office.[29]

Yet, while autocrats enjoy considerable mid-career job security, most existing studies fail to recognize that incumbents remain vulnerable to decreasing popular and elite support in the case of an excessively long period of rule. Such leaders turn into lame ducks and are likely to face popular opposition for having accumulated a track record of broken promises, political and economic crises, and repressive treatment of political rivals and ordinary people. Lame duck autocrats also, more often than not, face political elites engaging in power bargains, possibly in opposition to the chosen successor. Military officers in particular will find their corporate loyalty for a lame duck autocrat put to a stress test when such a succession crisis correlates with social and political upheaval which would necessitate an active engagement of armed forces to save the incumbent.[30]

General coup risk will have decreased significantly only when the following two conditions are met: (1) officers remain in their barracks, even (2) if incumbents are weak. If, first, militaries have been exposed to sophisticated coup-proofing, and, second, general coup risk remains high, officers analyze the strength and support base of incumbents. They refrain from challenging rulers at a time when those have a solid grip on power. Beyond the immediate aftermath of the takeover of power, coup plotters will be patient to wait for the moment to come when incumbents turn into lame ducks. In order to test a coup-proofed military's general propensity to stage coups d'état, I therefore reemphasize the assumption of Bienen and van de Walle "that there would be some threshold, say two or three years, after which risk [of the ousting of incumbents] decreased only to rise again later, thus producing a pattern that could be graphed as a U-shaped curve."[31]

The authors of this study did not find proof in their empirical material to verify their hypothesis. Rather, they found that the risk of losing office declines with age, which could be depicted in an L-shaped curve.[32] Yet, their study covers the period 1801–1987; that is, a large part of their empirical observations of coups d'état occurred in new and instable regimes, most of which had to deal with difficult state-building processes. The effect is the selection of a universe of cases the majority of which witnesses rapid sequential turnovers, with very few observations of long-serving autocrats. Within the whole universe of autocracies—and among a sample as large as the one, for instance, by Jennifer Gandhi comprising 558 observations[33]—the number of CPAs is certainly underrepresented. I assume that the results of a sample of observations isolating coups d'état in consolidated autocracies will confirm the Bienen/van de Walle study's original hypothesis and hence depart significantly from its empirical findings.

Jonathan Powell provides evidence that organizational capacities of coup plotters—namely the size of military apparatuses—are decisive for coup outcome.[34] I support this contention and introduce an explanatory variable showing how coup

plotters adapt to coup-proofing: my agency variable determines whether coups d'état are executed by the central military leaderships or factions of military apparatuses, most often consisting of low-ranking officers. Significant differences prevail between military leaderships and low-ranking officers concerning the respective agents' control over economic resources, the degree of corporate grievances, and organizational cohesion. Given the hierarchical organization of military apparatuses, it is also compelling to assume that military leaderships are more successful than army factions in the performance of coups. If militaries are vulnerable to coup-proofing, I expect to see an increasing number of coup attempts executed by the core military leaderships, rather than subordinate units.

Scope Conditions, Data, and Method

With its proven track record of authoritarian regime endurance, the MENA region provides a valuable field for the comparison of coup-proofed versus unconsolidated autocracies. Scholars of MENA politics have analyzed the successful application of coup-proofing strategies which—since the late 1970s—contributed to the consolidation of authoritarian incumbencies.[35] Middle Eastern rulers seemed to have successfully solved the major puzzle of authoritarian power maintenance:[36] the "principal-agent problem," that is, the paradox of establishing coercive power designed to support the incumbency, while avoiding that this power within the state turns into a very threat for the incumbency. Scholars of Egyptian politics, for instance, maintained that coup-proofing led to civilian control, firmly established over a military that "refrains from intervening in politics, has re-professionalized, has allowed for the civilianization of the regime, and has succumbed to the control of civilians."[37] It was assumed that "Mubarak's close association with the military has rendered Egypt 'coup-proof.'"[38] The ousting of Hosni Mubarak through a military coup on February 11, 2011, and the coup against Mohamed Morsi on July 3, 2013, begs for new research on contemporary civil–military relations in the MENA region that has only just begun to surface.[39]

Concerning the identification of coup instances, I do not emphasize differences among singular coup instances concerning the agents (higher vs. lower officers; regime outsiders vs. insiders, and sometimes incumbents' family members), duration (some coups take only hours, others several days or even lead to a protracted standoff), and the intrinsic motivations of coup plotters. As to coup trajectories, I follow Powell and Thyne who coded successful coups d'état when the successor assumed executive office for at least one calendar week.[40] In a few instances—such as in Egypt 1952, Turkey 1960, and Tunisia 2011—successful coup plotters have used their powers to invite a new executive office holder from outside of their own ranks.

My data set on military coups d'état in the MENA region (n[total] = 89) covers the time period 1950–2013 and is exhaustive on the number of successful coups d'état (n[suc] = 44) (see Appendix B). Observations of unsuccessful coup attempts (n[fail] = 45) use data by Powell/Thyne[41] and the Center for Systemic Peace

(CSP).[42] I excluded a number of cases coded in the Powell/Thyne and CSP data sets whenever I could not find sufficient information on the identity of the coup plotters; in turn, some of the CSP observations did not match the employed definition and could not be clearly distinguished from other forms of military insubordination, such as assassinations and mutinies. I included a small number of observations when I found sufficient empirical evidence that a coup attempt may have taken place (e.g., Jordan 1972, Iraq 1996, and Tunisia 2011).

In order to study the effects outlined in Hypothesis 1, I compiled a list of all executive office holders in the MENA region for the period 1950–2013 ($n = 137$) (see Appendix A). The list includes presidents, prime ministers, junta leaders, kings, emirs, and revolutionary leaders. The unit of analysis here is the universe of individual incumbents, which—when paired with observed coup instances—allows for an assessment of the likelihood of executive office holders to becoming the target of coup attempts. To respond to Hypothesis 2, I coded two dichotomous variables: first, the success of coups d'état; and second, agency. As to coup agents, I distinguish between those coups planned by the central military leadership, and others executed by subordinate military units. Centrally planned coup attempts happen when the ministers of defense, chief of staff, or a minimum of two junta members (e.g., "Revolutionary Command Councils" in postcolonial military regimes) are among the coup plotters.

The main method employed in the empirical discussion is a cross-time comparison of two historical periods, which has particular value for detecting changes in the broader patterns of the phenomenon under investigation.[43] The approach helps to compare CPAs with those authoritarian regimes where incumbents and ruling coalitions have remained structurally unstable. In my comparison, the first period (P1), 1950–1979, covers the postindependence, state-building era. Concerning the relationship between incumbents and officers, the 1950–1979 period was the "golden age of coups in the Arab world" whereas, in the post-1980 period, "governments did have a great deal of success in preventing their armies from intervening in politics."[44]

While the phenomenon under investigation here shows a gradual decline of coup incidents since the second half of the 1970s, the selection of 1980 as a cutoff year is useful for methodological purposes and adopts the suggestion of James Quinlivan.[45] In most MENA countries, coup-proofing became effective from the mid-1970s onward owing to substantial amounts of financial resources available to authoritarian incumbents. Almost all coup-proofing strategies require a material investment; and investments were facilitated by increasing oil rents. They started to flow into the region from 1973 onward. Rent income was not monopolized by the oil-rich states on the Arabian Peninsula and in North Africa but was rather distributed across the Arab world mainly through the diffusion of budgetary assistance, political rents, and workers' remittances.[46] While the diffusion of material resources was unequal, every country in the region had increased resources at the disposal to undertake significant coup-proofing measures by the turn of the decade. I also do not find evidence that the end of the Cold War had a significant impact on the likelihood of

coup attempts. MENA data reveal that the number of coup incidents had already declined by 1990 and stayed relatively constant ever since.

Measuring Coup Risk in Middle Eastern Autocracies

It is obvious that the number of coups d'état in the MENA region has decreased significantly over the past forty-five years. Figure 1 shows that the period from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s saw a peak in coup incidents; and their steady decline since 1965 lends support to widespread assumptions on the effects of coup-proofing: the decline of observable incidents. In 1950–1979 (P1), sixty-two coups were observed, twenty-nine of which were successful; 1980–2013 (P2) saw a total of twenty-seven coup attempts, fifteen of which triggered the replacement of incumbents.

Yet, some indicators support the assumption that general coup risk in the MENA region has remained higher than implied in longitudinal data. In P1, a total of eighteen countries experienced coup attempts: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. In P2, the number of countries affected by coups d'état remains high at thirteen: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and the People's Democratic Republic in Yemen. While seven countries counted in P1 have not reported a coup attempt in P2 (Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen Arab Republic), two countries experienced a coup attempt in P2, but not in P1 (Bahrain and Tunisia).

The decreasing number of observations in the MENA region does not imply the ultimate subordination to civilian autocrats, but rather the successful containment of coup cascades in the majority of the concerned countries. In Iraq, eight coup attempts characterized the years 1963–1973; in Sudan, four coups happened in 1955–1959 alone in addition to six coups in 1966–1977; Syria witnessed seven military interventions between 1961 and 1970; and the two Yemeni states were struck by a combined six coups during 1967–1978. All these postcolonial regimes were ruled by juntas that had come into being through military coups. This explains why they are challenged primarily from within their military apparatuses,[47] but it does not explain why the same countries continued to be affected by coup incidents once ruling coalitions coup-proofed.

Most countries in the MENA region experienced coups as isolated incidents during P2: seven of the thirteen countries witnessed only one coup attempt (Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Libya, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [PDRY], Syria, and United Arab Emirates); Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, and Qatar reported two incidents each. The effects of coup-proofing were most significant in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. In P1, these three countries alone account for a total of twenty-three coups (37.1 percent of all coups in P1), but only three attempts in the post-1980 era (11.1 percent of all coups in P2). Mauritania (eight coups) is somewhat exceptional because

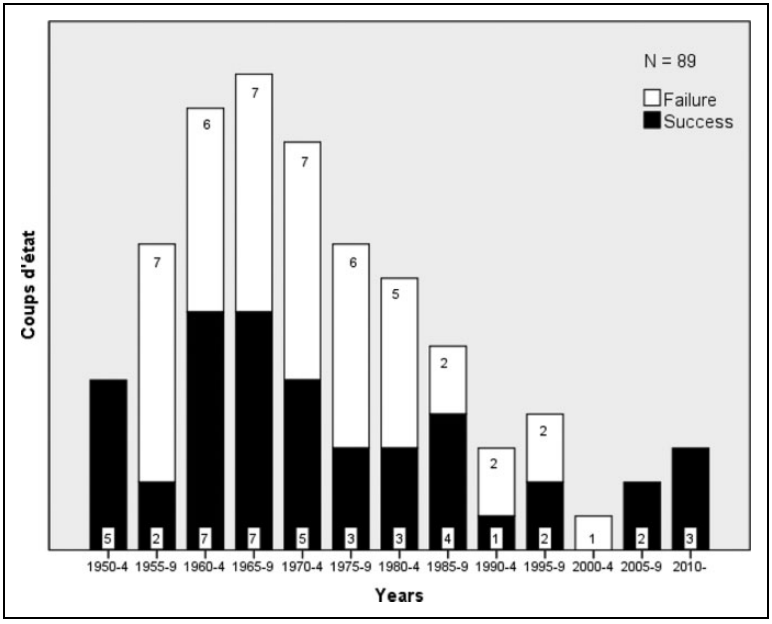

Figure 1. Coups d'état in the Middle East and North Africa, 1950–2013.

several coups have been observed throughout the greater part of P2. Sudan saw a belated consolidation, with four coups between 1983 and 1990, but the ruling coalition has somewhat stabilized since the takeover of Omar al-Bashir.

There are other empirical indicators supporting Hypothesis 1: authoritarian consolidation led to the containment of coup cascades, but this did not completely immunize incumbents. The containment of coup cascades facilitated the extension of incumbents' tenure, but did not remarkably reduce the average likelihood of each individual incumbent to experience at least one coup attempt during their time in office.

Figure 2 visualizes the number of coup attempts in P1 in relation to the number of years of incumbents' tenure. The data reveal that the vast majority of coup attempts happened during the first three years of a new ruler's ascent to power. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the vast majority of executive incumbents in Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, and Yemen did not come to enjoy a particularly long period of time in office without facing a coup attempt—and they often fell over their military rivals' political ambitions.

In fact, many coups in P1 were directed against incumbents who had held office for a significant amount of time prior to the observed period, often as puppets of colonial powers: Egypt in 1952 (ousting King Farouq I, ruled for 16.2 years), Iraq in 1958 (replacing King Faisal II, in power for 19.2 years), and Oman in 1970 (replacing Emir Said Bin Taimur, in charge for 38.4 years). Only few

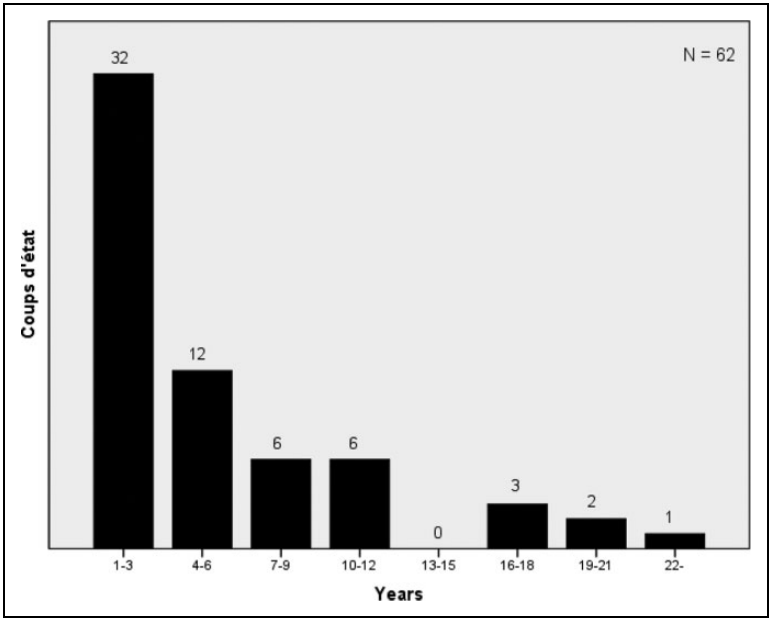

Figure 2. Coups d'état and incumbent tenure, 1950–1979.

incumbents have avoided coup attempts for long during P1: Libya's King Idris al-Senoussi ruled for 17.8 years before being ousted by Colonel Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi in 1969; Mauritania's Moktar Ould Daddah presided over Mauritania for 17.7 years before falling to a junta in 1978; Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power in 1954 by sidelining his rival Mohammed Naguib and passed away in 1970 without any reported coup attempt; Bahrain's Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa served in 1942–1961; the Emirs of Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai have never reported a coup attempt; and the Saudi Kings Faisal and Khalid ruled during the 1960s and 1970s. All other executive office holders in the pre-1980 period have either experienced a coup attempt or had to abandon power after a short period for other reasons, such as assassinations, wars, natural death, or voluntary resignation.

The immediate consequence of coup-proofing was the extension of incumbents' tenure in office. During P1, the average tenure of executive office holders, when they experienced coups d'état, amounts to 5.2 years; the average leadership duration for the same group of individuals in P2 increased to 11.2 years. While, in P1, not many executive office holders came to enjoy a status as elder statesmen, P2 saw an increasing number of elderly rulers.

Figure 3 visualizes the effects of coup-proofing in authoritarian regimes. The early stage of an incumbent's takeover is still a moment of opportunity for coup plotters. But coup-proofing leads to a significant degree of job security once personal

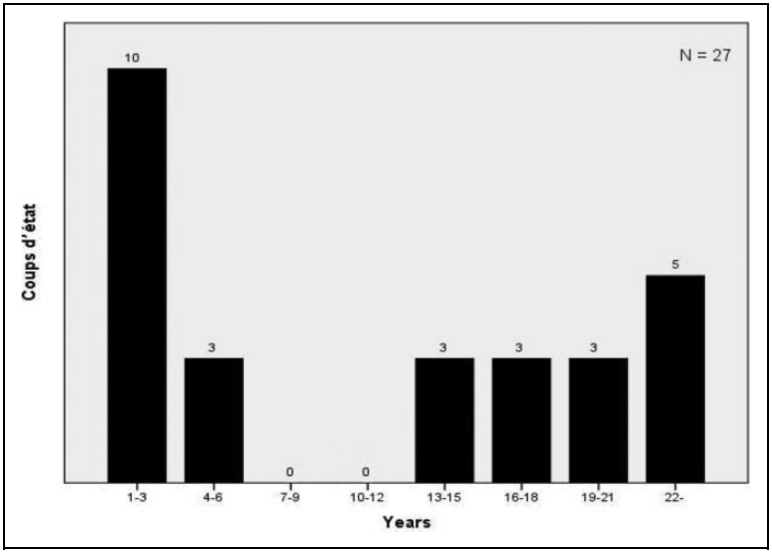

Figure 3. Coups d'état and incumbent tenure, 1980–2013.

rule and ruling coalitions are stabilized. In P2, no executive office holder ever became the target in a coup attempt during his seventh to twelfth year in office. This observation is in line with the findings of studies of authoritarian leadership consolidation.[48] Yet, MENA data isolating CPAs reveal a substantial increase in the number of targeted rulers during the later stages of their political careers. Several long-serving autocrats were targeted by ambitious military personnel, whose actions were often catalyzed through political or economic crises.

Among long-serving rulers, Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani was replaced by his son in 1995, after running affairs in Qatar for 23.3 years. Chadli Benjedid was replaced by a military junta in 1992, after serving 12.9 years as Algeria's president. Despite the obvious differences between the two countries, both rulers—in Algeria and Bahrain—were sidelined when they proved unable to solve protracted social and economic instability. Mauritania's Maaouya Ould Taya seemed to have stabilized the country to some extent, only to fall in 2005 after serving 20.7 years as president. Iraq's Saddam Hussayn survived two Gulf wars, several uprisings, assassination attempts, and a coup attempt in 1996 (after 16.9 years in power). Tunisia's Bourguiba was sidelined by Ben Ali in 1987 after 30.3 years in power and amid social unrest following economic reforms in the 1980s. Ben Ali himself was forced out of the country by his military during the Arab spring in 2011, 23.2 years later. Hosni Mubarak, ruling over Egypt for 29.2 years, met Ben Ali's fate only three weeks later. In Libya, Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi survived a coup attempt in 1993—24.1 years after his takeover—and various attempts on his life only to succumb to Libya's uprising in 2011. The sidelining of Yemen's Ali Abdullah Saleh in November 2011 and the

desperate struggle of Bashar al-Assad throughout Syria's uprising were not coded as coups d'état (and thus not included in the data), but these events also reveal the eminent threat that military officers' insubordination imposes on long-serving autocrats.

The comparison of the two periods P1 and P2 reveals intriguing insights in individual incumbents' likelihood of becoming the target of coup attempts, whether successful or not. Of the eighty-three rulers serving during P1, forty-four have experienced coup attempts (53.0 percent). During P2, forty-nine executive office holders enjoyed conclusive terms, twenty-two of which experienced a coup attempt (44.9 percent).[49] The difference between the two periods becomes all but insignificant when comparing success rates. In P1, twenty-six of eighty-three incumbents fell to coup plotters (31.3 percent); during P2, the rate among incumbents with conclusive terms remained equally high at 30.6 percent (fifteen of the forty-nine).

The high personal coup risk for post-1980 incumbents in the MENA region stands in remarkable contrast to the results of a global study on the ways of losing power, which maintains that 11.6 percent of rulers worldwide lose power through coups d'état.[50] Yet, the MENA data on P1 correlate with the global data underlying the study of Bienen and van de Walle, the results of which were informed by an underrepresentation of CPAs. The initial hypothesis of Bienen and van de Walle, predicting a U-shaped curve, receives empirical support from the MENA region only for the post-1980 period, largely characterized by CPAs (with Mauritania as exception). Coup plotters strike when they believe that incumbents command over limited elite or popular support. This explains the high number of coup cascades in P1, the limited average duration of tenure, and the few examples of long-term rulers in that period. While turnover rates have decreased in the CPAs during P2, the general propensity of coup plotters to strike when an opportunity arises has remained high. This explains the rising number of coups attempted against long-serving autocrats.

Who Are the Coup Plotters in CPAs?

Coup plotters adapt to coup-proofing. Not only will they wait for the right moment in time to challenge a weakened incumbent. In coup-proofed authoritarian regimes, coup plotters will also increasingly make use of superior organizational resources. In the CPAs of the MENA region, state apparatuses have grown and institutionalized. Military apparatuses have also undergone processes of institutionalization, leading to the establishment of large standing armies, an infrastructure consisting of modern equipment and communication tools, and a more effective chain of command than in the early years of state building throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In the wake of this modernization process, it has become much more challenging for peripheral elite segments and fragmented army units to successfully stage coups d'état and usurp power. The "Young Officers," leading postcolonial independency movements in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Libya, consisted of small groups of middle-rank military officers and would most likely be unsuccessful today. In order to stage a coup d'état in CPAs, agency is as decisive as timing. Hence, I assume that adaptation

Table 1. Agency and Outcome of Coups d'état, 1950–1979.

n[total] = 62	Success n[suc] = 29 46.8 percent of n[total]	Failure n[fail] = 33 53.2 percent of n[total]
Centralized	13	4
n[cen] = 17	21.0 percent of n[total]	6.5 percent of n[total]
27.4 percent of n[total]	76.5 percent of n[cen]	23.5 percent of n[cen]
	44.8 percent of n[suc]	12.1 percent of n[fail]
Fragmented	16	29
n[fra] = 45	25.8 percent of n[total]	46.8 percent of n[total]
72.6 percent of n[total]	35.6 percent of n[fra]	64.4 percent of n[fra]
	55.2 percent of n[suc]	87.9 percent of n[fail]

to sophisticated coup-proofing will be indicated by an increasing number of centrally planned coups, corresponding with increasing success rates.

A simple cross-tabulation constructs a relationship between coup agency and coup success (see Tables 1 and 2). The data show that the number of coups undertaken by the leadership of military apparatuses (n[cen]) increased significantly from 27.4 percent in P1 to 40.7 percent in P2. The increase in the success rate of coups d'état (n[suc]) is modest but noteworthy, from 46.8 percent in P1 to 55.6 percent in P2.[51] Yet, the data indicate a strong relationship between coup agency and coup success in CPAs. In P2, all eleven coups d'état attempted by central military leaderships have been successful. These coups make 40.7 percent of n[total] in P2—up from only 21.1 percent of successful, centralized coups in P1. The drop in the number of false positives is also significant: in P1, 55.2 percent of all successful coups were undertaken by fragmented groups within the military, down to only 26.7 percent in P2.

That fragmented coup plotters have been quite successful in P1—compared to their fellow officers in P2—can be explained with the particular situation of state building in the 1950s and early 1960s. The data in P1 include those coups directed against political elites, often backed by colonial powers—such as in Egypt 1952, Iraq 1958, Syria 1954, Turkey 1960, and Yemen Arab Republic 1962. Most of these "founding coups" have been successful even though the majority was launched by younger officers. When left-censoring them—a total of eighteen coups, including eleven successful and seven failed coups—the success rate (n[suc]) in P1 drops to 40.9 percent. With state building in the MENA region a bygone era, longitudinal data therefore show a significant increase of coups executed by military leaderships, correlating with higher success rates.

One limitation of this study, mainly owing to its reliance on existing data sets, is a possible bias on failed coup attempts. It is likely that various incidents of failed and aborted coup attempts are not reported in the data. Successful coups d'état are relatively easy to detect; failed and aborted coup attempts are not. Information on the latter is often based on rumors or the claims of governments to have uncovered

Table 2. Agency and Outcome of Coups d'état, 1980–2013.

n[total] = 27	Success *n*[suc] = 15 55.6 percent of *n*[total]	Failure *n*[fail] = 12 44.4 percent of *n*[total]
Centralized *n*[cen] = 11 40.7 percent of n[total]	11 40.7 percent of *n*[total] 100 percent of *n*[cen] 73.3 percent of *n*[suc]	0
Fragmented *n*[fra] = 16 59.3 percent of *n*[total]	4 14.8 percent of *n*[total] 25 percent of *n*[fra] 26.7 percent of *n*[suc]	12 44.4 percent of *n*[total] 75 percent of *n*[fra] 100 percent of *n*[fail]

plots. Such claims are difficult to verify because independent information on the events in an authoritarian "black box" is scarce. The authorities' announcements to have uncovered a coup, the exiling of alleged conspirators, and mass executions of military personnel are viable indicators. Yet, autocrats may employ such measures for a variety of alternative purposes: the elimination of potential rivals in elite coalitions, preemptive measures to forestall imagined coups, and uprisings not necessarily aimed at overthrowing incumbencies. Spreading the rumor of a coup plot might then be invoked to legitimize exaggerated coercive action.

On other occasions, incumbents may have an interest to conceal coup attempts, for example, in order to sustain the picture of cohesive elite coalitions. Hereditary monarchies, where elite configurations are based on strong family bonds, are usually interested not only in avoiding coups but also in hiding them from public scrutiny, for coup plots might indicate fissures within ruling families. Rigorous qualitative and archival research will help uncover failed and aborted coup incidents, and hence improve the quality of large-n and medium-n data collections.

Concluding Remarks: Guidelines for Coup Plotters, and Autocrats

Table 3 lists all coups d'état executed in the post-1980 period in the MENA region, analyzed as a historical period of CPAs. This table helps to summarize my argument. First, coups d'état are not a phenomenon of the past. Second, coup plotters in CPAs are successful when they are executed by military leaderships, and they are promised to fail when coup plotters are organized in peripheral military units.

Clever coup plotters consider timing to be an important factor for success. Centralized and successful coup plotters have acted against incumbents shortly after their takeover, as in Turkey 1980 and 1997, or in Egypt 2013. Once this moment of opportunity passes, coup plotters will have to be prepared to wait patiently—exceeding the period of power maintenance to which most democratic

Table 3. Agency and Incumbent Tenure in Coups d'état, 1980–2013.

Observation	Incumbent	Agency	Years
Successful Coups d'état			
Algeria 1992	Chadli Benjedid	1	12.9
Egypt 2011	Hosni Mubarak	1	29.2
Egypt 2013	Mohammed Morsi	1	1.0
Mauritania 1980	Mohammed Ould Louly	1	0.5
Mauritania 1984	Mohammed Ould Haidalla	0	4.9
Mauritania 2005	Maaouya Ould Taya	0	20.7
Mauritania 2008	Mohammed Ould Abdallahi	1	1.3
Qatar 1995	Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani	1	23.3
Sudan 1985	Gaafar Nimeiry	1	15.9
Sudan 1989	Sadiq al-Mahdi	0	3.1
Tunisia 1987	Habib Bourguiba	1	30.3
Tunisia 2011	Zine al-Abdine Ben Ali	1	23.2
Turkey 1980	Süleyman Demirel	1	0.8
Turkey 1997	Necmettin Erbakan	1	0.7
Yemen (PDRY) 1986	Ali Nasir Mohammed	0	5.8
Failed Coups d'état			
Bahrain 1981	Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa	0	20.1
Iraq 1996	Saddam Hussayn	0	16.9
Libya 1993	Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi	0	24.1
Mauritania 1981	Mohammed Ould Haidalla	0	1.2
Mauritania 1982	Mohammed Ould Haidalla	0	2.1
Mauritania 1987	Maaouya Ould Taya	0	2.9
Mauritania 2003	Maaouya Ould Taya	0	18.5
Qatar 1996	Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani	0	0.7
Sudan 1983	Gaafar Nimeiry	0	14.0
Sudan 1990	Omar al-Bashir	0	0.8
Syria 1983	Hafez al-Assad	0	13.0
UAE (Sharjah) 1987	Shaykh Sultan Al Qasimi	0	15.4

Note: PDRY = People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

leaders aspire in their political careers. Yet, coup plotters should not be discouraged by authoritarian coup-proofing. Lame duck autocrats become vulnerable and, more often than not, do not retain the means to fend off their militaries' ambitions.

Opportunities for the takeover of power through coups arise in domestic politics: as a response to severe economic crises, such as in Tunisia 1987 and Sudan 1989; to contain domestic opposition, as in Algeria 1992 and Turkey 1997; triggered by popular mass uprisings, such as in Egypt 2011 and 2013 and in Tunisia 2011; and when rulers are temporarily incapacitated, such as in early 1983 in Syria. International factors might aggravate such domestic crises or more directly create incentives for coup plotters by weakening incumbents.

Western support to oust the rulers in Libya and Iraq during the 1990s proved unsuccessful at the time, yet it may well have encouraged coup attempts in 1993 and 1996, respectively.

It is more difficult to offer suggestions to autocrats as to how to avoid coups d'état. The simplest trick is to embark on a path toward democratic consolidation, a strategy with strong disincentives for authoritarian incumbents who would surrender to elected officials, rather than their officers. Autocrats want to refrain from excessive personal resource extraction and rather broaden ruling coalitions if they have the necessary financial resources at their disposal. Excluded parts of society or the political establishment will breed grievances and likely engage in opposition to incumbents in crisis. The most effective strategy to avoid coups d'état is the sophisticated management of political succession. Timing is decisive for all new incumbents. The sooner they reestablish ruling coalitions, the more likely it is that militaries are prevented from removing them early on.

Yet, there are also significant differences between subtypes of autocracies. MENA data reveal that hereditary monarchies are able to reduce general coup risk better than presidential republics. Four of the twenty-seven coups happened in those countries, with only one successful case in the observed period: Qatar in 1995. The financial capacities of the oil-rich Gulf states are one reason. Yet, more generally, institutionalizing succession without allowing democratic procedures to take root is more challenging for incumbents in presidential republics. The strategy of quasi-hereditary turnover, in which power would be transferred from the father to son, was attempted but triggered the Arab uprisings,[52] disastrous events for incumbents in the Arab republics. A more promising approach seems to lie in the establishment of term limits. The institutionalized retrenchment of a single individual's tenure in executive office might not necessarily threaten the core mechanisms of authoritarian rule—as can be seen in Iran, China, or Putin's Russia. But it might prevent personalized authoritarian regimes from slipping into severe crises when the mighty ruler turns into a lame duck. With institutionalized mechanisms in place to rejuvenate ruling coalitions, democratic or not, coups d'état might well become a phenomenon of the past.

Appendix A

Incumbents in the Middle East and North Africa, 1950–2013

Country	Incumbent name	Tenure	Coup
Algeria	Ahmed Ben Bella (PM/P)	1962–1965	1 (1)
Algeria	Houari Boumedienne (J)	1965–1978	1 (0)
Algeria	Rabah Bitat (P)	1978–1979	0
Algeria	Chadli Benjedid (P)	1979–1992	1 (1)
Algeria[a]	Military junta (J)	1992–1999	0
Algeria	Abdelaziz Bouteflika	Since 1999	0
Bahrain	Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa (K)	1942–1961	0
Bahrain	Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa (K)	1961–1999	1 (0)
Bahrain	Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa (K)	Since 1999	0
Egypt	Farouq I (K)	1936–1952	1 (1)
Egypt	Mohammed Naguib (P)	1952–1954	1 (1)
Egypt	Gamal Abdel Nasser (J/P)	1954–1970	0
Egypt	Anwar al-Sadat (P)	1970–1981	0
Egypt	Hosni Mubarak (P)	1981–2011	1 (1)
Egypt	Mohammed Hussayn Tantawi (J)	2011–2012	0
Egypt	Mohammed Morsi (P)	2012–2013	1 (1)
Egypt	Abdel Fatah al-Sisi (J/P)	Since 2013	0
Iran	Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (K)	1941–1951	0
Iran	Mohammed Mosaddegh (PM)	1951–1953	1 (1)
Iran	Mohammed Reza Pahlavi (K)	1953–1979	0
Iran[b]	Ayatollah Khomeini (RL)	1979–1989	0
Iran	Ali Khamenei (RL)	Since 1989	0
Iraq	Faisal II (K)	1935–1958	1 (1)
Iraq	Abdel Karim Qasem (PM)	1958–1963	2 (1)
Iraq	Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (PM)	1963	1 (1)
Iraq	Abdul Salam Arif (P)	1963–1966	2 (0)
Iraq	Abdul Rahman Arif (P)	1966–1968	2 (1)
Iraq	Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (P)	1968–1979	2 (0)
Iraq	Saddam Hussayn (P)	1979–2003	1 (0)
Iraq	Ayad Allawi (PM)	2004–2005	0
Iraq	Ibrahim al-Jaafari (PM)	2005–2006	0
Iraq	Nouri al-Maliki (PM)	Since 2006	0
Jordan	Hussayn Bin Talal (K)	1952–1999	3 (0)
Jordan	Abdullah II (K)	Since 1999	0
Kuwait	Emir Abdullah III (K)	1961–1965	0
Kuwait	Emir Sabah III (K)	1965–1977	0
Kuwait[c]	Emir Jaber III (K)	1977–2006	0
Kuwait	Emir Sabah IV (K)	Since 2006	0
Lebanon	Beshara Khouri (P)	1943–1952	0
Lebanon	Camille Chamoun (P)	1952–1958	0

(continued)

Appendix A. (continued)

Country	Incumbent name	Tenure	Coup
Lebanon	Fouad Chehab (P)	1958–1964	1 (0)
Lebanon	Charles Helou (P)	1964–1970	0
Lebanon	Soulayman Franjieh (P)	1970–1976	1 (0)
Lebanon	Elias Sarkis (P)	1976–1982	0
Lebanon[d]	Amine Gemayel (P)	1982–1988	0
Libya	Idris al-Senoussi (K)	1951–1969	1 (1)
Libya[e]	Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi (J/RL)	1969–2011	3 (0)
Mauritania	Moktar Ould Daddah (P)	1960–1978	1 (1)
Mauritania	Mustafa Ould Salek (J)	1978–1979	1 (1)
Mauritania	Mohammed M. Ould Louly (J)	1979–1980	1 (1)
Mauritania	Mohammed K. Ould Haidalla (J)	1980–1984	3 (1)
Mauritania	Maaouya Ould Taya (P)	1984–2005	3 (1)
Mauritania	Ely Ould Mohammed Vall (J)	2005–2007	0
Mauritania	Mohammed Ould Abdallahi (P)	2007–2008	1 (1)
Mauritania	Mohammed Ould Abdelaziz (P)	Since 2008	0
Morocco	Mohammed V (K)	1957–1961	0
Morocco	Hassan II (K)	1961–1999	2 (0)
Morocco	Mohammed VI (K)	Since 1999	0
Oman	Said Bin Taimur (K)	1932–1970	1 (1)
Oman	Qaboos Bin Said (K)	Since 1970	0
Qatar	Ahmad Bin Ali Al Thani (K)	1971–1972	1 (1)
Qatar	Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani (K)	1972–1995	1 (1)
Qatar	Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani (K)	1995–2013	1 (0)
Qatar	Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani (K)	Since 2013	0
Saudi Arabia	Saud (K)	1953–1964	1 (1)
Saudi Arabia	Faisal (K)	1964–1975	0
Saudi Arabia	Khalid (K)	1975–1982	0
Saudi Arabia	Fahd (K)	1982–2005	0
Saudi Arabia	Abdullah (K)	Since 2005	0
Sudan	Ismail al-Azhari (PM)	1954–1956	1 (0)
Sudan	Abdullah Khalil (PM)	1956–1958	1 (0)
Sudan	Ibrahim Abboud (P)	1958–1964	2 (0)
Sudan	Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa (PM)	1964–1965	0
Sudan	Mohammed A. Mahjoub (PM)	1965–1966	0
Sudan	Sadiq al-Mahdi (PM)	1966–1967	1 (0)
Sudan	Ismail al-Azhari (P)	1965–1969	1 (1)
Sudan	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	1969–1985	6 (1)
Sudan	Abdelrahman Swar al-Dahab (J)	1985–1986	0
Sudan	Sadiq al-Mahdi (PM)	1986–1989	1 (1)
Sudan	Omar al-Bashir (J)	Since 1989	1 (0)
Syria	Maarouf al-Dawalibi (PM)	1951	1 (1)
Syria	Adib Shishakli (J/P)	1951–1954	1 (1)
Syria	Hashim al-Atassi (P)	1954–1955	0
Syria	Shukri al-Quwatli (P)	1955–1958	0

(continued)

Appendix A. (continued)

Country	Incumbent name	Tenure	Coup
Syria	Abdel Hamid al-Sarraj (J/VP)	1958–1961	1 (1)
Syria	Nazim al-Kudsi (P)	1961–1963	2 (1)
Syria	Salah al-Din al-Bitar (PM)	1963–1966	2 (1)
Syria	Salah Jadid (J)	1966–1970	2 (1)
Syria	Hafez al-Assad (P)	1970–1999	1 (0)
Syria	Bashar al-Assad (P)	Since 1999	0
Tunisia	Habib Bourguiba (P)	1957–1987	1 (1)
Tunisia	Zine al-Abdine Ben Ali (P)	1987–2011	1 (1)
Tunisia	Moncef Marzouki (P)	Since 2011	0
Turkey	Celal Bayar (P)	1950–1960	1 (1)
Turkey	Cemal Gürsel (P)	1960–1966	2 (0)
Turkey	Süleyman Demirel (PM)	1965–1971	1 (1)
Turkey	Nihat Erim (PM)	1971–1972	0
Turkey	Ferit Melen (PM)	1972–1973	0
Turkey	Naim Talu (PM)	1973–1974	0
Turkey	Bülent Ecevit (PM)	1974	0
Turkey	Sadi Irmak (PM)	1974–1975	0
Turkey	Süleyman Demirel (PM)	1975–1977	0
Turkey	Bülent Ecevit (PM)	1977	0
Turkey	Süleyman Demirel (PM)	1977–1978	0
Turkey	Bülent Ecevit (PM)	1978–1979	0
Turkey	Süleyman Demirel (PM)	1979–1980	1 (1)
Turkey	Kenan Evren (P)	1980–1989	0
Turkey	Turgut Özal (P)	1989–1993	0
Turkey	Tansu Ciller (PM)	1993–1996	0
Turkey	Mesut Yilmaz (PM)	1996	0
Turkey	Necmettin Erbakan (PM)	1996–1997	1 (1)
Turkey	Mesut Yilmaz (PM)	1997–1999	0
Turkey	Bülent Ecevit (PM)	1999–2002	0
Turkey	Abdullah Gül (PM)	2002–2003	0
Turkey	Recep Tayyib Erdogan (PM)	Since 2003	0
UAE[f] (Abu D.)	Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahian (K)	1966–2004	0
UAE (Abu D.)	Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahian (K)	Since 2004	0
UAE (Dubai)	Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum (K)	1958–1990	0
UAE (Dubai)	Makt. Bin Rashid Al Maktoum (K)	1990–2006	0
UAE (Dubai)	Moh. Bin R. Al Maktoum (K)	Since 2006	0
UAE (Sharjah)	Shaykh Khaled Al Qasimi (K)	1965–1972	1 (0)
UAE (Sharjah)	Shaykh Sultan Al Qasimi (K)	Since 1972	1 (0)
Yemen (YAR)	Ahmad Bin Yahya (K)	1948–1962	1 (0)
Yemen (YAR)	Mohammed al-Badr (K)	1962	1 (1)
Yemen (YAR)	Abdullah al-Sallal (P)	1962–1967	1 (1)
Yemen (YAR)	Abdul Rahman al-Iryani (P)	1967–1974	1 (1)
Yemen (YAR)	Ibrahim al-Hamdi (P)	1974–1977	0
Yemen (YAR)	Ahmed al-Ghashmi (P)	1977–1978	0

(continued)

Appendix A. (continued)

Country	Incumbent name	Tenure	Coup
Yemen (YAR)	Ali Abdullah Saleh (P)	1978–1990	1 (0)
Yemen (PDRY)	Qahtan M. al-Sha'abi (P)	1967–1969	2 (1)
Yemen (PDRY)	Salim Ali Rubay (J)	1969–1978	1 (1)
Yemen (PDRY)	Ali Nasir Mohammed (J)	1978	0
Yemen (PDRY)	Abdul Fattah Ismail (P)	1978–1980	0
Yemen (PDRY)	Ali Nasir Mohammed (P)	1980–1986	1 (1)
Yemen (PDRY)	Haidar Abu Bakr al-Attas (P)	1986–1990	0
Rep. of Yemen	Ali Abdullah Saleh (P)	1990–2011	0
Rep. of Yemen	Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi (P)	Since 2011	0

Source: http://www.rulers.org.
Center for Systemic Peace: Coups d'état 1946–2011 [http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm]
Powell, Jonathan M. and Clayton L. Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 48, 2 (2011): 249-59. [appendix: http://www.uky.edu/ ~ clthyn2/coup_data/powell_thyne_coups_final.txt]
Note: Coup: success (1) versus failure (0). UAE = United Arab Emirates; YAR = Yemen Arab Republic, North Yemen; PDRY = People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, South Yemen. Executive Incumbents: King (K), President (P), Prime Minister (PM), Junta (J; e.g., head of Revolutionary Command Council), Revolutionary Leader (RL)
[a]Presidents under military junta: Mohammed Boudiaf (1992), Ali Kafi (1992–1994), and Liamine Zeroual (1994–1999).
[b]Presidents in the Islamic Republic: Ali Khamenei (1981–1989), Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989–1997), Mohammed Khatami (1997–2005), Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005–2013), and Hassan Rouhani (2013–present).
[c]Exiled in Saudi Arabia during Iraqi occupation, 1990–1991.
[d]No individual executive office holder could be identified post-Taif Agreement (1989) due to power sharing arrangement between president, prime minister, and speaker of parliament.
[e]No individual executive office holder could be identified in the immediate post-Qadhdhafi era.
[f]United Arab Emirates consists of seven constituent emirates enjoying far-reaching political autonomy. Coded are those three emirates whose representatives hold the dominant positions in federal government structures: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah.

Appendix B

Coups d'état in the Middle East and North Africa, 1950–2013

No.	Country	Date	Result	Agency	Regime	Incumbent	Age	YIPPI
1	Algeria	June 19, 1965	1	1	R	Ahmed Ben Bella (P)	48	1.7
2	Algeria	December 14, 1967	0	1	R	Houari Boumedienne (J)	35	2.5

(continued)

Appendix B. (continued)

No.	Country	Date	Result	Agency	Regime	Incumbent	Age	YIPPI
3	Algeria	January 11, 1992	1	1	R	Chadli Benjedid (P)	62	12.9
4	Bahrain	December 13, 1981	0	0	M	Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa (K)	48	20.1
5	Egypt	July 23, 1952	1	0	M	Farouq I (K)	32	16.2
6	Egypt	February 27, 1954	1	1	R	Mohammed Naguib (P)	43	0.6
7	Egypt	February 11, 2011	1	1	R	Hosni Mubarak (P)	82	29.2
8	Egypt	July 03, 2013	1	1	R	Mohammed Morsi (P)	61	1.0
9	Iran	August 13, 1953	1	0	M	Mohammed Mosaddegh (PM)	71	2.7
10	Iraq	July 14, 1958	1	0	M	Faisal II (K)	23	19.2
11	Iraq	August 07, 1959	0	0	R	Abdel Karim Qasem (PM)	44	1.2
12	Iraq	February 08, 1963	1	0	R	Abdel Karim Qasem (PM)	48	4.5
13	Iraq	November 18, 1963	1	1	R	Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (PM)	49	0.7
14	Iraq	September 04, 1964	0	0	R	Abdul Salam Arif (P)	43	1.5
15	Iraq	September 12, 1965	0	0	R	Abdul Salam Arif (P)	44	2.5
16	Iraq	June 30, 1966	0	0	R	Abdul Rahman Arif (P)	50	0.2
17	Iraq	July 17, 1968	1	0	R	Abdul Rahman Arif (P)	52	2.2
18	Iraq	January 20, 1970	0	0	R	Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (P)	55	1.5
19	Iraq	June 30, 1973	0	0	R	Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (P)	58	5.0
20	Iraq	June 26, 1996	0	0	R	Saddam Hussayn (P)	59	16.9
21	Jordan	April 13, 1957	0	1	M	Hussayn Bin Talal (K)	21	4.7
22	Jordan	July 01, 1958	0	0	M	Hussayn Bin Talal (K)	22	5.9
23	Jordan	November 27, 1972	0	0	M	Hussayn Bin Talal (K)	37	20.3
24	Lebanon	December 31, 1961	0	0	R	Fouad Chehab (P)	59	3.3

(continued)

Appendix B. (continued)

No.	Country	Date	Result	Agency	Regime	Incumbent	Age	YIPPI
25	Lebanon	March 12, 1976	0	0	R	Soulayman Franjieh (P)	65	5.5
26	Libya	September 01, 1969	1	0	M	Idris al-Senoussi (K)	80	17.8
27	Libya	December 01, 1969	0	0	R	Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi (J)	27	0.3
28	Libya	August 05, 1975	0	1	R	Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi (J)	33	5.9
29	Libya	October 23, 1993	0	0	R	Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi (J)	51	24.1
30	Mauritania	July 10, 1978	1	1	R	Moktar Ould Daddah (P)	53	17.7
31	Mauritania	June 03, 1979	1	1	R	Mustafa Ould Salek (J)	43	0.9
32	Mauritania	January 04, 1980	1	1	R	Mohammed M. Ould Louly (J)	36	0.5
33	Mauritania	March 16, 1981	0	0	R	Mohammed K. Ould Haidalla (J)	40	1.2
34	Mauritania	February 06, 1982	0	0	R	Mohammed K. Ould Haidalla (J)	41	2.1
35	Mauritania	December 12, 1984	1	0	R	Mohammed K. Ould Haidalla (J)	44	4.9
36	Mauritania	October 22, 1987	0	0	R	Maaouya Ould Taya (P)	46	2.9
37	Mauritania	June 08, 2003	0	0	R	Maaouya Ould Taya (P)	62	18.5
38	Mauritania	August 03, 2005	1	0	R	Maaouya Ould Taya (P)	64	20.7
39	Mauritania	August 06, 2008	1	1	R	Mohammed Ould Abdallahi (P)	70	1.3
40	Morocco	July 10, 1971	0	0	M	Hassan II (K)	42	10.4
41	Morocco	August 16, 1972	0	1	M	Hassan II (K)	43	11.5
42	Oman	July 26, 1970	1	0	M	Said Bin Taimur (K)	69	38.4
43	Qatar	February 22, 1972	1	1	M	Ahmad Bin Ali Al Thani (K)	52	11.3
44	Qatar	June 27, 1995	1	1	M	Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani (K)	63	23.3
45	Qatar	February 20, 1996	0	0	M	Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani (K)	44	0.7
46	Saudi Arabia	March 28, 1964	1	1	M	Saud Bin Abdulaziz (K)	62	10.4

(continued)

Appendix B. (continued)

No.	Country	Date	Result	Agency	Regime	Incumbent	Age	YIPPI
47	Sudan	August 10, 1955	0	0	R	Ismail al-Azhari (PM)	54	1.0
48	Sudan	November 17, 1958	1	1	R	Abdullah Khalil (PM)	66	2.3
49	Sudan	May 21, 1959	0	0	R	Ibrahim Abboud (P)	58	0.5
50	Sudan	November 09, 1959	0	0	R	Ibrahim Abboud (P)	59	1.0
51	Sudan	December 18, 1966	0	0	R	Sadiq al-Mahdi (PM)	30	0.4
52	Sudan	May 25, 1969	1	0	R	Ismail al-Azhari (P)	68	4.3
53	Sudan	July 19, 1971	0	0	R	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	41	2.2
54	Sudan	September 05, 1975	0	0	R	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	45	6.3
55	Sudan	July 02, 1976	0	0	R	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	46	7.2
56	Sudan	February 03, 1977	0	0	R	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	47	7.8
57	Sudan	May 15, 1983	0	0	R	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	53	14.0
58	Sudan	April 06, 1985	1	1	R	Gaafar Nimeiry (P)	55	15.9
59	Sudan	June 30, 1989	1	0	R	Sadiq al-Mahdi (PM)	63	3.1
60	Sudan	April 23, 1990	0	0	R	Omar al-Bashir (J)	56	0.8
61	Syria	November 29, 1951	1	1	R	Maarouf al-Dawalibi (PM)	42	0.1
62	Syria	February 25, 1954	1	0	R	Adib Shishakli (J)	44	2.3
63	Syria	September 28, 1961	1	0	R	Abdel Hamid al-Sarraj (J/VP)	35	1.0
64	Syria	March 28, 1962	0	0	R	Nazim al-Kudsi (P)	56	0.3
65	Syria	March 08, 1963	1	0	R	Nazim al-Kudsi (P)	57	1.3
66	Syria	July 18, 1963	0	0	R	Salah al-Din al-Bitar (PM)	51	0.4
67	Syria	February 23, 1966	1	1	R	Amin al-Hafez (P); al-Bitar (PM)	44	2.5
68	Syria	September 08, 1966	0	0	R	Salah Jadid (J)	40	0.5
69	Syria	November 13, 1970	1	1	R	Salah Jadid (J)	44	4.2
70	Syria	November 01, 1983	0	0	R	Hafez al-Assad (P)	53	13.0

(continued)

Appendix B. (continued)

No.	Country	Date	Result	Agency	Regime	Incumbent	Age	YIPPI
71	Tunisia	November 07, 1987	1	1	R	Habib Bourguiba (P)	83	30.3
72	Tunisia	January 14, 2011	1	1	R	Zine al-Abdine Ben Ali (P)	74	23.2
73	Turkey	May 27, 1960	1	0	R	Celal Bayar (P)	77	10.0
74	Turkey	February 22, 1962	0	0	R	Cemal Gürsel (P)	66	1.8
75	Turkey	May 20, 1963	0	0	R	Cemal Gürsel (P)	67	3.0
76	Turkey	March 12, 1971	1	1	R	Süleyman Demirel (PM)	46	5.4
77	Turkey	September 10, 1980	1	1	R	Süleyman Demirel (PM)	55	0.8
78	Turkey	February 28, 1997	1	1	R	Necmettin Erbakan (PM)	70	0.7
79	UAE (Sharjah)	January 25, 1972	0	0	M	Shaykh Khaled Al Qasimi (K)	40	6.5
80	UAE (Sharjah)	June 16, 1987	0	0	M	Shaykh Sultan Al Qasimi (K)	47	15.4
81	Yemen (YAR)	April 02, 1955	0	0	M	Ahmad Bin Yahya (K)	63	7.1
82	Yemen (YAR)	September 27, 1962	1	0	M	Mohammed al-Badr (K)	36	0.1
83	Yemen (YAR)	November 4, 1967	1	0	R	Abdullah al-Sallal (P)	50	5.1
84	Yemen (YAR)	June 13, 1974	1	1	R	Abdul Rahman al-Eryani (P)	66	6.6
85	Yemen (YAR)	October 15, 1978	0	0	R	Ali Abdullah Saleh (P)	36	0.3
86	Yemen (PDRY)	March 20, 1968	0	0	R	Qahtan M. al-Sha'abi (P)	47	0.3
87	Yemen (PDRY)	June 22, 1969	1	0	R	Qahtan M. al-Sha'abi (P)	49	1.7
88	Yemen (PDRY)	June 26, 1978	1	0	R	Salim Ali Rubay (J)	42	9.0
89	Yemen (PDRY)	January 13, 1986	1	0	R	Ali Nasir Mohammed (J)	46	5.8

Source: Center for Systemic Peace: Coups d'état 1946–2011 [www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm]. Powell, Jonathan M. and Clayton L. Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset." *Journal of Peace Research* 48, 2 (2011): 249-59. [appendix: www.uky.edu/~clthyn2/coup_data/powell_thyne_coups_final.txt].
http://www.rulers.org.

Note: Definition "coup d'état" (Powell and Thyne 2011, 252): illegal, overt attempt by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive. Result: Coup success (1) versus failure (0). Centralized versus sectoral coup: coup plotters include military leaderships (1; minister of defense, chief of staff or group of members of Revolutionary Command Councils) or factions of military/regime (0). YIPPI = "years in power per incumbent"; duration of leadership; UAE = United Arab Emirates; YAR = Yemen Arab Republic; PDRY = People's Democratic Republic of Yemen; Regime: Republic (R) or Monarchy (M); Incumbents: King (K), President (P), Prime Minister (PM), Junta (J; e.g., head of Revolutionary Command Council).

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Eva Bellin, Dina Bishara, Matt Buehler, Elliott Colla, Maria Glenna, Steven Heydemann, Michelle Jurkovich, Hazem Kandil, Kevin Koehler, Jean Lachapelle, Ellen Lust, Joshua Stacher, Lucan Way, and three anonymous reviewers for helpful comments.

Authors' Note

A first version of this article was presented at the 4th Annual Conference of the Project on Middle East Politics (POMEPS), Washington DC, May 23–24, 2013. All errors and omissions are mine.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Much of the research for this article was done when the author was a Jennings Randolph fellow at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), in 2012 and 2013. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Institute of Peace.

Notes

1. Fabrice Lehoucq and Anibal Perez-Linan, "Breaking Out of the Coup Trap: Political Competition and Military Coups in Latin America," *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (2014): 1105-29; Milan Svolik, "Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science* 53, 2 (2009): 477-94.
2. Aaron Belkin and Evan Schofer, "Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47, 5 (2003): 594-620.
3. Jonathan Powell and Clayton Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, 2 (2011): 252.
4. Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," *Comparative Politics* 36, 2 (2004): 139-57.
5. Svolik, "Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes," 2009.
6. Jennifer Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
7. Ellen Lust-Okar, *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World: Incumbents, Opponents, and Institutions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
8. Svolik, "Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes," 478.
9. See Risa Brooks, *Political-military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998); James Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing. Its Practices and Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security* 24, 2 (1999): 131-65; Mehran Kamrava, "Military Professionalization and Civil–military Relations in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, 1 (2000): 67-92; Belkin and Schofer, "Toward

a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk," 2003; Ulrich Pilster and Tobias Böhmelt, "Coup-proofing and Military Effectiveness in Interstate Wars, 1967-99," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28, 4 (2011): 331-50; Jonathan Powell, "Determinants of the Attempting and Outcome of Coups d'état," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, 6 (2012): 1017-40.

10. Boubacar N'Diaye, *The Challenge of Institutionalizing Civilian Control: Botswana, Ivory Coast, and Kenya in Comparative Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001).
11. Abel Escriba-Folch, "Accountable for What? Regime Types, Performance, and the Fate of Outgoing Dictators, 1946-2004," *Democratization* 20, 1 (2013): 160-85.
12. Craig Jenkins and Augustine Kposowa, "The Political Origins of African Military Coups: Ethnic Competition, Military Centrality, and the Struggle over the Postcolonial State," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, 3 (1992): 271-92; Theodore McLauchlin, "Loyalty Strategies and Military Defection in Rebellion," *Comparative Politics* 42, 3 (2010): 333-50; Philip Roessler, "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa," *World Politics* 63, 2 (2011): 300-46.
13. Hein Goemans, "Which Way Out? The Manner and Consequences of Losing Office," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, 6 (2008): 771-94.
14. Risa Brooks, "An Autocracy at War: Explaining Egypt's Military Effectiveness, 1967 and 1973," *Security Studies* 15, 3 (2006): 396-430; Pilster and Böhmelt, "Coup-Proofing," 2011.
15. Rebecca Cann and Constantine Danopoulos, "The Military and Politics in a Theocratic State: Iran as a Case Study," *Armed Forces & Society* 24, 2 (1997): 269-88; Terence Lee, "Military Cohesion and Regime Maintenance: Explaining the Role of the Military in 1989 China and 1998 Indonesia," *Armed Forces & Society* 32, 1 (2005): 80-104.
16. Kamrava, "Military Professionalization and Civil–military Relations in the Middle East," 69; see also Powell, "Determinants of the Attempting and Outcome of Coups d'état," 2012.
17. William Thompson, "Regime Vulnerability and the Military Coup," *Comparative Politics* 7, 4 (1975): 459-87.
18. Samuel Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (London, UK: Pall Mall Press, 1962).
19. Svolik, "Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes," 481.
20. Anjali Thomas Bohlken, "Coups, Elections, and the Predatory State," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 22, 2 (2010): 169-215.
21. Zoltan Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State. Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
22. For a similar argument, see Lehoucq and Perez-Linan, "Breaking out of the Coup Trap," 2013; Wendy Hunter, *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil: Politicians against Soldiers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
23. See Powell, "Determinants of the Attempting and Outcome of Coups d'état," 1024.
24. See also Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell, "Pathways from Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 18, 1 (2007): 149.

25. Henry Bienen and Nicolas van de Walle, "Time and Power in Africa," *American Political Science Review* 83, 1 (1989): 19.
26. Henry Bienen and Nicolas van de Walle, *Of Time and Power. Leadership Duration in the Modern World* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, 2008; Goemans, "Which Way Out?" 2008.
27. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *Logic of Political Survival*, 100.
28. Hadenius and Teorell, "Pathways from Authoritarianism," 149-52.
29. Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, 174.
30. See Eva Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East. Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics* 44, 2 (2012): 127-49; David Pion-Berlin, Diego Esparza, and Kevin Grisham, "Staying Quartered: Civilian Uprisings and Military Disobedience in the Twenty-first Century," *Comparative Political Studies* 47 (2014): 230-59.
31. Bienen and van de Walle, *Of Time and Power*, 10.
32. Ibid., 9; see also Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, 174.
33. Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, 171-79.
34. Powell, "Determinants of the Attempting and Outcome of Coups d'état," 1024.
35. Brooks, *Political-military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes*, 1998; Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing," 1999; Kamrava, "Military Professionalization and Civil–military Relations in the Middle East," 2000; Barry Rubin, "The Military in Contemporary Middle East Politics," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 5, 1 (2001): 47-63; Imad Harb, "The Egyptian Military in Politics: Disengagement or Accommodation?" *Middle East Journal* 25 (2003): 269-90; Steven Cook, *Ruling but not Governing. The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Roger Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
36. Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil–military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Svolik, *Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
37. Harb, "The Egyptian Military in Politics," 289.
38. Cook, *Ruling but not Governing*, 139.
39. Philippe Droz-Vincent, "Prospects for 'Democratic Control of the Armed Forces'? Comparative Insights and Lessons for the Arab World in Transition," *Armed Forces & Society* online first (2013): 1-28 ; Derek Lutterbeck, "Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and Civil–Military Relations," *Armed Forces & Society* 39, 1 (2013): 28-52; Holger Albrecht and Dina Bishara, "Back on Horseback: The Military and Political Transformation in Egypt," *Middle East Law and Governance* 3 (2011): 13-23.
40. Powell and Thyne, "Global Instances," 2011.
41. Ibid.
42. Center for Systemic Peace: Coups d'Etat, 1946-2012, accessed July 11, 2014, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm.

43. For a similar account, see Nikolay Marinov and Hein Goemans, "Coups and Democracy," *British Journal of Political Science* online first (2013): 1-27.
44. Rubin, "Military in Contemporary Middle East Politics," 47.
45. Quinlivan, "Coup-proofing," 133.
46. Bahgat Korany, "Political Petrolism and Contemporary Arab Politics, 1967-1986," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 21 (1986): 66-80; Giacomo Luciani, "Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework," in *The Rentier State*, ed. Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (London, UK: Croom Helm, 1987), 63-82.
47. Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, 166.
48. Gandhi, *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*, 2008; Bienen and van de Walle, *Of Time and Power*, 1991.
49. Various rulers enjoyed multiple terms in office. Each of them was coded as one observation, irrespective of length and number of terms. The tenures of twenty-two rulers overlap in P1 and P2; they were coded in both periods. Three other executive office holders have had conclusive terms in both P1 and P2 and were coded in both periods. In P2, eighteen incumbents have, by August 1, 2013, not experienced a coup d'état and are still in power; they are right-censored.
50. Hein Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Giacomo Chiozza, "Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders," *Journal of Peace Research* 46, 2 (2009): 269-83. The study found that 82.59 percent of leaders lose office through "regular manners."
51. Interestingly, coup success rates declined in sub-Sahara Africa after 1980. At the same time, the number of coups has remained largely constant which indicates that coup-proofing was either not attempted or less successful when compared with the MENA region; see Patrick McGowan, "African Military Coups d'état, 1956-2001: Frequency, Trends and Distribution," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41 (2003): 339-70.
52. See Owen, *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life*, 2012; Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East," 2012.

Author Biography

Holger Albrecht is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the American University in Cairo and has been, at the time of writing this article, a Jennings Randolph Research Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace. His research interests include civil–military relations, regime change, and political opposition in the Middle East and North Africa. He is the author of *Raging Against the Machine: Political Opposition under Authoritarianism in Egypt* (Syracuse University Press, 2013) and the editor of *Contentious Politics in the Middle East* (University Press of Florida, 2010).