

A new theory of military behavior in the Arab uprisings: 'Pro-State' and 'Pro-Regime'

Ali Sarihan

*Georgetown University, Department of Government,
USA
as2556@georgetown.edu*

Abstract. Many articles have been published on civil-military relations. But the unexpected events circle that was the so-called Arab spring or Arab uprisings has created a gap that should be filled by scholars. The article sets forth a new theoretical framework that is pro-state and pro-regime by applying this framework respectively to the two different cases Tunisia and Libya. This article provides a comparison of the military's behavior in Tunisia, which led to the success of the uprisings, and the military's behavior in Libya, where the army fought protesters and precipitated in the NATO intervention and about 9 months of armed struggle. The data indicates that the military's response to the social protests played an undeniable role in the diverse outcomes of the uprisings. Pro-state and pro-regime framework aids in the exploration of this response by integrating rational choice and institutionalism to develop a comprehensive lens through which we can view this phenomenon.

Received:
March, 2020
1st Revision:
December, 2020
Accepted:
March, 2021

DOI:
10.14254/2071-
8330.2021/14-1/1

Keywords: Pro-state, Pro-regime, rational choice, institutionalism, Tunisia, Libya and the Arab uprisings.

JEL Classification: D74, F51, Q34

1. INTRODUCTION

Protestors involved in the Arab uprisings generally demanded three things: "freedom, jobs and dignity" (Kaboub, 2013, p.534). The uprisings were the confluence of the prolonged social, economic and political backwardness. One of the most surprising aspects of the protests, however, was the role that the military in each case chose to take. In Tunisia, the military chose to side with the demonstrators while the Libyan military powers split into two parts as pro-Gaddafi and anti-Gaddafi. This study proposes to explore the different military behaviors under the theoretical framework of *pro-state* and *pro-regime*. While pro-state frame defines the case of Tunisia, pro-regime explains the case of Libya.

Rational choice and institutionalism contributed to my theoretical framework. I theorized that the power and socio-psychological objectives of the military, along with its rational priority and institutional character helped shape the role of the military during the anti-government uprisings. I also theorized that

the military's behavior was not immune from the character of uprisings. Accordingly, my theoretical framework integrates rational choice and institutionalism to aid in explicating the military's behavior in the 2010-2011 uprisings in Tunisia and Libya.

The contribution and the originality of this study is that I introduce a new theoretical framework that is *pro-state* and *pro-regime*. I develop that theoretical approach by combining two existing theoretical frameworks with applicable features for my case study. Rational choice and institutionalism became the basis for the theoretical model. I use the framework to interpret the Tunisian and Libyan military behaviors from the perspectives of economic incentives (*greed*) and socio-psychological aspect (*relative deprivation*), along with selective and indiscriminate violence. I also argue that the Tunisian military's defection should be defined more from the framework of relative deprivation (non-material force) and less greed notion (material force). In addition, the institutional structure of the Tunisian military propelled troops to make the rational choice to cooperate with protestors that saved Tunisia from a potential civil conflict. As a result, Tunisian military demonstrated pro-state behavior.

On the other hand, the framework demonstrates that portions of the Libyan military demonstrated pro-regime behavior. Various factions of the Libyan forces split because the pro-Gaddafi forces wanted to protect their earnings and tribal power, and the anti-Gaddafi group sought to remove Gaddafi and his regime. According to the framework, the pro-Gaddafi forces demonstrated economic motive more than socio-psychological cause. In addition, I explored that the lack of institutional character that prevented the Libyan military cooperating and led to a deep split within the forces. Lack of cooperation and power seeking agendas became the theoretical approach to explain the Libyan military.

In the first part of this article, I reviewed the literature on the role of military in the social upheavals and explained my methodology. Later, I examined the analytic eclecticism and defined theories that guide this analysis. The remainder of this article explored the military's role in Tunisia and Libya using this theoretical framework. That helped to address this question why military forces chose to defect in Tunisia and split in Libya. Applying this new theoretical framework to the other cases, which show similar patterns, would be the article's contribution to the field of political theories in explaining different military stances under the framework of pro-state or pro-regime.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The military power and its involvement in the social upheavals has been discussed by many scholars to show how the armed power's stance shape the conclusion of protests. The behavior of military in the uprisings times is very important because as Svolik stated,

“Among the 303 leaders for whom I was able to unambiguously ascertain the manner in which they lost power, only 32 were removed by a popular uprising and another 30 stepped down under public pressure to democratize. Twenty more leaders lost power by an assassination that was not part of a coup or a popular uprising, whereas 16 were removed by foreign intervention. But the remaining 205 dictators—more than two-thirds—were removed by government insiders, such as other government members or members of the military or the security forces, an event typically referred to as a *coup d'état*.” (Svolik, 2009, pp.477-478)

Russell also noted the following by Lenin and Le Bon respectively,

“No revolution of the masses can triumph without the help of a portion of the armed forces that sustained the old regime.”

“It is obvious that revolutions have never taken place, and will never take place, save with the aid of an important faction of the army.” (Russell, 1974, p.12)

The Arab uprisings, and the role the military played in the uprisings, opened a new page in the literature on civil-military relations in the MENA states. As Taylor explained, “Previous models of civil-military relations [treated] the military as the progenitor of political intervention or the stalwart defender of the regime, not as the arbiter of massive popular upheaval” (Taylor, 2014, p. 40).

Bellin (2012) explained the robustness of the authoritarianism in the Middle Eastern states after these seismic changes. She explained, “Two factors proved primary in the Arab spring: the institutionalization character of the military and the level of social mobilization” (Bellin, 2012, p. 131). Institutionalized military forces avoided costly actions, such as shooting the mass protestors, for their own institutional benefits. Moreover, nonviolent social protests received significant support from different sections of society. According to Bellin, the aforementioned factors led to the change of regimes in Egypt and Tunisia recently, as they did previously in Brazil (1985) and Argentina (1983). In contrast, weakly institutionalized or patrimonial military forces and violent protests engendered different results, as in Libya and Syria.

Gause (2011) also stressed the importance of the level of institutionalization and the professionalization of military. In addition, he argued that the social upheavals received the support of the military forces in places with a homogenous social composition, as in Tunisia and Egypt. In contrast, diverse societies, like Syria and Bahrain, failed to achieve success because of sectarian divisions within the societies (Gause, 2011).

Springborg (2014) also underlined the importance of institutionalism and military professionalism during the uprisings. He states that Tunisian and Egyptian militaries were more institutionalized, cohesive, and professional than were Yemen’s and Libya’s armies. As a result, military forces in Tunisia and Egypt cohesively defected from their rulers, while those in Yemen and Libya eventually fragmented.

Albrecht (2014) took a different approach, using the coup-proofing perspective to explain the varying outcomes during the uprisings. Albrecht noted that Mubarak’s Egypt “neglected personal bonds with the military” and instead developed corporate-based relationships by giving the military forces economic power (i.e., “economic coup-proofing”) (Albrecht, 2014 & Makara, 2013). Bashar Assad’s Syria, conversely, developed a different strategy, establishing ethnic, familial, and religious-based personal links with military officers that resulted in “communal military” (Albrecht, 2014, p.12).

Parsons and Taylor (2011) dissected the army’s behavior in the Arab uprisings using two perspectives: political restraints and the interests of the military. The researchers contended that the high level of interests along with the low scale of restraints increased the likelihood of the military’s intervention into politics. If both restrictions and interests at either the low or high end of the scale, the army might have split or tentatively supported the protestors. According to Parsons and Taylor, because of the different degrees of restrictions and interests for military forces, various behaviors emerged in the Arab uprisings states. Similarly, Nepstad stated that troops are more likely to defect “if [they] do not derive any direct benefits from the regime” (Nepstad, 2011, p. 489).

Barany also identified the following four factors that one must consider when examining the behavior of military forces during civil uprisings: “the military establishment, the state, the society, and the external environment” (Barany, 2013, p. 63). He explained that if the internal cohesion of the military deteriorated, such as professional versus conscripts or elites versus regulars; if the state failed to get the support of the army; if protestors succeeded in affecting the army’s behavior; or if outside actors encouraged the army to side with the protestors, the probability that the regime would fall was quite high (Barany, 2013, pp. 63-73).

3. THEORETICAL METHODOLOGY

My research methodology is a comparative case study, but I did not employ a Most Similar System (MSS) or Most Different System (MDS) design logic (Mill, 2002). Specifically, the study is a comparative analysis of military behaviors with key differences. In other words, the cases differ in terms of the outcome

they witnessed rather than the process in which they were involved. Instead of providing a description of the Arab uprising in two different countries, I conducted a comparative case analysis between two different cases specifically designed to identify and validate the factors that contributed to the military's actions (Skocpol, 1979, pp.37-38). Furthermore, my methodology does not compare the countries themselves, but focuses on the military's actions during the uprisings in each country and the reasons behind their behavior.

I compare the findings from Tunisia with the dissimilar case of Libya to test the reliability of my theoretical framework. As such, I compare my findings from the case of Tunisia to those of the contrast case to strengthen the depth and the breadth of the research results. I begin by explaining my methodological tool that is analytic eclecticism and later separate examinations of Tunisia and Libya. I then test my hypothesis by comparing the findings from Tunisia and Libya to each other. As will be detailed below, the structure of variables are not appropriate to quantitative coding, so I did not code my variables in the case study as 1 or 0. Rather, I compared the variables in my cases according to relative value comparison.

3.1. Analytic eclecticism

In this study, I utilize my theoretical framework to address one key query: What are the reasons for the variant military decision-making processes during the Arab uprisings? It is important to note that each case involved its own unique conditions. Accordingly, I employed analytic eclecticism method to capture the complexity of the two cases and strengthen my theoretical framework. Furthermore, instead of classifying theories as incorrect or correct, I instead determined whether the theories were appropriate from case to case.

Sil and Katzenstein explained that analytic eclecticism is “a means for social scientists to guard *against the risks of excessive reliance* on a single analytic framework and the simplifying assumptions that come with it” (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p.414). To extend that, analytic eclecticism argues that while one theoretical framework could fail to explain the whole part of a question, selecting more than one theory could decrease such risk by providing a more comprehensive approach. The method provides a way to fill any gaps and provide a complete theoretical foundation for the research by applying multiple theories. As Waltz explained,

“The prescriptions directly derived from a single image [of international relations] are incomplete because they are based upon partial analyses. The partial quality of each image sets up a tension that drives one toward inclusion of the others . . . One is led to search for the inclusive nexus of causes.” (Waltz, 1959, pp.229-230)

This method becomes more important in research that involves the comparison of different cases. Even a single theory can shed light on such a comparison, but using only one model runs the risk of discounting important aspects of the data. Instead, multiple theoretical frameworks can help the research conduct a stronger, more convincing and inclusive analysis.

It is important to note, though, that analytic eclecticism is not a unified synthesis, multi-method research, or methodological triangulation. Sil and Katzenstein explained,

“Analytic eclecticism does not require the acquisition or use of multiple methodological skills; it simply requires a broad understanding of the relative strengths and trade-offs of different methods and openness to considering causal stories presented in different forms by scholars employing different methods.” (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010, p.415)

For example, instead of examining the reasons of a social movement only from the resource mobilization, relative deprivation, or political opportunity approach, analytic eclecticism allows the research to examine a social movement under the framework of all these approaches. Analytic eclecticism provides links that bridge connections between different theories used when conducting case studies. Some theorists may posit that every social movement has its own prime and unique conditions and should be analyzed by a most suitable approach, but analytic eclecticism contends that examination of a social movement with a single approach has the risk of exclusion of the other suitable approach(es). Such constraints also could undermine the research's findings and reliability.

Using analytic eclecticism, I employ two theoretical approaches to build my study's theoretical framework: (a) rational choice, and (b) institutionalism. The theories will buttress and strengthen each other by shedding light and covering on the different parts of my article.

The reasons why I employ these two similar theoretical frameworks are that rational choice explains the events from rather individuals' cost-benefit perspective; institutionalism defines cases by counting both the importance and the impact of institutions' interests in the results. The other linchpin difference between these two frameworks is that according to rational choice individuals determine the results; but institutionalism defends how institutions influence individuals and other actors, if there is, for outcomes. Moreover, rational choice draws more individualistic framework for explanations; however, institutionalism provides collectivist perspective to analyze events. In short, for rational choice, individuals and their interests determine the outcomes for events. For institutionalism, however, institutions shape and mold the outcomes.

4. RATIONAL CHOICE

Scott (2007) explained, "Rational choice theories hold that individuals must anticipate the outcome of alternative courses of action and calculate that which will be best for them." These theories emphasize that individuals have social and economic exchanges with each other through rewards, threat, and so on (Scott, 2007). These theorists argue that individual decisions are dependent on the maximum utility.

Gurr examined the utility from the "relative deprivation" perspective (Gurr, 1970). Gurr explained relative deprivation as follows. "Relative deprivation is defined as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities" (Gurr, 1970, p.24). He continued, "The potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity" (Gurr, 1970, p.24). Accordingly, widespread and intense discontent makes the collective rebellion more likely.

That means the deprivation make the deprived people frustrated, and then frustration leads to aggression. In the words of Gurr, "The primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be the frustration-aggression mechanism" (Gurr, 1970, p.36). He continued, "The frustration-aggression relationship provides the *psychological dynamic* for the proposed relationship between intensity of deprivation and the potential for collective violence" (Gurr, 1970, p.23).

"The assumption that discontent has primarily physical origins, hence that satisfaction of material aspirations is its cure, is no more accurate. Men aspire to many other conditions of life than *physical* well-being, not the least of which are security, status, a sense of community, and the right to manage their own affairs." (Gurr, 1970, p.358)

Deprivation represents a causal connection between behavior and outcome (*rebellion*). In other words, discontent makes people potential for rebellion. If dissidence is high in scope and degree that happening increases the probability of rebellion not only at individual but also at collective level. The main goal of such

a rebellion is reaching the maximum utility by ending discontents. Gurr explained the rational utility of violence as follows:

“The qualified assertion is that most participants in collective protest and violence have utilitarian as well as aggressive motives: they believe that they stand a chance of relieving some of their discontent through violence.” (Gurr, 1970, p. 210)

Gurr argued the source of deprivation (*rebellion*) under the following frameworks: Decremental deprivation, aspirational deprivation and progressive deprivation (Gurr, 1970, pp.46-52).

“*Decremental deprivation*, in which a group’s value expectations remain relatively constant but value capabilities are perceived to decline; *aspirational deprivation*, in which capabilities remain relatively static while expectations increase or intensify; and *progressive deprivation*, in which there is substantial and simultaneous increase in expectations and decrease in capabilities. All three patterns have been cited as causal or predisposing factors for political violence.” (Gurr, 1970, p.46)

Regarding the military involvement, Gurr said, “The more intense collective violence becomes, however, the more likely the armed forces are to intervene against the incumbent president” (Gurr, 1970, p.221). To summarize, Gurr demonstrated frustration-aggression nexus as the main reason for the behavior of rebellion. In addition, according to Gurr, the goal that is termination of deprivation is the rational baseline of uprisings. As will be detailed later, that explains the case of the deprived and discontented anti-Gaddafi Libyan forces’ fight against the pro-Gaddafi factions during the 2010-2011 uprisings.

By contrast with Gurr’s social-psychological model, Collier and Hoeffler explained that rational utility of a rebel from economic (*greed*) approach (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004;1998). In other words, Collier and Hoeffler argued the “greed thesis” as primary motivation for rebellion (Berdal, 2005, p.687). Both authors focused on the economic causes of rebellion and they defended that economic causes mainly motivate people to rebel. “The incentive for rebellion was increasing in the probability of victory, and in the gains conditional upon victory, and decreasing in the expected duration of warfare and the costs of rebel coordination” (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, p.571).

Collier and Hoffman claimed that “the availability of finance, the cost of rebellion and the military advantage” increase the probability of rebellion (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, p.588). In other words, according to Collier and Hoffman, men rebel if economic benefits prevail over the costs of rising. More specifically, they underlined the importance of having rich energy resources within a country that create rebel and conflict risk (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, p.588).

The greed approach did not ignore the impact of grievance on rebellious actions. Collier and Hoeffler considered four measures of grievances in their research: ethnic or religious hatred, political repression, political exclusion, and economic inequality (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, p.570). However, they defended economic motives (*i.e. greed*) prevails over psychological motives (*i.e. grievance*). For the case of energy rich Libya, greed motivated pro-Gaddafi forces, but in energy poor Tunisia grievance was the main driving force for the military forces to defect Ben Ali regime.

“While it is difficult to find proxies for grievances and opportunities, we find that political and social variables that are most obviously related to grievances have little explanatory power. By contrast, economic variables, which could proxy some grievances but are perhaps more obviously related to the viability of rebellion, provide considerably more explanatory power.” (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, p.563)

Kalyvas (2006) explained the rational baseline of a rebel from a different perspective. As Tarrow stated, “[Kalyvas] refuses to reduce his actors to people who join insurgencies either to satisfy their greed or to right their grievances” (Tarrow, 2007, p.592). Rather, Kalyvas presented “selective violence” and “indiscriminate violence” in his book *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Kalyvas, 2006). In his own words,

“Against prevailing views that such violence is either the product of impenetrable madness or a simple way to achieve strategic objectives, the book demonstrates that the logic of violence in civil war has much

less to do with collective emotions, ideologies, cultures, or 'greed and grievance' than currently believed." (Kalyvas, 2006, p.1)

Thus, according to Kalyvas, people make cooperation with government or incumbent power to avoid violence. That means government also applies violence only the people-who refuses cooperation with incumbent power or preferring collaboration with opposition against the ruling regime-that is "personalization of violence" (Kalyvas, 2006, p.173). That cooperation represents bipolar rational choice and benefit for political actors and individuals. Since, indiscriminate violence becomes counterproductive for incumbent by widening rival factions (Kalyvas, 2006, pp.151-172). The collaborators of incumbent power also sustain or increase their benefits from such cooperation. "While political actors 'use' civilians to collect information and win the war, it is also the case that civilians 'use' political actors to settle their own private conflicts" (Kalyvas, 2006, p.14). Kalyvas stated,

"Indiscriminate violence is an informational shortcut that may backfire on those who use it; selective violence is jointly produced by political actors seeking information and individual civilians trying to avoid the worst—but also grabbing what opportunities their predicament affords them." (Kalyvas, 2006, p.388)

In terms of the cases of Libya and Tunisia, pro-Gaddafi forces' indiscriminate violence against armed and unarmed groups brought about more fierce and a prolonged civil war in Libya, but Tunisian military chose cooperation with anti-Ben Ali factions to avoid a likely civil strife in Tunisia.

In brief, rational choice defends that social-psychological deprivations, economic aspirations and cooperation to avoid violence mainly are the independent variables those determine actors' decision-making process. However, the lack of the piece within this framework is that institution and the role(s) of it has. That means not only individuals' interests but also the impact of institutions should be taken into consideration to reach reliable and in depth conclusions for the cases that contain institutions. Although, Libya lacked institutional state definition, Tunisia had institutions somewhat including the military force. Therefore, I interact rational choice with institutionalism to reach an overarching theoretical framework to explain this article's two different cases Libya and Tunisia.

5. INSTITUTIONALISM

As explained above, mainly, socio-psychological conditions, economic interests and the logic of avoiding violence constitute primary motives for individuals to rebel. However, when an individual believes collective action or cooperation will give them more advantage, or that the collective behavior will protect them from possible losses, the individual prefers collective action to moving forward alone. Collective action prevails when it offers either more profit or less loss.

Reciprocity and reciprocal relationships are important factors in the collective action model. According to Ostrom, reciprocity could occur in the following forms.

"Always cooperate first; stop cooperating if others do not reciprocate; punish non-cooperators, if feasible. Cooperate immediately only if one judges others to be trust worthy; stop cooperating if others do not reciprocate; punish non-cooperators, if feasible. Once others establish cooperation, cooperate oneself; stop cooperating if others do not reciprocate; punish non-cooperators, if feasible. Never cooperate. Mimic (first) or (second), but stop cooperating if one can successfully free ride on others. Always cooperate (an extremely rare norm in all cultures)." (Ostrom, 1998, p.11)

Ostrom also noted that the other important point in the reciprocal relationship model focuses on building trust and reputations between agencies, which raises the probability of cooperation between the potential partners and increases the reward and punishment incentives (see Figure I). This is what the world witnessed once Tunisian military and protesters made cooperation for collective reward that was democratic Tunisia. On the other hand, the lack of trust and the absence of interactions prevented a likely cooperation

between the majority of the Libyan military forces and the anti-Gaddafi factions. However, the question remains of how one establishes the transparent and interactive conditions and how the interaction emerges at the individual and institutional levels?

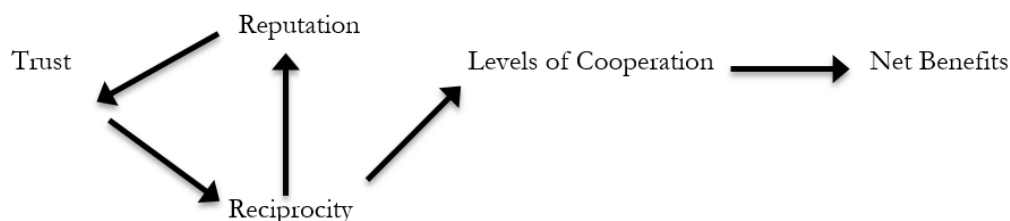


Figure 1. The core relationship in collective action theory

Source: Ostrom (1998, p.13)

Institutional theory provides an answer to the question of how strategic interactions and strategic calculus may emerge. The central argument of institutional theory is that institutions shape decision-making process. Additionally, the theory argues that the institutions increase the level of trust, eliminate unclear issues, and create proper conditions for cooperation between the actors (Slaughter, 2011). More importantly, such cooperation might play out both among institutions and between individuals and institutions (Peters, 1999). Individuals shape and use institutions to maximize their utilities, while institutions behave in the interests of individual incentives, as well (Peters, 1999). Slaughter explained, “Institutionalists argue that institutions – defined as a set of rules, norms, practices and decision-making procedures that shape expectations – can overcome the uncertainty that undermines co-operation” (Slaughter, 2011).

Historical institutionalists define institutions using historical and path-dependent developments, while sociological institutionalists emphasize the role of culture and ideologies within institutions (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Conversely, political institutionalists highlight the importance of political party systems (Amenta & Ramsey, 2010), and rational choice institutionalists emphasize strategic interactions and strategic calculus between actors during the decision-making process (Hall & Taylor, 1996). That means interaction helps actors to calculate the scale of potential gains and losses for any decision. Decision maker(s) make the most rational choice according to this cost-benefit analysis. “Institutions, in the rational choice perspective, are designed to overcome identifiable shortcomings in the market or the political system as means of producing collectively desirable outcomes” (Peters, 1999, p.59).

Moreover, rational choice institutionalism argues that strategic interaction paves the way for players to obtain total gain, not relative, which becomes available through the strategic cooperation of decision makers.

“Realists interpret the relative-gains logic as showing that states will not cooperate with one another if each suspects that its potential partners are gaining more from cooperation than it is. However, just as institutions can mitigate fears of cheating and so allow cooperation to emerge, so can they alleviate fears of unequal gains from cooperation.” (Keohane & Martin, 1995, p.45)

Rational choice institutionalism provides the most convincing explanation of military decision-making during the anti-government uprisings in Tunisia and Libya. One cannot deny the impact of culture, ideology, and the political party system on the role of the military during the uprisings, but rational choice institutionalism seemed the most appropriate framework. Since, though military could have some affairs with political parties and their members, active military officers do not run and represent interests of a political party as much as party leader and its members. Culture and ideology are important, but not crucial,

for the decision of military under uprisings as much as civilians, especially for the apolitical military structures. In addition, historical facts have an impact but not a chain to the past for military behavior. Utility-based rational decisions are the most expected and appropriate decision-making process used by military forces.

In summary, rational choice institutionalism theory argues that even though decision makers pursue their own interests, they do not necessarily have to pursue a relative gain, as realism argues. Rather, players can obtain a total gain by cooperating with other actors in the political realm. Accordingly, “institutions structure such interactions” (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p.12). Rational choice institutionalism argues that how actors increase their utility by using institutional tools. This is the case what transpired in the Tunisian uprisings once the cooperation occurred between institutional military and protesters to obtain total gain, which was building more democratic Tunisia. Conversely, the lack of institutional structure in the Libyan military resulted in an opposite scenario with Tunisia.

In the following section, I combined rational choice and institutionalism into my article. I apply the aforementioned theoretical frameworks to my cases Tunisia and Libya to explain why the military forces defected in Tunisia, but chose to split in Libya.

6. THE CASES: TUNISIA AND LIBYA

In this section, I examined the Tunisian and Libyan military cases using the framework explained above. The framework provides a unique perspective for viewing the varying responses and the behaviors of the Libyan and the Tunisian military forces and reveals that the military forces demonstrated pro-state and pro-regime behaviors in the Tunisian and Libyan uprisings, respectively.

6.1. Tunisia: Pro-state

The pro-statist framework offers unique insight into the defection of the Tunisian military from a socio-psychological (frustration-aggression) stance rather than a materialistic one, since both President Ben Ali (1987-2011) and his predecessor Habib Bourguiba (1956-1987) depoliticized and marginalized the state's armed forces. They built strong police forces and presidential guards to stabilize internal security. Western support, especially from France and the United States, also propelled the Tunisian leaders to build small armed forces.

The Tunisian army possessed little economic power, and their defense budget represented only a small portion of the Tunisian gross domestic product (GDP) (Hanlon, 2012, p.4 & Lutterbeck, 2011, p.22)¹. When the uprisings took place, the military did not seek to protect its economic assets because they did not have much to secure. Moreover, Tunisia received its independence from France through diplomatic negotiations pioneered by the first diplomatic president, Habib Bourguiba, rather than through military struggle. There was a low-scale struggle for independence against the French between 1952 and 1954, but that did not take place on a national level. Gelvin explained, “The Tunisian army was thus the product of independence, not the progenitor of independence” (Gelvin, 2012, p.61). All of these policies led to the development of a rubber stamp military structure during Bourguiba's and Ben Ali's administrations.

Anderson asserted that the Tunisian military's driving force in 2010-2011 was the belief that supporting large-scale protests at the national level would help to avoid national clash (Anderson, 2014, p.55). This impetus represented a *pro-state* approach, as the goal of protecting the state and its national stability was

¹ Due to the non-transparent data system of Tunisian state, the exact number is unavailable.

more important than supporting the existing regime (Anderson, 2014, p.55). The post-Ben Ali developments also demonstrated that the military did not have a compelling economic or political agenda because they left the political arena to civilians and retreated to their barracks shortly after Ben Ali was deposed (Townsend, 2015).

The environment in Tunisia propelled the military to cooperate with protestors during the uprisings. The protests were decisive and supported by international players; and Ben Ali's police forces and presidential guards were ineffective. The rational decision occurred as cooperation with demonstrators to avoid the risk of national friction. This decision represented the *pro-statist* side of the Tunisian military. The maintenance of national integrity and stability in the state worked to the benefit of the military (Gerges, 2014, p.3). Otherwise, public clashes or a civil war, like the conflict that took place in Algeria (1991-2002), could have occurred (Gelvin, 2012, p.94). In the initial phases of the protests, the military developed a defensive intervention by protecting public buildings and avoiding any offensive measures against the protestors (Albrecht&Bishara, 2011). Thereafter, the Tunisian military demonstrated its cooperation with protestors by withdrawing its support from Ben Ali and refusing to end the protests with a heavy response.

On the January 14, 2011, two incidents marked the end of Ben Ali's regime. First, then Chief of Army General Rached Ammar refused to protect the house of Ben Ali's second wife Leila Trabelsi's family members by saying that protecting privates places was not the army's responsibility (Interview with Nasr, 2015). Second, General Ammar refused to fight the Anti-Terrorist Brigade (BAT), under the command of Colonel Samir Tarhouni, that captured Trabelsi's family members at the Carthage Airport that day (Jebnoun, 2014). These two incidents served as tipping points that led Ben Ali to leave the country (Pachon, 2014, p.9). In essence, the military used its power by deciding not to act and choosing neutrality in the initial phases of the uprisings. That action of inaction created decisive effect in the uprisings by encouraging protestors (Lukes, 1974, p.50). Later, the military act demonstrated its force by demanding that Ben Ali leave the country.

The military largely based its defection on socio-psychological (frustration aggression) factors and acted under conditions that facilitated cooperation (Gurr, 1970). As the uprisings progressed, the military saw that the protestors were quite decisive, unarmed and were demanding a regime change without any conditions. The police forces and presidential guards were unable to ease the protests. Moreover, the disproportionate and "*indiscriminate*" violence towards protestors widened the protests across Tunisia (Kalyvas, 2006). The weakness of security forces also demonstrated that they would be unsuccessful in any clash with the military. Additionally, international key actors, the European Union and the United States, sided with the pro-democratic protests to prevent turmoil in this strategic location. Accordingly, the behavior of military propelled Ben Ali to leave presidency on the January 14 of 2011. The decision was neither free of materialistic aims nor irrationality.

The post-Ben Ali developments revealed that the Tunisian military acted in the interests of state rather than its own individual sake, because there have not been any important benefits that have emerged for the military in the post-Ben Ali term other than some promotions and wage increases (Jebnoun, 2014). The military accepted the legitimacy of the interim government after Ben Ali, the national election's results that took place in October 2011, and this new troika government that took power (Hababou & Amrouche, 2013). Moreover, in 2014, the majority of the Tunisian assembly accepted the new constitution, which Tunisian people widely appreciated, and one of the most important person of the 2011 uprisings, General Ammar, retired in June 2013 (Marks, 2014&Al-Jalassy, 2013).

In brief, ideal conditions before and during the uprisings brought about a *de facto* cooperation between the pro-democratic demonstrators and the state's military force. The theoretical framework explains that outcome as follows. Tunisian military's behavior was constituted largely objective of *intense deprivation* but

not entirely free from power (*greed*) objectives; and its rational choice based institutional character influenced its behavior. I define that behavior as 'pro-statist'.

6.2. Libya: Pro-regime

During the Libyan uprisings in 2010 and 2011, the state's military forces split into two factions—pro-Gaddafi and anti-Gaddafi. My theoretical framework explains that behavior as follows. First, largely materialistic, but less socio-psychological, tendencies propelled the split within the Libyan military. Second, the low level of military institutionalism and the highly politicized military structure generated a lack of cooperation between the anti-Gaddafi protesters and the Libyan military. The pro-Gaddafi military and the anti-Gaddafi demonstrators had very different priorities. Third, the environment in Libya made high-scale cooperation between the military and protestors very difficult. As a result, the protesters armed themselves, and they battled the military after Gaddafi applied lethal means to quell their protests.

"The men of the tent," who are Gaddafi's close friends, relatives, and tribally-connected loyalists stayed with him until the end of the conflict; since they were Gaddafi's *Jamahiriyah* (state of the masses), and the end of Gaddafi's regime also meant the end of the social, political, and economic benefits that they enjoyed (International Crisis Group, 2011&Pargeter, 2012). Deep fissures within the Libyan army emerged as soldiers in the eastern part of the state supported the anti-Gaddafi protestors, while the soldiers in the western part of the state controlled brigades and mercenaries defended Gaddafi's interests until the end. While there was cooperation between the military forces and protestors, it was limited, because many people supported Gaddafi's regime for the sake of their own interests.

For the pro-Gaddafi part, the military demonstrated more loyalty to the Gaddafi's regime than to the state. Fighting for Gaddafi was the rational choice of the pro-Gaddafi armed forces, but that choice developed from materialistic aspirations (*greed*). The influence of socio-psychological link was restricted to tribal, relative, and somewhat sectarian connections with Gaddafi (Sunni Islam). Therefore, the pro-Gaddafi military's behavior involved materialistic goals because they wanted to maintain the benefits that they enjoyed under the Gaddafi regime. I define that behavior of Libyan military as 'pro-regime'. It is also important to state that Gaddafi, in general, applied "*indiscriminate violence*" by applying massive and brutal response to protestors (Kalyvas, 2006). That became counterproductive for Gaddafi because of widening anti-Gaddafi factions and inviting international intervention.

It is also important to note that the strength and the brutality of Gaddafi's loyal military forces compelled some of the Libyan soldiers to stay with them. The armed structure of protestors also propelled some armed groups to fight with Gaddafi, hindered the pro-democratic protestors' non-violent power, and proved the legitimacy of the pro-Gaddafi forces decision to exert lethal means to thwart the resistance. International interventions also affected that outcome of the conflict, because Gaddafi declared a patriotic campaign to protect Libya against international intervention. Both sides made their rational choice by either supporting or deserting the Gaddafi regime. The former group desired to maintain what they had (*greed*), but the latter group aspired to get what they had not had (*relative deprivation*).

The impact of institutions was very low in this scenario, because Libya was a tribal state rather than an institutional one (Martinez, 2014). Both military and state structures were established on patrimonial relations and patrimonial rules rather than the rule of law. The highly patrimonial and political military structure hindered high-scale cooperation with protestors and led cracks within the military forces. As such, NATO chose to execute an immediate intervention in Libya in March 2011, while choosing to take a more passive role in other locations of the Arab uprising, because Gaddafi and his forces would have carried out a massacre of anti-Gaddafi factions to protect regime structure.

7. EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the 2010-2011 uprisings, the Tunisian military supported the pro-democratic or the anti-government protestors because they harbored both materialistic and non-materialistic goals, though their aims leaned more toward non-materialistic side. In addition, the rational choice of institutionalism helped pave the way for the military to achieve strategic cooperation with demonstrators. I refer to the behavior of the Tunisian military as ‘pro-statist.’

The Libyan military, conversely, made very different decisions. A significant part of the Libyan military chose to remain loyal to the Gaddafi regime due to that they believed that the current regime was the most rational choice for their state’s interests. Materialistic aspirations played a large role in this decision, because their choice to protect the Gaddafi regime was in their best political, social, and economic interests. The non-materialistic fragment behind the decision related to the fact that the pro-Gaddafi armed forces had ethnic, sectarian, and tribal connections to Gaddafi.

The lack of institutional character among the Libyan armed forces paved the way for the split within the military and the lack of cooperation between the military and the protestors. In contrast to Tunisia, I categorize the Libyan military’s behavior as ‘pro-regime.’

8. CONCLUSION

In this article, I examined the military behavior in the 2010-2011 Arab uprisings from two perspectives. The article began with an exploration of the rationale behind the Tunisian military’s support of the demonstrations, then moved on to discuss the Libyan army’s reasoning for splitting into two factions supporting opposite sides of the national conflict.

I also introduced a new theoretical framework, which helped to explain the military’s behavior during the uprisings using two factors: (a) rational choice, and (b) institutionalism. Through this discussion, I arrived at two new theoretical definitions of the role of the military during the Arab uprisings—“pro-state” and “pro-regime.”

The pro-state theory claims that the partnership between greed and frustration-aggression were the prominent factors that shaped the military’s behavior in Tunisia. The Tunisian military followed the path of socio-psychological deprivation because they had few economic incentives to lose but high marginalization. They supported the protests to aid in building a state according to the national demands. More importantly, by lending their support to the protestors, the military avoided national conflict that would not have been in their institutional interests.

The Tunisian military chose to side with the protestors without demonstrating any cracks within their ranks. The protests were influential and peaceful, and the military responded in kind. Because of this *de facto* alliance between the military and the national protests, civil-led, but military-backed, revolutionary social movement occurred in Tunisia (Blumer, 1995, p.63). As Youngs stated, “The Arab Spring’s initial flavour of civic-led ‘ruptured’ transitions has morphed into an elite-controlled ‘pacted’ transition dynamic” (Youngs, 2014, p.11).

Unlike the Tunisian military, the Libyan army divided into two factions during the Arab uprisings. Materialistic goals, along with blood and tribal relations, influenced the military powers to support Gaddafi and protect the spoils they had gained during his regime. Due to the weakness of the Libyan military’s institutional design limited any strong cooperation with the protestors, small military factions were only able to show their support of the anti-Gaddafi groups in the eastern part of Libya. While the lack of institutional military structure created fissures within the state’s armed forces, the protestors’ choice to lead an armed uprising also played a factor in the outcome.

In this article, I argued that materialistic (greed) and non-materialistic objectives (relative deprivation), selective or indiscriminate violence, in addition institutional design and protest type influenced the role of the Tunisian and Libyan military in the 2010-2011 Arab uprisings. Accordingly, pro-state and pro-regime framework aid in the exploration of this phenomenon by integrating rational choice and institutionalism to develop a comprehensive lens through which we can view this phenomenon.

REFERENCES

- Ahram, A. I. (2020). *War and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa*. Medford, MA : Polity.
- Albrecht, H., & Bishara, D. (2011). Back on Horseback: The Military and Political Transformation in Egypt. *Middle East Law and Governance*, 3 (1-2), 13-23. doi: 10.1163/187633711X591396.
- Albrecht, H. (2014). Does Coup-Proofing Work? Political-Military Relations in Authoritarian Regimes amid the Arab Uprisings. *Mediterranean Politics*, 20 (1), 36-54. doi: 10.1080/13629395.2014.932537
- Albrecht, H., Croissant, A., & Lawson, F. H. (2017). *Armies and Insurgencies in the Arab Spring*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Al-Jalassy, M. Y.(2013). *Tunisian General Steps Down Amid Presidential Speculation*. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2013/06/tunisia-army-cheif-resigns-speculation-presidential-run.html>.
- Amenta, E. & Ramsey K. M. (2010). Institutional Theory. In K. T. Leicht & J. C. Jenkins (Eds.), *Politics: State and Society in Global Perspective* (pp.15-39). New York, NY: Springer.
- Anderson, L. (2014). Authoritarian Legacies and Regime Change. In F. Gerges (Ed.), *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World* (pp.41-59). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139236737.003.
- Barany, Z. (2013). Armies and Revolutions. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(2), 62-76.
- Bayat, A. (2020). *Revolution without Revolutionaries: Making Sense of the Arab Spring*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bellin, E. (2012). Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics*, 44 (2), 127-149. doi: 10.5129/001041512798838021.
- Berdal, M. (2005). Beyond greed and grievance - and not too soon. A review essay. *Review of International Studies*, 31(4), 687-698.
- Blumer, H. (1995). Social Movements. In S. M. Lyman (Ed.), *Social Movements: Critiques, Concepts, Case-Studies* (pp. 60-83). New York: New York University.
- Brooks, R. A. (2016). Subjecting the military to the Rule of Law: The case of the Tunisian military. In E. Bellin & H. E. Lane (Eds.), *Building Rule of Law in the Arab world: Tunisia, Egypt and beyond* (pp.109–130). Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Brooks, R. A. (2019). Integrating the Civil-Military Relations Subfield. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22 (1), 379-398. doi: 10.1146/annurev-polisci-060518-025407.
- Collier, P. & Hoeffler, A. (1998). On Economic Causes of Civil War. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50(4), 563-573.
- Collier, P. & Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and Grievance in Civil War. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56(4), 563-595. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3488799>.
- Droz-Vincent, P. (2021). *Military politics of the contemporary Arab world*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Fahmy, D., & Mohamed, E. (2020). *Arab Spring: Modernity, Identity, and Change*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian.
- Feldman, N. (2020). *The Arab winter. A tragedy*. Lawrenceville: Princeton University Press.
- Gause, F. G. (2011). Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability. *Foreign Affairs*, 90 (4), 81-90.
- Gelvin, J. L. (2012). *The Arab uprisings: what everyone needs to know*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gelvin, J. L. (2020). *The Modern Middle East: A History*. New York : Oxford University Press.
- Gerges, F. A. (2014). *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*. NY: New York: Cambridge University.
- Ghanem, H. (2016). *The Arab Spring Five Years Later: Toward Greater Inclusiveness*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1657tv8>
- Gurr, T. R. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

- Hababou, M., & Amrouche, N. (2013). Misconceptions and realities of the 2011 Tunisian election. *Political Science and Politics*, 46 (4), 741-747. doi :10.1017/S1049096513001248
- Hanlon, Q. (2012). *Security Sector Reform in Tunisia: A Year after the Jasmine Revolution*. US Institute of Peace.
- International Crisis Group. (2011). *Popular protest in North Africa and the Middle East (V): Making sense of Libya*. Cairo, Egypt: International Crisis Group.
- Interview with Nasr, Mokhtar Ben. (2015). *Tunisian military structure and its role in the Tunisian uprisings*. edited by Ali Sarihan.
- Jebnoun, N. (2014). In the shadow of power: civil-military relations and the Tunisian popular uprising. *Journal of North African Studies*, 19 (3), 296-316.
- Kaboub, F. (2013). The End of Neoliberalism? An Institutional Analysis of the Arab Uprisings. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 47(2), 533-544.
- Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keohane, R. O., & Martin, L. L. (1995). The Promise of Institutional Theory. *International Security*, 20 (1), 39-51. doi: 10.2307/2539214
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. London: Macmillan.
- Lutterbeck, D. (2011). *Arab Uprisings and Armed Forces: Between Openness and Resistance*. Ubiquity Press.
- Lutz, J. (2021). Conflict in the Modern Middle East: An Encyclopedia of Civil War, Revolutions and Regime Change. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 33, 211-212. doi: 10.1080/09546553.2021.1864976.
- Marks, M. (2014). *Convince, coerce, or compromise? Ennahda's approach to Tunisia's constitution*. Doha: Brookings Doha Center.
- Masoud, T. (2021). The Arab Spring at 10: Kings or People? *Journal of Democracy*, 32 (1), 139-154.
- Mill, J. S. (2002). *A system of logic: Ratiocinative and inductive : being a connected view of the principles of evidence and the methods scientific investigation*. Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific.
- Nassif, H. B. (2015). Generals and autocrats: How coup-proofing predetermined the military elite's behavior in the Arab Spring. *Political Science Quarterly*, 130(2), 245-275.
- Nassif, H. B. (2020). *Endgames: Military response to protest in Arab autocracies*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Nepstad, S. E. (2011). Nonviolent Resistance in the Arab Spring: The Critical Role of Military-Opposition Alliances: Nonviolence, Mutiny, and the Arab Spring. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 17 (4), 485-491.
- Ostrom, E. (1998). A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action: Presidential Address, American Political Science Association, 1997. *The American Political Science Review*, 92 (1), 1-22.
- Pachon, A. (2014). Loyalty and Defection: Misunderstanding Civil-Military Relations in Tunisia during the 'Arab Spring'. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37 (4), 508-531.
- Pargeter, A. (2012). *Libya: The rise and fall of Qaddafi*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.
- Parsons, W., & Taylor W. (2011). Arbiters of Social Unrest: Military Responses to the Arab Spring. 1-43. Retrieved March 10, 2014.
- Peter, A.H., & Rosemary, C. R. T. (1996). Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms. *Political Studies*, 44 (5), 936-957.
- Peters, B.G. (1999). *Institutional theory in political science: The "new institutionalism"*. London: Pinter.
- Picard, E. (2015). Arab Military in Politics: from Revolutionary Plot to Authoritarian State. In G. Luciani (Eds.), *The Arab State* (pp.189-219). California: California University Press.
- Rabou, A. A. (2020). Arab Spring and the Issue of Democracy: Where Does Middle Eastern Studies Stand?. In: Eid M. & Dalia F. (Eds.) *Arab Spring. Critical Political Theory and Radical Practice* (pp.173-204). Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-24758-4_10
- Russell, D. E. H. (1974). *Rebellion, revolution and armed force: A comparative study of fifteen countries with special emphasis on Cuba and South Africa*. New York: Academic Press.
- Scott, J., & Marshall, G. (2009). Rational Choice Theory. In *A Dictionary of Sociology*: Oxford University Press. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199533008.001.0001/acref-9780199533008-e-1872>.
- Sil, R., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2010). Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions. *Perspectives on Politics*, 8 (2), 411-431.

- Skocpol, T. (1979). *States and social revolutions: A comparative analysis of France, Russia, and China*. New York: Cambridge University.
- Slaughter A.M. & Hale, T. (2014). *International Relations, Principal Theories*. Oxford University Press.
- Springborg, R. (2014). Arab Militaries. In M. Lynch (Ed.), *The Arab Uprisings Explained* (pp.142-159). New York: Columbia University.
- Svolik, M. W. (2009). Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53 (2), 477-494. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00382.x
- Tarrow, S. (2007). Inside Insurgencies: Politics and Violence in an Age of Civil War. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5 (3), 587-600. doi:10.1017/S1537592707071575
- Taylor, W. C. (2014). *Military responses to the Arab uprisings and the future of civil-military relations in the Middle East: Analysis from Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Syria*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Townsend, C. (2016). Civil-Military Relations in Tunisia and Libya through the Arab Spring. *Journal of Defense Resources Management*, 6 (2), 5-12.
- Waltz, K. N. (1959). *Man, the State and war: A theoretical analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Youngs, R. (2014). *From Transformation to Mediation: The Arab Spring Reframed*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.