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İNGİLİZCE TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

**THE ARCHİTECTURE OF COUP-PROOFİNG SECURITY APPARATUSES: THE
LEGACY OF HAFİZ AL-ASSAD İN SYRİA**

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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduđum “*THE ARCHITECTURE OF COUP-PROOFING SECURITY APPARATUSES: THE LEGACY OF HAFIZ AL-ASSAD IN SYRIA*” başlıklı çalışmanın tarafımda, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuđunu ve bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım. 30/05/2021.

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ABSTRACT

In their race to maintain power and prevent coups, authoritarian regimes that emerged after World War II applied a coup-proofing strategy through building security and intelligence services effectively and efficiently. In al-Assad's era, the peculiarity of the Syrian security apparatus was its establishment initially to serve a coup-proofing strategy solely. While Hafiz al-Assad improved his coup strategy by trial and error, the security apparatus always retained its backbone and main weight. Therefore, it was given broad powers under cover of the emergency law. Syrian security decision-making was targeted to serve this policy, with Hafiz al-Assad taking control of both its joints and limbs and supervising the movements of this apparatus directly for this purpose. Therefore, he succeeded in stopping coups by applying a successful coup-proofing strategy using *Mukhabarat* as the cornerstone and controlling the security decision-making process.

Based on taking Syrian *Mukhabarat* as a case study represented coup-proofing strategy in an authoritarian regime, this research illustrates structure functions and purposes of Syrian security-intelligence apparatus "Mukhabarat." It was converted to coercive apparatus its main aim was too adept the Syrian institutions to be coup-proofing, and the decision-making process was built in a way that makes this apparatus serve coup-proofing does not threaten autocrats.

Keywords: Authoritarianism, Intelligence Agencies, Security Apparatus, Coup-proofing, Syria, Hafiz Al-Assad, Decision-making, Mukhabarat.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The Middle East is considered one of the fertile environments for authoritarianism. At the time of former President Hafiz al-Assad, Syria was an important country in the region, politically and socially. It played an influential role in the era of al-Assad. Likewise, critical internal changes occurred in the country under al-Assad's authoritarian rule. Moreover, like other autocratic regimes, the Syrian regime would reshape the state, allocating resources and arranging priorities in the country towards a coup-proofing policy at the expense of social, economic, and political development.

Syrian security apparatus, namely, *Mukhabarat*, is an essential and pivotal institution for the regime. Moreover, at the same time, the *Mukhabarat* has played a crucial role in coup-proofing policy. It has undergone significant changes over time, reflecting the nature of dominated political regime. However, it has become prominent for studying the phenomenon of the Syrian security apparatus *Mukhabarat* to define its nature, objectives, methods, and role in governance and public life in Syria during that period. Dismantling the security decision-making process and the part of the intelligence apparatus will help drawing a complete picture of the authoritarian regime's composition. Mainly, it contributes to the academic knowledge on the methodology of security decision-making, which was shrunk in authoritarian regimes in favor of coup-proofing.

Within regime coup-proofing policy, this research will focus on examining the role and effectiveness of security apparatus in achieving that policy, taking the shape of the cause-and-effect relationship between the position and effect of security apparatus on the coup-proofing regime model. This research uses the Syrian security apparatus during the reign of Hafiz al-Assad as a case study for this model.

The gap this research wants to fill in is the position of the security apparatus in al-Assad's regime. Its role in coup-proofing strategy will reveal that and will attempt to answer the

following questions: Is the Syrian security apparatus just a tool to serve the dictator, or it is a part of the regime that has its autonomy, and maybe takes its decision accordingly with its priorities, regardless of the importance of al-Assad or other regime institutions?

1.2. Research Background

In Hafiz al-Assad's era, Syria was an authoritarian security state in which the regime imposed a tight security barrier against the transmission of information. Consequently, despite its significance for understanding the structure and composition of the system, the process of security decision-making has been surrounded by ambiguity for an extended period. On the other hand, Hafiz al-Assad's rule was characterized by relative stability, which extended to the security apparatus staff and structure. This stability ensured the al-Assad regime's durability for more than thirty years. Furthermore, the security apparatus witnessed a period of stability that led to tightening its grip on all areas of life in Syria. The robustness of the coup-proofing strategy pursued by Hafiz al-Assad was strong enough not only to cease the series of successive coups that exhausted the state, but also to consolidate his rule and to increase Syria's influence regionally. This series of coups had turned Syria into a state of distress, searching for a protector state, while the coup-proofing enabled the inheritance of rule by al-Assad's son. Meanwhile, al-Assad was free to extend his influence outside Syria and transform Syria from an influenced state to an influential one, regardless of the merits of this influence.

The security decision-making process was structured in the first place to serves the coup-proofing strategy. Thus, the Syrian Security Apparatus was modified on all aspects, by changing its priorities and objectives from protecting national security to safeguard the autocrats, its structure, relations with other regimes' bodies, and finally by opening international sphere for the *Mukhabarat* to gain more powerful cards for the dictator to use them in one way or another to enhance his influence and control.

1.3. Problem Statement

The status of ambiguity and secrecy experienced by the authoritarian regimes in general, and Syria in particular, makes it challenging to know the true motivations behind the decisions taken by the authority. Therefore, these regimes try to encapsulate the coup-proofing policies with doctrinal, national, and legal justifications. Still, the primary motive for them is preserving the rule, consolidating autocrats' control, extending his influence, and silencing the voices of the opposition.

In this sense, the problem this research tries to reveal lies in determining the amount of change that occurred throughout the entire duration of this apparatus, starting by examining its structure, its position in the power hierarchy, in addition to its internal and external relations. Moreover, the research aims to lay down the correct theoretical framework for the 'new' form of the security apparatus, a.k.a. the *Mukhabarat*. To clarify the defect that affected the security apparatus, both internally and externally, into a repressive security apparatus that aims to protect the ruler in the first place, and for the sake of this goal, other security concerns were transferred to a lower priority level.

1.4. Research Questions and Objectives

The research questions were developed to reveal the structure, working mechanism in the coup-proofing policy, and its cornerstone, the security apparatus in the Syrian regime in the Hafiz al-Assad era. Consequently, the central question of the research is identified as: "What is the structure of the coup-proofing strategy in Hafiz al-Assad's ruling, and what was the role of the security apparatus in that strategy, and how the decision was taken to serve the coup-proofing strategy?"

The sub-questions to be scrutinized in the chapters are:

1. What is the actual role that the authoritarian security apparatus plays in coup-proofing policy, and to what extent does the structure-function of the security apparatus, its relationship with other institutions, people, external organization serve coup-proofing policy?

2. What is the peculiarity of the Syrian security apparatus in Hafiz al-Assad's era regarding the coup-proofing policy?
3. How was the structure of the Syrian security decision-making process, as well as its affiliated objectives, means, and working mechanism?
4. What is the generalization according to the Syrian case study to other authoritarian security apparatus? This research aims to determine the role of the security apparatuses in authoritarian regimes in the coup-proofing policy, to establish an academic framework and proper identification of the Syrian *Mukhabarat* as a case study. This would serve to dismantle and reveal its structure and the decision-making process in the Syrian *Mukhabarat* to place it in the appropriate institutional framework and distinguish its defects and strengths.

1.5. Research Hypotheses

Through the data acquired, reviewed, and analyzed in line with the research questions and sub-questions, this research aims to focus on responding to the following hypotheses:

- H1: Hafiz al-Assad's success in stopping the successive coups, which Syria had been suffering before, is due to a successful coup-proofing strategy that al-Assad applied, which he had learned by trial and error.
- H2: Al-Assad exploited Baath ideology, Alawite sect, regionalism in coup-proofing policy, primarily due to the need and utility in that policy, regardless of the extent of conviction or adherence to these principles.
- H3: The peculiarity of the Syrian security apparatus (*Mukhabarat*), was crucial in determining its rule in the coup-proofing strategy.

1.6. Research Design

This research is structured on qualitative methods, including primary and secondary sources. It starts from secondary resources in two areas. First, this research uses secondary resources to draw academic concepts for authoritarianism, security-intelligence apparatus, coup-proofing. All of that is to link between all these concepts to establish the theoretical background that enables us to study Syria as a case study.

Secondly, in the Syrian case study, we will stand on both primary and secondary resources. Starting from the secondary one, trying to put Syrian *Mukhabarat* in the academic context, relating it with the correct concepts, depending on secondary resources especially reference books written within Hafiz al-Assad's era, till 2000. The purpose of these references is to put the Syrian security apparatus in the correct description, historical and institutional context. Most of these were written by non-Syrian researchers and journalists who had visited Syria and met al-Assad himself before they decided to publish such writings.

The primary resources were depending mainly on in-depth interviews with nearly a dozen of decedent Syrian security and military officers. The most prominent ones are three. The first officers were teaching in officer's security and the army academy, the second was significant in-state security, the third was a general in the military. The purpose of these interviews is to fill in the gap in the literature, ascertain information, and achieve untold stories, i.e., read in between the lines of customary measures revealed in the apparatus.

After the questions were submitted to the officers in a written form, the researcher called them directly and received back written answers and voice records too. The analysis begins after drawing a complete picture of the Syrian security apparatus structure, its role in coup-proofing strategy, its decision-making mechanism, the security decision-making process, the distribution of tasks, and the way that al-Assad had improved coup-proofing strategy to get the final shape which continued till the era of his son.

1.7. Research Field and Period

The period within which the research variables will be measured is the period during which Hafiz al-Assad became the President of the Syrian Arab Republic since he succeeded in his coup and initiated the Corrective Movement on November 16, 1970, until his death on July 10, 2000. The history of the Syrian security apparatus before al-Assad's presidency and the history of al-Assad's responsibilities, experience, and positions before his presidency were also taken into consideration. The study is within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, where the Syrian security apparatus was primarily located. It also studies, when necessary, the external branches of the Syrian security apparatus or external operations such as in Lebanon, Europe, and Turkey.

1.8. Significance of the Research

The coup policy is linked to the authoritarian regime by its very nature because these regimes reject the idea of the peaceful transfer of power. Therefore, the isolation of the coup-proofing policy from the regime's other policies is crucial to solve social and political problems related to that policy. On the other hand, *Mukhabarat* has not been sufficiently studied as an independent shape from other security/intelligence agencies and as a form of developing the security apparatus linked to its temporal and spatial adaptations. Therefore, this research contributes to the academic study and theoretical framework of cognizing the nature, role, and function of *Mukhabarat*, which is linked in one way or another to some countries of the Middle East. Furthermore, this research is revealing the mechanism of the security decision-making process and controlling the security establishment to make it serve the coup policy, thereby contributing to the dismantling of the security system and the explanation of the joints of forces and controlling them, which matches with the process of democratic transition and the rule of law.

Finally, it helps to enlighten the regional risks of such regimes, the distortions they bear in the roles, missions, and functions of the security apparatus, and the conduct of its decision to protect the dictator. All these conditions end up opening the way for regional unrests, political turmoils, civil wars, proxy wars, and chronic instability.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF REGIME AND AFFILIATION WITH COUP PROOFING

The literature review provides a conceptual and theoretical background for the research. It identifies terms and concepts to develop and frame the case study and examines authoritarian regimes as a broad concept for describing the state. The review then identifies similar concepts to clarify its limits and explore other comparable concepts. As such, the concepts of totalitarianism, democracy, and sultanism will be discussed in this chapter to identify the essence of the authoritarian regimes.

The first section discusses authoritarianism; its concept, authoritarian regimes, different subtypes of authoritarian regimes and their distinctive characteristics. The second section debates the coup-proofing strategy in such authoritarian regimes. Moreover, in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept, application mechanisms, strategies, and the risks to apply. The third section will scrutinize the security apparatus, the differences among the mentioned regimes, and the relevant agencies. This aims to explore the authoritarian regimes to determine the security apparatus's responsibilities in the coup-proofing strategy. Lastly, in the final section, to complete this conceptual and theoretical picture, the research examines the decision-making process and its form in an authoritarian security apparatus.

2.1. The Authoritarianism

2.1.1. The Concept of Authoritarianism

There is not such a thing as standardized authoritarianism, as each authoritarian regime has its own version of the term due to various political and societal circumstances. Contrary to the pre-20th-century authoritarian regimes, new ones try to hide their status of authoritarianism. Thus, each authoritarian regime has its *sui generis* character and varies significantly in its severity, structure, and policies.

Due to the way scholars (Arendt, 1973; Bellin, 2004; Frantz, 2018; Glasius, 2018; Linz, 2000) debate the term, the definition and understanding of authoritarianism have undergone three stages: The first stage recognized authoritarianism as a term between democracy and totalitarianism. In comparison, the second stage developed the word to describe regimes that do not possess free and fair elections. However, the third stage described it as a character or status conferred to any political authority or institute that sabotages accountability.

Firstly, until the second half of the twentieth century, there was a fundamental "dichotomy" in political science between two concepts: democratic and totalitarian regimes. In this regard, authoritarian regimes were usually observed as a form of totalitarianism (Badie et al, 2011). However, authoritarianism was not categorically considered as a regime type, but a transitional period between totalitarianism and democratic regimes.

What is now called the classical literature on non-democratic regimes was developed after WWII. This literature was primarily founded on the differentiation between totalitarianism and authoritarianism (Arendt, 1973, Glasius, 2018, Linz, 2000). In this sense, to catch the meaning of authoritarianism, we must determine its frontiers: totalitarianism and democracy.

In practice, totalitarianism can be reflected in a pattern of total control of the people and obliging them to follow a certain ideology. Totalitarian rulers pursue power by eliminating independent business groups, labor unions, religious bodies, educational institutions, and the opposing factions to the regime (Badie et al., 2011, p. 2634). Italy's Benito Mussolini (1922–1943), Germany under the rule of Adolph Hitler (1933–1945), and Soviet Union's regime under Joseph Stalin's rule (1922–1953) that existed in the 20th century are concrete examples of totalitarian regimes.

As such, totalitarianism, with fundamental political structures, takes complete control over society. It rejects every space of social and political freedom, independence, and private life. Totalitarian rulers influence or even reshape societal norms. Such a system requires both an ability to suppress, besides a comprehensive ideology that provides each society's member with unique means of socialization (Jebnoun, 2013, p. 1).

In this sense, totalitarianism diverges from authoritarianism in two essential aspects. The first and the most important is that totalitarianism purports to monopolize and control society,

regulate it, limit its autonomy, and blur the line between political and civil society. The second difference is that totalitarianism possesses an ideological character that aims to rebuild society and create individuals who enjoy superficial happiness and artificial stability, but are entirely subdued by the regime (Jebnoun, 2013, p. 1).

On the other frontier of authoritarianism comes democracy, in which the concept denotes precisely, is a point of contention among academics and politicians alike. Whereas the various types of democracies mean that much work surrounding the theory and concepts of democracy exist in the literature, making it a contentious topic (Kurian, 2011. pp: 387). Democracy according to modern democratic theory, comprises liberal views of individual freedom, personal responsibility, and the rule of law as cornerstones of a democratic system. Which is unlike the case of the classic democratic approach of ancient Greece in 500 BC (Kurian, 2011.pp:387-388).

In this context, Dahl (1998. pp. 83-98) defines eight minimal criteria that a political regime must meet to be considered a polyarchy. This includes the freedom to form and join organizations, freedom of expression, equal right to vote, eligibility for public office, the right of political leaders to compete for support, alternative sources of information, free and fair elections and the preservation of the government.

According to the previous stage, authoritarianism constitutes a 'grey zone', or a transitional period between totalitarian regimes and democracies. Nevertheless, this creates a state of deficiency in the definition more than it describes a purpose. As the term does not take a specific limited format but instead lies in the middle of two extremes. In this context, the first stage, i.e., 'lack of definition,' was short-lived in the literature. The 'new' phenomenon has established itself in the political sphere, not just as a transitional stage but also as a *de facto* reality and an independent type of regime. Since the previous stage was no longer sufficient, it led scholars to shift the definition to the next and more sophisticated stage.

The decline of totalitarianism from political life after the Second World War made non-democratic studies observe authoritarianism as the absence of democracy. At this point, the lack of democracy had been reduced to the absence of its most transparent, most tangible feature, which is the existence of free and fair elections. Consequently, the second stage of authoritarianism, defined as being an authoritarian regime if the leader(s) has acquired power through undemocratic means, i.e., in any way other than free and fair elections

(Schumpeter,1998. pp:260-271). In this context, this stage defines authoritarianism as a regime that does not hold regular free and fair elections. Such regime-type classifications tell us that these respective regimes do not merit formal classification as authoritarian, unless leaders dissolve parliament or steal elections (Glasius, 2018, p. 516).

The previous definition lacks two essential aspects, as it explains authoritarianism being subject only to one perspective which is the absence of free and fair elections. However, having merely free elections does not guarantee the existence of democratic rule. Furthermore, in the highlights of this definition, perception of authoritarianism manifests it being a sole bloc that has no diverse shapes, degrees or levels of implication. Moreover, the excess focus on elections triggers authoritarian rulers to run fake elections, to avoid being stigmatized as non-democratic.

In the third stage, scholars shifted their focus on authoritarianism from the absence of fair and free elections to what they refer to as 'sabotaging accountability'. For this stage, scholars (Glasius, 2018; Albrecht & Ohl, 2016; Brown et al., 2018a; Feldman, 2003) have sought to define authoritarianism in a substantive and evolving way, focusing on accountability rather than solely on elections. In this sense, political institutions at various state levels are also taken into consideration. So new forms of authoritarianism can be perceived on a non-state level: governmental, organizational, and practical levels.

In this vein, Glasius (2018, p. 517) defines authoritarianism as "patterns of action that sabotage accountability over whom a political actor exerts control over their representatives 'practicing' secrecy, disinformation, and a disabling voice". "These are distinct from illiberal practices, which refer to patterned and organized infringements on individual autonomy and dignity".

Practices are, 'put-patterned actions embedded organized contexts' (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 5). Theorists have turned to conceptualize 'practices' in slightly different ways for somewhat other reasons (Schatzki, 1996.pp:89-90). Here, two essential features of practices must be considered. First, emphasizing practices allows a transfer from labeling only 'regimes' as authoritarian, recognizing that governance arrangements can be more fluid in contemporary politics since rules are much more than the action or behavior of an individual but much less than a state structure. Secondly, it highlights authoritarianism within organizational and social contexts (Schatzki, 1996.pp:89-90) (Glasius, 2018).

According to (Schatzki, 1996) a practical approach can analyze the different levels of social and political strategy in the level of communities, societies, and cultures. In addition to this, different levels of governments, corporations, armies, as well as domination and coercion as either character or phenomena instituted and instantiated in ‘authoritarian’ practices. Likewise, Glasius labels authoritarian practices as a set of actions found in an organized framework, sabotaging accountability to people over whom a political actor, or its representatives, exerts control, either by hindering their access to information or silencing their voice (Glasius, 2018, p. 527).

At the organizational level, scholars look at some famous examples such as the European Union, which suffers from democratic deficits, or the International Monetary Fund's loan conditions, or the World Trade Organization's arbitral awards, which have always been labeled as non-transparent or possibly authoritarian. To realize authoritarianism at the organizational level, it must be seen as a label (Brown et al., 2018b; Glasius, 2018; Schatzki, 1996, pp. 89–90).

From all the above, it becomes clear that looking at authoritarianism as an in-between or transitional status between democracy and totalitarianism is no longer, in any way, representative of the political reality and the stability of this phenomenon in many regions of the world, with different levels and characteristics. Authoritarianism must be looked at as a concept linked to practice, rather than as a concept related to carrying out specific actions. For instance, the availability of free and fair elections gives this concept more analytical capacity and a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, and the ability to analyze factors and characteristics of the phenomenon.

On the other hand, taking the concept of authoritarianism as a practice comes out of all-or-nothing. That is to say, it does not limit the analysis of the concept at the state level but expands it to the levels of organizations and practices. This extends the analytical capacity of the concept and gives it an additional descriptive dimension.

2.1.2. Authoritarian Regimes

Scholars have provided many different perspectives in defining authoritarian regimes. Starting from the first part, 'a regime', as the 'set of basic formal and informal rules that determine who influences leaders' choices, including regulations that identify the group from which key leaders can be selected' (Glasius, 2018). While Linz (2000, p. 159) defined political systems as authoritarian in case they have limited, not responsible political pluralism. Without elaborating and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, nor extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally non-defined structures, but entirely predictable ones.

Authoritarian regimes do not aspire or aim, as totalitarian regimes do, to impede society, as individuals and institutions, from following any ideology other than their own. Instead, authoritarian regimes try to restrict and limit political participation by restraining the ability of society and societal groups to reject and protest the regime.

More pragmatically, authoritarianism is essentially a control mechanism. Linz (2000) developed the first full-grown authoritarian regimes theory, defining them as distinct from many other non-democratic administrations (traditional autocracies, Sultanistic regimes, semi-constitutional monarchies, oligarchic democracies). Linz (2000, pp:159-263) explained authoritarian regimes grounded on three main characteristics: limited pluralism, a pragmatic mentality, and lastly, the deficiency of political mobilization.

The first of these characteristics is the limited constrained pluralism that differs in a degree from one authoritarian regime to another. These may range from merely excluding political opposition groups or to excluding certain civil society institutions. Such exclusions can be based on either laws or de facto restrictions (Linz, 2000, pp:162-175).

The second characteristic places a pragmatic mentality against the ideology that contrasts with the more rigid, systematic, rationally developed, ideological, and comprehensive ideologies. Mentalities are less organized and more fluid in thinking and feeling, and they are more emotional than rational (Linz, 2000. pp176). Although the distinction between ideology and pragmatic mentality is not clear-cut, this ambiguity is used to create a broader political coalition

around authoritarian rulers. Establishing regime legitimacy is a simple process, which is more accessible than other sophisticated types of ideologies (Badie et al., 2011, p. 108).

Thirdly, the lack of political mobilization differs between totalitarian regimes and authoritarian ones, even though authoritarian regimes may have a low level of or passive mobilization (Linz, 2000. pp:165-166). At this point, it may help distinguish between authoritarian and sultanistic regimes that (Stepan & Linz, 2013) use the institutionalization of the military as a critical variable to draw a line between the two regimes. Both regimes' models, sultanistic and authoritarian, can be distinguished through the fact that the rulers of sultanistic regimes have the ultimate power and the final decisive word in every matter, while in authoritarian regimes there is a sort of balance of power between the ruling elite, ruling coalition that the autocrat who cannot take a decisive decision without taking into consideration this balance. However, it is challenging to recognize sultanistic states due to the difficulty of measuring this institutionalization.

2.1.3. Subtypes of Authoritarian Regimes

In their very nature and for many reasons, authoritarian regimes are commonly compound systems that join inconsistent models into an uneasy coexistence (Kurian, 2011). In his reference and groundbreaking book, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes", Linz counts many subtypes of authoritarian regimes. The limitations among such types have not become clear to be distinguished (Linz, 2000.pp:159-263). Moreover, it is rather challenging to locate such indefinable realities in perfect kinds, some of them have lost their contemporary presentation, which is out of this research focus, but the relevant are twofold:

The first is the bureaucratic-military; in these regimes, the state is dominated and ruled by a combination of military officers and bureaucrats. This dominant group may and may not include parties, but the regime does not adopt any ideology driven by a pragmatic and bureaucratic mindset in both cases. It also does not allow a single party to dominate political life (Kurian, 2011). Still, more common is the formation of a single party, backed by the government, which, 'rather than aiming at a controlled mobilization of the population, tends to

reduce its participation in political life even in a manipulated form to occupy political space' (Linz, 2000, p. 184; Schmitter, 1974).

The second is electoral authoritarianism; this type is the most frequent authoritarian regime type, especially in the Middle East (Kurian, 2011). The category of electoral authoritarianism can be subdivided into competitive authoritarianism and hegemonic authoritarianism. In the first, there is significant parliamentary opposition. Meanwhile, in the second subtype, elections are a *façade* in essence, with the dominant party, supported by the government, consistently winning the majority in parliament. Likewise, in hegemonic electoral authoritarian regimes, the president is elected with many popular votes.

However, since the beginning, in the literature, there has been little agreement on what these regimes should be labeled or how to define them. Terry Lynn Karl (1995) introduced the term 'hybrid regime' as a regime with both democratic and authoritarian characteristics. Linz and Stepan (2013) added to the list of their former categories, a new type named as “authoritarian-democratic hybrid” regimes, to define the situation of some Arab countries that followed the Arab Spring.

However, the difficulties in distinguishing between these subtypes are obvious (Diamond, 2002). In any case, the distinction looks indicative rather than absolute; indeed, all subtypes do belong to the authoritarian type but are still different from comprehensive or complete authoritarian regimes. Scholars (Badie et al., 2011; Diamond, 2002; Stepan & Linz, 2013) admit the difficulties of differentiating between these subtypes. The conceptual confusion in the hybrid regime literature draws the dividing line that separates and highlights authoritarian regimes from other forms of non-democratic authorities. This distinction is made from pseudo-democracies or semi-democracies and is a somewhat blurred one (Kurian, 2011).

By using case studies to address the gap between authoritarian and democratic regimes, Ottaway (2003) stepped forward in the literature, presenting the 'semi-authoritarianism' in which the ruling elite could bear the appearance of democracy without exposing itself to a political change. As argued by (Luttwak, n.d; Stepan & Linz, 2013; Ottaway, 2003) the hybrid regime is actually not a regime type; rather, it is a status quo where the dominant elite fails to rule within an institutional condition. This status quo may swing to democracy or full authoritarianism. According to the latter scholars this mainly subject to the armed political

unites, especially coercive apparatus, which would allow a smooth transition towards democracy or not (O'Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986, p. 9).

During the end of the 20th century, democracy constituted the basis on which new terms were created, producing a regime labeled as 'democracy with adjectives such as 'neo-patrimonial democracy', 'proto democracy', 'military-dominated democracy', 'authoritarian democracy,' (Collier and Levitsky, 1997). Despite this, making democracy as a starting point to define and describe these regimes was criticized mainly because it considers mixed regimes as partial or restricted types of democracy. Thus, as a reaction the opposite trend emerged in which 'democracy' was replaced with 'authoritarianism' (Levitsky and Way, 2002; Gilbert and Mohseni, 2011).

Levitsky & Way (2002) made a comparison between electoral authoritarianism with competitive authoritarianism in some aspects contests democracy. First, in an electoral dictatorship, an election is available, but it has meaningless competition. Secondly, there is either no legislature or the ruling party controls it thoroughly. Third, the regime also dominates the judiciary, and the media is entirely state-owned, heavily censored, or systematically repressed. Consequently, opposition was too weak to defeat the ruling elite.

Due to the nature of the political phenomenon and the continuous changes in its characteristics and the diversity of regimes, and the differences in their social and political conditions, a country may encounter authoritarianism as a phased transition during political and economic development. Malaysia under Mahathir Muhammad's rule is the best example of a phased transition hybrid regime.

Based on the discussion above, a practical understanding of authoritarianism, based on sabotage of accountability, should be considered because it will avoid drowning in the varied details of these subtype regimes to match the essence of authoritarianism. Furthermore, focusing on the substance, not the form, will isolate autocrats' attempts to 'escape' from classification and their efforts to hide authoritarianism features in their regimes.

2.2. Coup-Proofing

2.2.1. Coup-Proofing Concept

A coup d'état constitutes an infiltration of a small but critical segment of the state apparatus, which is then used to displace the government from its control over the state (Luttwak, 1969. p: 12). It involves the sudden military action, much connected to force and violence, to overthrow an existing government. This aims to grasp power over the entire state, not just the leaders themselves. In comparison, revolution is accomplished by vast numbers of people working towards severe change, especially in economic, social, and political spheres.

A coup d'état fundamentally matches a military coup almost all of the time because it either changes a civilian rule with the military one or one military rule with another (Kurian, 2011). Therefore, coup-proofing indicates leaders' policies, decisions, activities, or efforts that will reduce the military's (or other internal institution's) ability to organize a successful coup. On top of this, and in the opposite direction, those who have come to power through coups learned to take protection procedures to forestall coups recurrence. They developed effective, albeit costly, means of defending their rules from military coups, including a trial-and-error readjusting of the standards that carried them to power at the time (Be'eri, 1982, pp. 69–81, Quinlivan, 1999).

Consequently, leaders who carry out a coup d'état may not have a full conclusive conception of how their regimes should be composed at the beginning. However, the subsequent decisions on who should or should not be trusted with power have resulted in the formation of the newly-emerged regime, in which most of the state's energy is being consumed and misused on defending that regime (Quinlivan, 1999). Most scholars used a definition for coup-proofing which is close to Quinlivan: the set of actions a regime takes to prevent a military coup (Quinlivan, 1999). This is a broad definition as it includes several actions a regime would take that is classified as coup-proofing.

2.2.2. Coup-Proofing Tactics

Coup-proofing intersects with other policies of a regime in many spheres. However, coup-proofing manifests itself in some incidents, since labeling a certain policy as a coup-proofing would retain it and become nonsense. For example, autocrats may justify appointing their relatives whom they trust in a sensitive position, however by its very nature, the situation gets vague, as autocrats would never explicitly state that their actions are part of coup-proofing.

Scholars (Quinlivan, 1999; Biddle & Zirkle, 1996; Brooks, 2013; Bueno de Mesquita, 2003; Talmadge, 2015; Weeks, 2014) have not agreed upon a certain definition of coup-proofing tactics. In which some expanded the definition to include tens of tactics, some others have settled for few, based on criteria and objectives of their studies. To conclude, coup-proofing tactics can be categorized on ten central policies and strategies, as discussed below:

Firstly, the exploitation of special loyalties, which may be derived from bonds of family, ethnic and religious loyalties. This is, however, countered by greater participation and less stringent loyalty criteria for the regime overall. In contrast, it favored specific communities over others. Loyal groups must be sufficiently big to control the remaining population. While a small individual will form the major personnel in the state's central administration, or the regime required to staff security organizations and to man military units by this group (Quinlivan, 1999) (Reiter, n d). In this regard, autocrats have two specific concerns: first, if the loyal community could staff security institutions to control and repress the entire state's population; and second, whether this community could provide vast, solid military forces for external defense (Quinlivan, 1999, p.135) (Reiter, n d).

Ibn Haldun referred to the solidarity of one group in supporting one of its members when he/she grasps power. Ibn Haldun developed the theory of *Asabiyyah* (agnation, league, coalition), which refers to a regime's stability, political system control, and a coup-proofing policy. Ibn Haldun indicated that lineage is a prelude to establishing an alliance of political and social interests within a state.

As Ibn Haldun's environment was a Bedouin community, in which grouping is based on tribalism. Therefore, he settled for discussing the grouping of this *Asabiyyah* just as a tribe, disclosing other types of grouping, like sects and ethnicities. Despite that, he considered that

tribes in a Bedouin society were a manifestation of social, political, and economical interests, not blood-ties. According to Ibn Haldun, the latent function for this group is to protect a tribe member's dominance, coined by Ibn Haldun as *Taghalub*, and to ensure controlling power and political gains within a state. In other words, as referred to in modern political science as coup-proofing policy (Khaldûn, 2015).

Ibn Haldun saw sub-communities' need to have strong sentiments (*Asabiyyah*), in the form of a clan, not based on lineage. Capabilities like social solidarity are considered essential for those who have leadership responsibilities. According to the prevalent political system during Ibn Haldun's time, power was being traded other than through a free and fair election, therefore the most common method to gain power was through *Teghallub* (predominance, overpower). Hence, the leaders must own stronger social solidarity to prevent others from usurping their power. Thus, *Asabiyyah*, special social solidarity, becomes essential to ruling durability and to applying successful coup-proofing policy (Khaldûn, 2015).

The second policy is the structuring of a parallel military, which aims to balance power against the regular armed forces and be used against them, if necessary, in a case like a coup attempt or other. Therefore, it must be bound to the regime through particular loyalties as a social, communal and sectarian relationship (Quinlivan, 1999) (Reiter, n d).

Therefore, for security missions, some military units are assigned and devoted to physically protecting the leaders and their crucial associates. So, these will be professionally equipped, well trained and highly confident units located near the headquarters of the President and the crucial state's staff. It should contact and report informally to the regime leader rather than through legal channels (Reiter, n d). Parallel force units are fully equipped in the same manner as regular army units and even better, to ensure that the regular military will consider them in any balance-of-power calculation. On top of this, the parallel military must believe itself capable of facing the traditional military units when requested (Quinlivan, 1999, p.141).

The third policy is the multiple security services, which ensures the alertness and activeness of the security services. The active opposition of the military and the passivity of the security services can be very harmful to the regime, therefore stressing the importance of having multiple security services in order to ensure active security function. (Reiter, n d). The propagation of security services with intersecting charters generates a situation with several

providers and a single demander, which ensure that the services will be loyal and active (Reiter, n.d). However, this organizational fragmentation can impede the collective quality of security, particularly at higher levels. The creation of multiple intelligence agencies, banned from coordination, known as 'stove piping', decreases the possibility that the intelligence community could afford a unified view of all intelligence, reducing intelligence assessments' quality.

The fourth policy is the fostering of expertness in the regular military, which helps building an advanced professional military. This requires a developed, integrated process: any unit's action must pass various control stages, meaning that the army's units cannot work in isolation from others (Quinlivan, 1999). The militaries, which work in the advanced and sophisticated system, need complicated and long procedures to move, which is to ensure effectiveness and credibility. That produces a professional army instead of ones with patrimonial structures. This transformation to the modern military requires professionals and skilled officers.

Technically skilled officers depend on planning complicated coordination with other military parts, which opens the doors for active measures by the security forces to monitor movements. It also reduces the probability that the required units and all the conspirators can be ready by a proper military operation's standard. Furthermore, understanding the risks involved in a coup attempt renders officers with this understanding less likely to attempt a coup and more vulnerable to detection (Quinlivan, 1999, p.151).

The fifth tactic concerns the bribery and the role of money in coup-proofing policy. Since coup-proofing policy needs funds for two primary reasons, regimes have to find methods to wage them, at the same time funding other needs for state and regime. The first of these reasons is the high requirements of parallel militaries which are expensive to create and maintain; the second is spoiling.

Some critics argue that 'spoiling' can decrease the military's likeliness of launching a coup in the short-term, yet, in reality, this increases the military's ability to establish a successful coup in the long-term (Feaver, 1999). This is due to the fact that spoiling may provide military officers with greater resources and political power so that they will be better equipped to stage a coup (Powell, 2012; Acemoglu, Ticchi & Vindigni, 2010). This is emphasized by the empirical research of certain scholars, which demonstrates that greater military expenditure raises the likelihood of staging successful coups (Wang, 1998).

Therefore, once political leaders empower militaries with increased resources, they will face a higher probability of coup attempts from these stronger militaries. Thus, some scholars consider that spoiling will not coup-proof the regimes (Sudduth, 2017). Furthermore, spoiling could also increase the risk of potential future coups. In the case of military officers suspecting that political leaders will cease supplying their many resources, ‘they might prevent any downsizing by resorting to a coup’ (Acemoglu, Ticchi & Vindigni, 2010).

The sixth tactic uses low training quality in general and specific training to some narrow elite. Rulers who want to reduce coups attempts may reduce training to decrease the military abilities to attack the regime. However, the military's capabilities to defend the country will fall in turn. Such actions include reducing the extent of training exercises, making exercises less realistic by forbidding live-fire activities, and ordering that training occurs away from the national capital (Reiter, n d). On the other hand, the regime should limit the qualitative and intensive training process to some commando units, that carry out coup-proofing missions, and on the individual officer level, the regime limits it to a few trusted officers who are tasked with implementing what they have learned.

Seventh, restraining information flow of both horizontal and vertical path. It does this both directly by restricting military information flows and indirectly by making internal security aim to increase one another's suspicion of units and officers, thus reducing cooperation and communication (Reiter, n d). Rules could often also alternate officers to block establishing individual networks between officers, which could facilitate a coup in turn. These actions undermine the capacity of military forces to update their strategy and tactics during war and hinder coordination of combat between units, including combined arms operations.

Eighth, indoctrinating society in favor of the leader can also make the people and military less expected to making a coup. Military officers are less likely to launch coups against popular leaders, recognizing that this popularity reduces the likelihood of a successive coup and increases the difficulties of ruling in the case of a coup succeeding. Coup-plotters hope that the public will remain impartial to the possibility of a coup, if not even supportive. (Reiter, n d).

Ninth, the pursuit of aggressive foreign policies favored by the army; such activities as taking a more aggressive stance against an adversary, expanding military spending, or launching bids for an empire. Pursuing foreign policies favored by the military doesn't require reduce

military effectiveness, though it may lead to a poorly integrated grand strategy (Snyder,1991) (Reiter, n d). Instead, others believe that military juntas are more likely to initiate conflict because such officers view the related costs as lower and the benefits as higher. (Weeks) (Reiter, n d).

In the same vein, war is itself is a form of coup-proofing, that various types of interstate conflict can decrease the likelihood of coups and coup attempts. This is because the additional difficulties make coup-plotters bear more responsibilities for the coordination of a coup. Moreover, in this case the sort of information needed to plan a successful coup weakens the army in times of war, gets utilized outside the capital and national territory more generally, and war preparations further divide military branches (Eren.2016) (Reiter, n d).

Tenth, achieve foreign policy successes in a way satisfy supporting elites whom the regime depends on. To justify this, some scholars argue that such achievements can stabilize dictators if they provide private goods that the dictator can then reward supporters with (Bueno de Mesquita, 2003). Others assume that mass disappointment with foreign policy results may threaten a dictator's hold on power, as may signal to resolve to other states (Weeks, 2014) (Reiter, n d). On the other hand, this policy strengthens a leader because more significant popularity among the mass public discourages elites such as military officers from launching a coup (Reiter, n d).

These tactics are not limited, and any procedure has final aim to protect. When put coup-proofing tactics into practice, each regime has its own unique combination of that tactics. Priorities, circumstances and ability tactics among others, likewise the level of exploitation.

2.2.3. Choosing Appropriate Combination of Coup-Proofing Tactics

There are two mainstream theories on how and whether leaders start coup-proof: 'internal threat theory' and 'external threat theory.' The former suggests that leaders facing a high risk of coup attempts will embrace coup-proofing tactics. Simultaneously, the external threat theory believes they will relax coup-proofing efforts due to their counter-intuitive effect on the military. In this way, they will instead accept a higher risk of the coup to improve the state's warfighting capacity (Sudduth, 2017).

Coup-Proofing policy, in practice, depending on a mixture of many tactics. While internal threat drives the general likelihood of choosing any particular coup-proofing tactic, the specific tactics selected depend on the external threat level. Specifically, leaders who face high internal and external threats tend to implement tactics that do not reduce military effectiveness. However, not all leaders have the ability to apply all tactics because, for example, not all leaders present a powerful ideology or have equal access to bribable private goods. Hence, the choice of tactics depends on availability and circumstance (Sudduth, 2017) (Reiter, n d).

2.2.4. Between Coup Risks and Coup-Proofing Strategies

It is typically argued that leaders facing a high risk of a coup will undertake more coup-proofing efforts, although these may be counter-intuitive. In particular, Pilster and Böhmelt (2012) argue that autocrats are more likely to apply coup-proofing strategies, due to leaders being more susceptible to a coup d'état. This conclusion that coup risk positively impacts coup-proofing efforts is obvious yet ignores the prospect that political leaders' strategies of weakening militaries could encourage coup-plotters (e.g., Biddle and Zirkle, 1996; Quinlivan, 1999; Belkin and Schofer, 2003; Roessler, 2011).

Displacing political leaders through a coup is the 'ultimate punishment', allowing militaries to make leaders comply and commit to permanently benefiting them. Once leaders have restricted the power of military officers and weakened the armies to the extent that they are unable to credibly stage a coup, they will lose political influence. Militaries must therefore prevent leaders' coup-proofing strategies by staging a coup d'état (Sudduth, 2017; Reiter, n d)

2.3. Security in Authoritarian Regimes

2.3.1. The Concept of Security

Security is an essentially contested concept. Specifically, its internal complexity and the contested values produce rival versions of the concept, leading to perennial struggles over the true meaning. In that sense, Barry Buzan identified twelve diverse definitions of security that critical analysts have produced (Buzan 1991: 16).

One of the more prominent examples being Arnold Wolfers' definition that 'security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked' (Wolfers 1952: 485). The modern security concept needs to include varied security elements, including human, society, and state security (Knudsen, 2012). State security involves severe threats to the state's survival that require extreme defense measures: this may be related to territory or political independence (Dunn Cavelty & Balzacq, 2017).

State security, representing a fundamental security requirement, includes a situation in which the state may be facing an existential threat that legitimizes the use of all its available resources in defense. Traditionally, state security has been linked to territorial integrity (territorial defense), but it also comprises its political sovereignty. On the other hand, societal security concerns protecting civilians, infrastructure, and critical societal processes. Threats against societal security may be human made. Still, grave accidents or catastrophes can also create severe damage (Knudsen, 2012).

Moreover, Human security seeks to safeguard individuals and human rights, in such situations when their rights like the right to life, and personal safety are threatened. Human security is closely linked to the principle of 'responsibility to protect', which has increasingly gained ground. In sum, 'the conceptual division into three 'types' of security: (state, societal and human security) should be seen as an analytical and operational tool to understand a country's security challenges better and adapt to those challenges in a globalized environment' (Knudsen, 2012).

2.3.2. Security Apparatus

Oversight on security missions and services, the division of security–intelligence tasks and the concentration of police and political power in security agencies vary widely among countries. The distribution of work between agencies that gather foreign intelligence and internal police authorities often was used as a metric of democratic freedoms enjoyed within states (Al-Marashi, 2003; Balzacq, 2011; Dunn Cavelty & Balzacq, 2017; Knudsen, 2012).

Likewise, totalitarian and authoritarian regimes regularly utilize their intelligence and law enforcement agencies as an instrument of state terror, helping to preserve ruler elite, sect, or dictator in power. So, in authoritarian regimes, many scholars classify security apparatuses as a coercion apparatus. In that case, these authoritarian coercive agencies, both external and internal threats are often subject to inspect by the same agencies. Authoritarianism makes intelligence-security services and government oversight become blurry; consequently, a security state will appear.

The security apparatus has a very varied structure and function. Here it is interpreted as an element to protect the state against external and internal threats. This research study security in the state level as being—or at least consider—safe, in particular, against criminal activities such as terrorism or espionage (Knudsen, 2012).

The security apparatus has a complex structure, usually a segment of a larger organization, and the equipment required for a particular purpose. The state's security reflects the modern-day principles held by a specific country or any other human entity or organization. Accordingly, the structure of the apparatus responsible for that security will change to reflect these values. The security apparatus also offers the state of affairs with the fundamental social, cultural, and/or political aspects. It also allows for a so-called health check of the community that evaluates its status and foresee its future (Badie et al., 2011).

2.3.3. Intelligence Apparatus and Other Security Apparatus

Intelligence may be thought of as a set of missions carried out by a nation's secret agencies and a cluster of people and organizations that carry out the collection tasks -and- analysis, counterintelligence, and covert action (Johnson,2009). Michael Herman (1996), author of the most significant theoretical books on intelligence concept and its definition (Williams, 2012, p. 439), states intelligence as a special formula of power, not unlike other powers formula like military power or economic power. Definitely, 'intelligence is a vital part of 'hyper-powerness'', allowing the regime to project military force on a global basis. In that sense, also establishing a new regime through a revolution or a coup, in military affairs, is strongly connected to an increasing ability to use a huge amount of data, so intelligence constitutes a significant component of the changing nature of coups, revolution and interstate war' (Ferris 2004, Williams, 2012, p. 439). Herman (1991, p.56) argue that:

“The Western intelligence system is two things. It is partly the collection of information by special means and partly the subsequent study of subjects, using all available information from all sources. The two activities form a sequential process. In practice, the link between them is not always complete; some single-source output bypasses the subsequent all-source stage and goes direct to users. The significance of this direct service varies between users and subjects. But the essence of the modern system is that it embraces the two related activities of single-source collection and all-source analysis”.

Intelligence differs between domestic security-based and foreign-based concerns; security intelligence affects to domestic 'safety', these threats could be originated from a domestic or foreign "aggressor". (e.g., terrorism, espionage). Likewise foreign intelligence involves information collection and activities relating to the political or economic affairs of foreign states, this requires intelligence agencies to work inside and outside the country to achieve this mission . Furthermore, the duties of these law enforcement agencies differ according to regime type. In authoritarian regimes, the structure and tools of the purpose vary significantly from others in democratic countries.

According to the topic of this research, and analysis' requirements, the use of the concept 'security' will be restricted to just human-made threats toward the regime, directly or indirectly.

So, the other threats toward national security will be excluded, like the environmental and natural disaster threats.

2.3.4. Security Apparatus in Authoritarian Regimes

There is no standard shape for security apparatus in authoritarian regimes on the ground, likewise in democratic ones. Still, one can see commonalities in these institutions derived from authoritarian regimes' nature. The security apparatus in authoritarian regimes also utilizes acts of terror and violence to scare enemies and society as a whole while establishing themselves.

At the forefront is the dependence on violence, terror, acts of torture not as a means for specific purposes in limited cases but as a strategy to brand security apparatus and spread fear in opponents and all society (Albertus & Menaldo, 2017). In addition, these essential characteristics must be included in the apparatus's character. Of course, terror's primary purpose is to send a specific message to regime members and society as a whole. Consequently, the message of terror may be withdrawn, but it may also return later as an essential part of the regime. While different authoritarian countries exercise an extra level of coercion, it is a fundamental feature of all.

In the same vein, the authoritarian security apparatus will give either hard (jail, concentration camp) or soft (so-called 'administrative measures') without legal basis through the security leaders' orders. This is because the rule of law is weak, or there is no rule in authoritarian regimes. It gives free rein to that coercion-security apparatus to practice its primary function, protecting the regime without waiting to make legal procedures. However, the investigation by security agencies is often arbitrary (Albertus & Menaldo, 2017).

The total un-involvement of the law within the security apparatus's activities means that human rights and civil liberties are no longer a factor within the state. Additionally, an essential difference between security apparatuses in authoritarian regimes and in democratic ones is the complete absence of judicial control over the security apparatus, i.e., authoritarian security apparatus is not constrained by law entirely. At first glance, some of the tools and measures of may look soft or even pain-free. Still, when they are applied continuously for decades, they instill a distrust that harm whole society, destroying its structure, sole and viability. These measures create a particularly harsh environment, making any suspected person in the state a

legitimate target. Consequently, citizens' rights are like a luxurious request that no one cares about in comparison to protecting the leader (Albertus & Menaldo, 2017).

2.3.5. Robustness of the Security Apparatus in Authoritarian Regimes

Scholars (Barros, 2016; Bellin, 2004; Burgess, 2009; Oesterreich, 2005) have given many descriptions and characters that authoritarian regimes try to create within security apparatus to ensure their efficiency, productivity, consistency with the regime's purpose.

First is the maintenance of fiscal health. The security establishment is most likely to give in when its financial foundation is seriously compromised (Bellin, 2004), as discussed in the role of money in the coup-proofing policy.

Second comes the successful maintenance of international support networks. Since decisions in foreign affairs is related to and ends up around the intelligence. Security-intelligence apparatus derives part of its power from international links with other security apparatuses of foreign countries. As a result, the authoritarian security apparatus is particularly inclined to lose its will and capacity to maintain its grasp on power when it loses fundamental international backing. Coercive authoritarian regimes are even more confronted with this problem when they have received massive foreign aid. The end of international backing leads to both existential and financial crises for regimes that often ends up devastating both its will and capacity to carry on (Bellin, 2004).

Third is the level of institutionalization. The more institutionalized the security establishment is, the more willing it will be to disengage from power and allow political reform to proceed (Bellin, 2004). Institutionalization does not pertain to the de-politicization of the security apparatus nor its subordination to civilian control. Rather, institutionalization refers to Weber's qualities to differentiate between bureaucracies and institutions with patrimonial structures (Bellin, 2004, p.144). A standardized security apparatus is rule-governed, predictable, and meritocratic. It has clearly established paths of career advancement and recruitment; promotion takes place based on performance, rather than politics. There is a clear line between the public and private sphere that impedes predatory behavior with regards to society, and discipline is upheld by means of the implementation of a service ethic and rigorous enforcement of a merit-based hierarchy (Bellin, 2004, p.144).

By contrast, in a coercive apparatus that is structured around patrimonialism, decisions work based on cronyism: the distinction between public and private spheres is unclear, resulting in mass corruption and abuse of power. Discipline is upheld by exploiting the primordial gap and is often based on rivalries between different ethnic and sectarian groups (Bellin, 2004).

Fourth, patrimonial structure confers many distinct advantages on authoritarian regimes that can contribute to their longevity (Bellin, 2004). These types of regimes include demobilizing opponents and forming a loyal base of support through favoritism and patronage. Patrimonialism can equally enable authoritarian regimes to be especially resistant to democratic reform. In coercive apparatus, patrimonial organizations are less receptive to political change. Conversely, institutionalization allows more easily for reform.

When the coercive apparatus is uniformized, the security elite benefits from a sense of common identity that exists distinct from the state and society. It has a separate mission, identity, and career path. Officers can imagine a separation from the state. Even if they give up their power, it is their belief that they will live to see another day (Bellin, 2004, p.145). They do not perceive that they will be 'gained by reform' (Nancy Bermeo, 1997). Instead, it is more likely for them to see their downfall due to holding onto office for too long. The inevitable political failures will lead to and fuel political fractures within the elite. These fractures, in turn, can question the institutional integrity of the security apparatus. A primary factor that led the military elite to, for example, give power to civilians in Brazil and Argentina was its concern to maintain the institutional integrity of the military. Similar incentives exist when the coercive apparatus is highly institutionalized (Bellin, 2004, p.145).

The coercive apparatus is distinguished by a commitment to some broader national mission which help attain public goals like national defense and economic development, instead of personal objectives such as aggrandizement and enrichment. Whenever the elite has successfully achieved such public goals, it again has good reason to be convinced that it will not be impacted by reform. Indeed, it might be reassured as to its ability to ride the wave of democratic transition successfully and maintain a grip on power, this time through popular-backed democratic reform (Bellin, 2004, p.146).

Fifth, the degree of popular mobilization, even if it is within the security forces' physical capacity, violently repressing thousands of people is costly. It may jeopardize the institutional integrity of the security apparatus, international support, and domestic legitimacy (Bellin, 2004).

From all of the above, the mission and function of the security apparatus differ in line with the nature of the political system, its specificity, and the quality and productivity of the security apparatus itself. Moreover, while the security institutions are divided between intelligence and security in democratic countries, the authoritarian character of the system leaves a significant influence on its security apparatus. The first of these effects is modifying its objectives, structure, and means to cope with the authoritarian regime. Hence, its goal is to protect the regime, especially the leader, not to protect national security.

The second is that it is associated with violence and coercion to a greater degree than the regime's authoritarianism, as it represents the pressure force of this system. Thus, it will pass through tools that are compatible with the intelligence of this system. The third, and last, is low productivity as a result of the patrimonial structure and the low level of institutionalization.

2.4. Decision Making in Authoritarian Security Apparatus

2.4.1. Decision-Making in Authoritarian Regimes

The online dictionary of the United States Department of Defense sets the definition of a decision as an estimate of the situation, a clear and concise statement of the line of action intended to be followed by the commander as the one most favorable to the assigned mission's successful accomplishment.

All the many variables within authoritarianism differ from those of other regime types and affect leaders' decisions in different ways. So, the decision-making process, which authoritarian leaders must take, is generally influenced by the three characteristics of the regime: limited pluralism, low subject mobilization, and patrimonial rulership (Purcell, 1973, pp. 30–51).

First, limited pluralism should be made to 'produce an erratic relation between the authoritarian leader's decisions and expressed group demands. Many choices will involve issues that were never raised, while issues raised frequently may be ignored because groups lack sufficient resources and capabilities to support their needs' (Purcell, 1973, p. 37).

'Interest groups in an authoritarian regime may also be expected to play a predominantly reactive (rather than initiating) role in the decision-making process, expressing support for the leader's decisions or seeking to modify them on their behalf' (Purcell, 1973, p. 37).

In a democracy whereas a comparatively unlimited pluralism, 'the relation between group demands and the leader's decisions may be expected to be strong; groups will play a predominantly initiating role in the decision-making process and should be able to support their demands with substantial pressure'. (Purcell, 1973, p. 37).

Second, the low subject mobilization will reduce the amount of pressure and demands made upon the autocrats, providing them with additional decision-making autonomy, and reinforce the broken relationship between group demands and authoritarian leaders' decisions (Purcell, 1973, p. 38). Meanwhile, in a 'democratic regime characterized by moderate 'participant' mobilization, the number of demands emanating from the polity will increase. The decision-maker's autonomy will be more limited, and the relatively strong relation between group demands and decisions will be reinforced' (Purcell, 1973, p. 38).

Third, 'patrimonial rulership, the third defining characteristic of an authoritarian regime, may be expected to impede the formation of horizontal alliances among individuals and groups' (Purcell, 1973, p. 38). Patrimonial structure of power makes analyzing decision-making process is very difficult. In this case, the ruler, as a "head of a set of patrimonial staff arrangements, will require his immediate subordinates to forward all ideas for decisions to him and to refrain from taking credit for such statements" (Purcell, 1973, p. 38). Democracy, on the other hand, will limit the powers of democratic decision-makers, who must follow legal guidelines. It will also and make the decision-making process longer and complicate. Likewise, self-employed groups will have many opportunities to form horizontal alliances and to initiate class-related demands.

2.4.2. The Role of Security Apparatus in Decision-Making in Authoritarian Regimes

The security apparatus in authoritarian regimes works as coercion, and authoritarian regimes depend on regime durability in many ways. In short, the state's coercive apparatus's strength, coherence, and effectiveness distinguish among cases of successful revolution, revolutionary failure, and non-occurrence (Skocpol, 1979). Thus, authoritarianism has proven exceptionally robust in some countries because the coercive-security apparatus in many states has been extraordinarily able to crush reform initiatives from below (Skocpol, 1979). Therefore, many authoritarian regimes succeed for years because they have such as proactive and develop security apparatus.

This approach, of course, tends to conflate the coercive apparatus with the authoritarian system it supports. Even under regimes where the head of state is tightly aligned with the coercive apparatus and heavily reliant on force to exist, the distinction between the two is often difficult to draw. For example, the Algerian regime's conflation and the security apparatus is well known that one analyst declared 'every state has an army, but in Algeria, the army has a state.' (Harbi,2002). Nevertheless, the prevalence of patrimonial leadership enhances nourishing this problem.

In conclusion, the security apparatus is vital for authoritarian regimes because the success of the coup-proofing strategy determines regime durability. Because most, if not all, coup-proofing tasks lie on the security apparatus. Still, the degree of that reliance, autonomy, and competence vary from one country to another according to variation of social-political environment.

Here, as a mentality and conscience of the security apparatus, the decision-making process represents the operating system of this apparatus. In addition, the starting point in this process begins with defining the targets to be protected, attacked, or neutralized because choosing requires a (decision) to determine the structure, working mechanism, and staff. The centrality of the security apparatus to authoritarian regimes makes the security decision-making process a vital issue in the regime because these choices determine the existence and durability of the regime itself.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Military coups are one of the most significant characteristics of Middle East politics. For the three decades that followed WWII, the region witnessed fifty-five coup attempts, in which half of them succeeded. In Syria alone, between the first coup carried out by Husni al-Zaim in 1949 until the 1970 Hafiz al-Assad's coup, the country witnessed dozens of coup attempts, in which 11 were successful (Zaiden, 2011) (Dam, 2011).

Straight away after his successful coup, General Hafiz al-Assad initiated *al-Harakah at-Tashihyah* (Corrective Movement). Despite this, al-Assad himself conducted an authoritarian policy until his death, by remaining in power for a period of 30 years. After which his son Bashar al-Assad succeeded him, adding up to more than 20 years in power so far. This can be considered as an extension of Hafiz's rule, without any successful coup being made against him.

This research argues that Hafiz al-Assad's long reign was mainly due to the successful and strict coup-proofing policy that he conducted; the justification for this assumption is based on how the same pattern of social and political structure continued throughout Hafiz al-Assad's rule. In addition to that, the same external threat to the regime from its neighbors intensified and expanded during his administration. Despite that, he succeeded in stopping the flow of coup d'états.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

Security Apparatus under Hafiz al-Assad's regime is quite distinctive, as its staff and functions were established by Hafiz al-Assad when he came to power and continued until his death in 2000 with nearly the same features, processes, and figures.

The variable, which this research discusses, is the role of security apparatus in coup-proofing policy in authoritarian regimes. This variable is connected to and covers several issues, which can be classified into three groups. The first factors relate to the apparatus itself, e.g., structure, mechanisms, and internal relations. The second are points and elements related to its

relationship with other regime's institutions, forces and people. The third are points and factors related to the proxy war conducted by the Syrian security apparatus.

The first group includes points and factors enclosed in the apparatus itself that make it coup-proofing (or a coup-threat); these points were either given as an additional power from the president or endogenous like its ethnic structure. On the other hand, some disciplines and rules serve coup-proofing, like the bases and criteria to choose local security commanders. Moreover, this group contains the coup threat to the regime's head originated from the security apparatus itself.

Regarding the second group, the research examined the security apparatus's role to prevent other institutions, like the military and affiliated agencies, from performing successful coups d'état. The relationship here was internal within regime institutions, so the research studies how the head of the regime recruits security apparatus to control other regime institutions and members. The greater power in the Syrian security sector was in unofficial, illegal security agencies. In contrast, some are also not named as a security agency (like the security branch responsible for Lebanese files). Due to that, the research will study both the formal and informal security relationships and how they functioned in the regime coup-proofing policy.

As for the second group, the research will determine to what extent the security apparatus play a role in preventing opposition and others from being a coup threat. The relationship here between security apparatus and people is up-to-down, from top to bottom, and from a superior to a subordinate, from governmental institutions in authoritarian regimes to the people.

Finally, the third group will be developed to explore the security apparatus's recruitment of external elements and factors to serve coup-proofing policy. This included supporting non-Syrian organizations to pressure and stress other countries and achieve gains that enhance the regime's external and internal control.

Building on these insights, the research posits that the role of the security apparatus in Syria is a function of the following independent variables. Firstly, to what extent the structure and function of the security apparatus itself serve coup-proofing policy. Secondly, to what extent the relationships between security apparatus and the regime's other institutions and components

serve the regime's coup-proofing policy. Lastly, to what extent security apparatus employ regional and international relations to perform the coup-proofing policy of the regime.

3.2. Institutional Approach

To diagnose all the variables mentioned above, the research will look primarily at the security apparatus as a whole, therefore it used the institutional approach. This approach focuses on the formal and informal structures of the political organizations inside regimes, such as the case of the Syrian security apparatus inside the Syrian regime.

The qualitative case study approach is "an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case intended to capture the object of the study's complexity", which draws together "naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods" (Merriam, 2009) in a bricoleur design, or as Stake(1995) named: "a palette of methods." Case study methodology maintains deep connections to core values and intentions and is "particularistic, descriptive and heuristic" (Merriam, 2009). Although quantitative research on the Syrian security apparatus would be necessary and instrumental in such a study, it is impossible to do so within this research due to the extreme secrecy of the security sector in the Syrian regime.

However, this approach emphasizes formal and informal structures and ignores individuals' roles in those institutions. When necessary, the research used psychological analysis when speaking about commanders of security apparatus and their role in coup-proofing. Using a psychological approach might not be beneficial as it does not focus on the security apparatus' role. Still, the research seeks to study the role of all institutions, including the Presidency.

On the other hand, other approaches such as the legal approach are not convenient in our research because there is no rule of law in authoritarian regimes in general and Syria in particular. The legal system is not stable as amendments are being done as per the ruler's interest. Moreover, the absence of judiciary and other legal institutions with the power to apply the law or reject a certain decision as unlawful means that the rule of law cannot be upheld.

In the same vein, the research took into account the informal role and function of this apparatus; as most of its operation is secret, informal, and illegal (Dam, 2011), it plays a role above the law and there is no kind of transparency and accountability from courts or other institutions. Therefore, any importance of the law diminishes.

The research took Syria under the rule of Hafiz al-Assad's regime as a case study to establish the general foundation and determine the starting point of the analysis, which will serve as a prelude to establishing links between the variables. Therefore, the research will use a descriptive approach in such a way as to define and recognize the Syrian security apparatus, structure and figures, and to address the description of the phenomenon, its limits, and the circumstances affecting it. In addition to that, the historical approach is partly used in our research because the phenomenon under examination has passed. The study must look at it in its historical context, which has since changed, and must consider the regional and domestic context.

3.3. Research Methods

Secrecy of information is an essential characteristic of an authoritarian regime, and in particular in its security apparatus. In addition, in every security apparatus agency, power is gathered in the hand of the agency's head. Nobody except the command has access to any certain information that is not related to their direct job, despite having the responsibility to monitor and spy on their colleagues and company, and then transfer information to the leader.

On the other hand, the Syrian regime never suffered a total collapse. This is unlike the Iraqi regime in the aftermath of the US invasion in 2003, or the Egyptian regime during the 2011 uprisings. In both cases, documents and archives of the security apparatus ended up in the hands of an authority that benefited from this situation through revealing such bad practices for political or other reasons -meaning most of those regimes' secrets were divulged.

In these circumstances of limited access to direct raw data, it is challenging to conduct field or statistical research. Hence, this research is designed as only qualitative research to drawn

on in-depth interviews and course analysis in the memoirs of regime security leaders and public interviews with the regime's political figures.

This research used primary data such as the leaders' speeches, documents, and laws of the regime. However, these first resources were rare because of the discreet status which prevailed in the security sector in Syria. On the other hand, the data mentioned above give us formal and direct information that can be analyzed.

On the same side of the regime's narrative, but unofficially, this research uses the memoirs of some leaders who held security positions or were close to the security decision-makers in Syria at that time. They are considered an essential reference that establishes the sequence of facts and contains what can be regarded as the official viewpoint towards events and figures despite the memoirs having disadvantages. These included their apparent bias, lack of information, repetition of the regime's propaganda in describing events, and their excessive praise and flattery of the leader and his achievements.

This research will use in-depth interviews with several leaders and officers who worked in the security apparatus within our period of study and defected from the Al-Assad regime. Afterward, these witnesses were keen to expose the regime's practices, and some of them had held high-security positions in the regime. However, there are many caveats and difficulties in generalizing from personal interviews, due to the privacy and limitations of their experiences. On the other hand, its importance comes from providing a more in-depth understanding of participants' non-documented motivations.

The secondary sources are books and articles written during that period, from authors who visited Syria, met Syrian regime leaders and gave their perspectives about the regime's mechanism. Their observations are particularly relevant as they come from external observers far from the regime or opposition propaganda. After transcribing interviews, content analysis, discourse analysis, and textual analysis for the data obtained from the methods mentioned above, a cross-check of information and complete links will be drawn between variables to come up with conclusions.

In comparison, the scarcity of information and the predominance of media propaganda within official speeches makes them of little use. On top of this, misleading information and the overly emotive language of the victims of security services' repression, means it is very difficult to obtain data and information about SSA.



CHAPTER FOUR

DECISION MAKING IN AUTHORITARIAN SECURITY APPARATUS: THE SYRIAN CASE STUDY

The relevance of Syria as a case to study security apparatus in an authoritarian regime stems from many reasons. The primary one, Syria is an excellent example of an authoritarian regime due to the constitution itself, which gave the Baath Party the leadership of state and society. And the same constitution gave President al-Assad the leadership of the three authorities: legislative, executive, and judicial. At the same time, al-Assad was commanding both the army and security apparatus. By law, President al-Assad was the head of all authorities and constitutions in Syria. Secondly, the high quality of al-Assad's coup-proofing policy enabled him not just to stop session coups that happened before coming to power, but also allowed his son to inherit power. The third is the security apparatus, *Mukhabarat* itself, which formed a comprehensive and complex network of agencies and security missions, making the process of security decision a vital and essential.

The struggle for power, which took place as a result of disagreements and differences of opinion between Salah Jadid and Hafiz al-Assad, ended with the coup carried out on November 16, 1970. After Hafiz al-Assad took over the administration of the country, he made complex but conscious strategic moves to consolidate his own power and followed rational pragmatist policies. In other words, it has taken all the necessary steps to consolidate its own management style, and has weaved its unique Presidential Monarchy model, which will carry Syria to the present day, with the meticulousness of a spider's own web, over time. Assad, who displayed a leadership with nationalist, realist and pragmatist features during his 30-year rule, established an authoritarian regime that kept the political, economic and social life in the country under control. (Şöhret, 2016, p.55-56)

To summarize the details of the regime established by Hafiz Assad in general, it is possible to say that the following points come to the fore. 1) First of all, Hafiz Assad, unlike

Salah Jadid, avoided governing his country by hiding behind a Sunni head of state. By monopolizing the administration, himself, he took measures against a potential Sunni opposition that may occur in the future and relied on the *Alawiet* military power. Secondly, Assad has gone to the formation of a state that is completely personal and has leadership characteristics. In other words, he identified the existence and legal personality of the state with its own existence, as in typical authoritarian governments. This situation is essentially a sultanistic state as the King of France XIV, who described himself as a state in the past. Thirdly, it expanded and multiplied the institutions; however, he did not include any formations that are likely to put himself in a difficult situation regarding the army, party and government. In other words, it expanded and strengthened key institutions in order to influence its own political power in every corner of the country and all the people under its rule, but while doing this, it did not assign tasks to individuals and groups that were not loyal to it. Lastly, all of the generals in charge at key points, from security to intelligence, were of *Alawiet* origin from *Matavira*, Assad's tribe, with this aspect, other minorities from outside the administration were prevented from holding important positions and possible coup attempts were prevented (Şöhret, 2016, p.55-56)

4.1. The Peculiarity of the Syrian *Mukhabarat*

Although there are local differences between Middle Eastern countries, the security apparatus was transformed into the so-called *Mukhabarat*, which is a local form of security service that differs from the typical forms of academically defined security or intelligence agencies. *Mukhabarat* is an idiom used in many Middle Eastern countries to refer to the apparatus which is responsible for the security or intelligence missions or both.

Mukhabarat can control civil, military, and political spheres, yet few scholars have focused on its unique nature (Moharram, 2006, p. 1). To some extent, it is difficult to understand politics, structure, and power relationships of most Arab states without understanding the *Mukhabarat* apparatus and its role in governments. (Moharram, 2006, p. 2). Due to the scarcity of available documents, material, and resources, scholars of security studies or Arab politics have avoided deep discussion of the *Mukhabarat*. For many reasons, this is particularly accentuated in the Syrian case.

Before the Arab Spring, *Mukhabarat* received little academic attention. For that reason, more information was available on *Mukhabarat* activities outside Arab borders rather than information on domestic activities. Foreign news agencies used to report when *Mukhabarat* agents are caught abroad, while *Mukhabarat*'s domestic activities go undeclared. Thus, the few researchers who have examined these services concentrate on their international operations rather than their role in domestic affairs. However, most of their power, potential, and primary mission lies in the domestic sphere (Moharram, 2006, p. 2).

During the era of Hafiz al-Assad, the initial studies on the Syrian *Mukhabarat*, such as Michel Seurat's essays, have aimed at uncovering human rights abuses and brutality in dealing with civilians that the authoritarian regime was always trying to conceal. Human Rights groups have also conducted surveys regarding the security apparatus in their publications, one of the best at that time was Middle East Watch, *Syria Unmasked: The Suppression of Human Rights by the al-Assad Regime* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991). In addition to Amnesty International, *Report to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic* (Washington DC: Amnesty International, 1983). Those reports explain in detail the composition of the Syrian security apparatus, targeting uncovering the violations of Human Rights in Syria during the first two decades of al-Assad's ruling.

The second group of literature tackled security when studying the regime's social and political structure. The most prominent examples of this research were Nicholas van Damme's published Ph.D. research, which is "The Struggle for Power in Syria". Likewise, Hanna Batatu's book "Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables and Their Politics". Of course, one of the most notable discussions of the "authoritarian-populist" nature of the Syrian regime was R.A. Hinnebusch, "Authoritarian Power and State Formation in Baathist Syria: Army, Party and Peasant", as well as J.F. Devlin, "Syria: Modern State in an Ancient Land". Such studies of modern Syrian politics frequently refer to the role of the military and *Mukhabarat* as key props of the regime but do not go into detail. Researches mentioned above explored *Mukhabarat* as an organ of the system and an institution like other institutions of government and power, rather than focusing on its centrality to the authoritarian regime's structure.

The third group of references dealt with *Mukhabarat* when they were studying coup d'état as well as coup-proofing in the Middle East. They see the *Mukhabarat* as a security apparatus in the academic sense, which constitutes one of the many autocratic tools used in the coup-proofing policy. Like James T. Quinlivan's decisive paper "Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East" (*International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall, 1999), pp. 131-165, and Eliezer Be'eri "The waning of the military coup in Arab politics" (Routledge, 1982).

On the other hand, few studies have examined *Mukhabarat* as a security apparatus with its distinctive characteristics. One such study is a master's research of Tammy Moharram: "The *Mukhabarat*" which analyzed *Mukhabarat* as a state institution in three Middle Eastern countries: Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, in addition, it revealed *Mukhabarat* specialists as well as referred to its relation to coup-proofing, but this research did not link the terminology *Mukhabarat* with other security terminology prevalent in Academia.

This research addresses the *Mukhabarat* in authoritarian regimes in general and in Syria in particular, as not just any other institution, but rather as a crucial organ of the authoritarian regime, playing the role of the autocrat's suppressive arm in implementing coup-proofing policies. In principle, the *Mukhabarat* exists to protect autocrats from perceived threats like extremist groups, political opposition, rival states, or potential insurgent member within the national army to remove any form of disloyalty to the leadership (Moharram, 2006, p.3). In return, *Mukhabarat* is designed in Syria and other authoritarian countries to act as a shadow of the Syrian President and played as an executive arm for coup-proofing policies. Syrian *Mukhabarat* designed in a way that does not represent a danger to the President, yet to protect autocrats rather than threatening them.

In theory, they represent a significant and tangible risk to the leaders they serve. In the armed forces, their power in politics and their interaction with civil society gives ambitious *Mukhabarat* leaders a support base from which to oust the leadership of their state (Moharram, 2006, p. 3). However, in practice, autocrats learn how to remove the *Mukhabarat*'s claws directed against them through applying coup-proofing tactics to the *Mukhabarat* itself in the first place, and then using it against others.

Above all, neither the modern Western "intelligence" nor "security" agencies can accurately describe *Mukhabarat*. According to its function, the *Mukhabarat* will do intelligence-gathering, interrogations, security operations, and covert operations. Therefore, making the distinction between "security" and "intelligence" services meaningless. The term *Mukhabarat* generally implies a service with the jurisdiction to carry out all of these functions. Although some definitions of the term "counter-espionage" describe services of this sort, other usages of that phrase do not (Moharram, 2006, p. 5). However, Western intelligence services often differentiate between covert actions and intelligence gathering, unlike the *Mukhabarat*, which routinely uses overt and covert means (Moharram, 2006, p. 29).

Concerning its name, common people in Syria always call any security institution "*Mukhabarat*" regardless of whether it has the word "*Mukhabarat*" in its name or not, giving further evidence that "*Mukhabarat*" is something different from security and intelligence agencies. Hereby, being commonly referred to as *Mukhabarat*, reflects the perception and realizing of its nature and function. However, it does mainly matter how it is called, yet its structure and function. Furthermore, the usage of the term *Mukhabarat* makes it easier to determine its nature, rule, and character. For these reasons, this research uses the Arabic term *Mukhabarat* and security apparatus interchangeably to refer collectively to the Syrian security-intelligence apparatus.

Another crucial difference concerning *Mukhabarat* is that it does not adhere to the hierarchy of authority or abide by the orders and regulations of the ministry to which it belongs. At the end of the day, autocrats themselves generally stand at the top of the *Mukhabarat* structure, either officially or unofficially, in a way that all fundamental *Mukhabarat* agencies report directly to autocrats.

In addition to being essentially a repressive organ conducting coup-proofing policy, most of the intelligence and security missions are assigned to the *Mukhabarat*. Moreover, unlike most Western intelligence services, the *Mukhabarat* has great armed forces, political power, and wide-ranging jurisdiction.

Since the mid-20th century in many Arab countries, the centrality of power has been transferred from the politically ambitious army to the politically isolated *Mukhabarat*. So, the

army's position weakened by the *Mukhabarat* growth, which filled the crucial place once occupied by the army (Moharram, 2006, p. 36). Starting from this point, autocrats were able to apply successful coup-proofing strategies using the *Mukhabarat* as a cornerstone.



4.2. Syrian Security Apparatus

4.2.1. Historical Background

The origins of the Syrian *Mukhabarat* lie within a department called the Special Services that existed during the French Mandate period. At the same time, it did not function as a security office, but also as publicity, propaganda, and disinformation. Due to the occupation policy in Syria, the French Mandate administration made its powerful office, named the Special Services, the backbone of its rule. The Service was turned loose to use detention without trial, torture, and summary execution; indeed, it was ‘subject to little legal restraint setting grim precedents for the post-colonial future’ (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 38).

After independence, the security apparatus benefited from political instability to expand its sphere of influence. The generals who seized power through successive coups, starting with Husni al-Zaim in 1949, moved quickly towards transparent authoritarian practices. They unified police and the other affiliated agencies like border police under the army's authority, outlawed political groups, imposed press restrictions, and expanded the function and power of the *Mukhabarat* (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 38). The increasing importance of the Second Bureau, which constituted the intelligence-security branch of the Army General Staff, at the expense of the civilian General Security Department; reflected the central role of the Syrian army in the political arena at that time (Rathmell, 1995).

To develop their competence and professionalism, the Syrian army and security apparatus benefitted from some German officers looking for a haven after WWII. They contributed to training and administrating the SSA. Due to their Nazis’ background and consequent circumstances, they remained far from directly acting in Syrian political life. Ultimately, in 1954, the eight years of work of German military and security advisors in Syria had ended when the German armed forces terminated its reestablishment (Chen, 2017).

The Eastern European states, particularly the Soviet Union and Romania, were vital and influential suppliers of arms, equipment, and technical support to the Syrian army and

Mukhabarat. This lasted from the mid-1950s until the end of the 20th century, although their role was bound to training and consultancy.

By the mid-1950s, though Syria had restored civilian rule, Military Security had become the vital security organization. In that period, the leader of Military Security was Col. Abd al-Hamid al-Sarraaj. Within the leadership of al-Sarraaj, MSD was famous for its brutal performance and wielded substantial influence over the consecutive governments at that time.

In the period of Syrian–Egyptian unification (1958-1961), Jamal Abd al-Nasir, the President, appointed his loyalist man, al-Sarraaj, as the Minister of the Interior for the Syrian region, with a task for supervising the security sector. As a result, al-Sarraaj became the first significant figure in the Syrian territory. His promotion was a kind of reward from Abd-al-Nasir for al-Sarraaj's role in pushing the government toward unification.

At that time, Abd-al-Nasir encouraged al-Sarraaj to crush suspected dissidents in the government and military, which he did ruthlessly. As part of this, Al-Sarraaj gave the *Mukhabarat* a wide-ranging authority to stamp out the opponents and to practice torture systematically for the first time since independence (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 38). With many Egyptian *Mukhabarat* personnel being sent to Syria, the Syrian *Mukhabarat* was improved to be more effective through the assistance of the Egyptians.

As a result, al-Sarraaj's leadership is considered a watershed in the history of the Syrian security apparatus, as he established a new phase in which *Mukhabarat* became an independent factor interfering in Syrian internal and external politics, rather than the official government, transcending the law, and working around a patrimonial structure.

In 1963, the Baathist military regime took power and depended on the *Mukhabarat* to strengthen its rule. During Jadid period in the late 1960s, security chief Abd al-Karim al-Jundi, head of the Baath Party's Bureau of National Security, threatened the country with abductions and torture (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 38).

Syrian Security Apparatus was not absent from Syrian politics before the 1970s, and its tools and structure had developed with every transition of power. Lastly, al-Assad succeeded in recruiting and subjecting the *Mukhabarat*, such that power was no longer shared out of the

President's control. *Mukhabarat* became instead a tool for him to use, which can now be used as a repressive executive body to serve the dictator coup-proofing policy.

Since coming to the presidential office on 16 November 1970, al-Assad enlarged the number, size, and powers of the security and quasi-security agencies. He also placed security leaders of these agencies within the most critical decision-making level in the regime. During the period (1963–1970), al-Assad was a military general personally supervised Air Security. So, when he came to power, he was considered as a security man, since he was a man of a military background too.

During the above-mentioned expansion, al-Assad rebuilt the security apparatus on two pillars: the first of which was the four traditional *Mukhabarat* directorates: Political, Air, State, and Military. Just before al-Assad came to power, there were only two administrations: one military and one civilian. SSD was considered a civilian institution, while MSD was a military one. On the other hand, al-Assad reconfigured the previous two Directorates. In addition, he expanded these bodies to four, by establishing the Directorate of Political Security and increasing the powers and functions of Air Security to become equal to other directorates, yet more reliable. In his new policy, al-Assad assigned to these bodies the dominant portion of the security work, including the routine security tasks. Moreover, he supervised it directly by himself via the Presidential Security Office

Secondly, new praetorian and paramilitary units with security missions were built, such as the Defense Brigade, and Presidential Guard. They combined the functions of commando and intelligence. Consequently, special 'political' military units were formed. These new units and their powerful subdivisions too were directed straight through the Presidential Security Office formed by al-Assad in the mid-1970s, that means they didn't follow the official hierarchy (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 39).

Moreover, al-Assad established, in 1971, another paramilitary organization, namely the Defense Brigades, and gave his brother Rifaat -whom he trusted the most at the time- its reins. The Brigades were initially meant to protect government headquarters against military coups and could win an expanded authority in addition to build up within it a strong intelligence division. By the late of 70s, it numbered more than 10000 men, mostly heavily armed commandos. its

intimidating manner and infamy for violence and exploitation made the Brigades the most hated and feared of all the security forces (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 38).

In 1976, al-Assad created a second praetorian guard under a relative by marriage, Adnan Makhluf. This agency was known as the Presidential Guard and was charged with al-Assad's direct personal security. Moreover, it quickly grew up to 10000 guards or more, and it included both paramilitary and intelligence branches (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 39). In this context, the Syrian interference in Lebanon that began in 1975, hastened the development of special commando forces.

Over the years, separate agencies have expanded, chiefs have changed, and targets have differed. However, the security system could always endure and remain central to the rule of al-Assad (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 39). After 13 November 1970, Hafiz al-Assad relied mainly on his own officers' faction to maintain his power. This included several senior officers who, together with their supporters, held strategically important positions in the Syrian armed forces.

Although officers belonging to non-Alawite religious communities might have occupied high military functions as a matter of convention. Still, they were in no position to offer a serious threat to an *Alawite* President, whose personal followers were well able to deal with any sign of insurrection. Non-Alawite high-ranking officers such as Mustafa Talas and Naji Jamil were able to exercise considerable power so long as they followed the President's policies. However, in case non-Alawite high-ranking officers deviate from the President's line in any way, they could easily be pushed aside by his military supporters-mainly Alawite, because they did not have strong personal ties in the Army and security apparatus.

Regarding opponents, Al-Assad policy was focused on neutralizing them, whether they were individuals or institutions. Former opponents were exploited and employed to serve and work within and harmonize with al-Assad's policies. In doing so, he benefited from opponent's strengths and avoided their problems. In the case of this policy failed for any reason, al-Assad did not hesitate to eliminate them.

Al-Assad did not deal with the prior security apparatus in only one way. Instead, he kept some security institutions, approving their structure such as the Bureau of National Security, and developed others to fit his new security strategy. For example, he limited the previous powers of the National Security Bureau, giving it new tasks while establishing new security institutions like the Presidential Security Office and the military units with crucial security missions like Defense Brigades. However, al-Assad improved the security apparatus gradually once he confronted a new challenge that required improvement and response.

As for the security apparatus's leaders, al-Assad chose them according to personal reliability, not on a meritocratic, doctrinal, professional, or pure sectarian basis. These leaders were kept in charge as long as they remained sincerely and strictly loyal to President al-Assad and his agenda. Which resulted in the dismissal of his own brother Rifaat from the Defense Brigades. Due to the diversity of security services and the direct supervision by the Presidential Security Office, no one posed an immediate future threat to al-Assad, so there was no need to replace leaders regularly.

Thus, the figures and institutions of this security structure remained static most of al-Assad's rule, except for his brother Rifaat and the Defense Brigades. The security structure remained for so long even after the death of Hafiz and the rule of his son Bashar. This reflects the regime's powerful coup-proofing strategy that provides long-lived decades of stability.

Since the establishment of the Syrian Security Apparatus, it reflected the power structure in the country. Through the French Mandate, military rule, civilian rule, unification period, Baath period, and lastly Hafiz al-Assad era, SSA.

4.2.2. The SSA structure¹

Due to the secretive nature of the Syrian regime, there are not many formal documents that display the structure, function, or leaders of the security apparatus. One of the few legal documents available was the legislative decree establishing the State Security Directorate. Although unfortunately, there was no such document for the PSD or ASD. However, according

¹ The information and mentioned in this section (from page 46 to 65) was obtained mainly from the in-depth interviews, and any other additional published source for the information will be mentioned.

to the in-depth interviews and the available sources, which counted the security agencies constituting the Syrian Security Apparatus, the chart of SSA in Hafiz al-Assad's era was as the figure 1²



² sources of this figure are the in-depth interviews especially with the academic officer who was teaching for long time in the Officers Academic College.

PRESIDENT

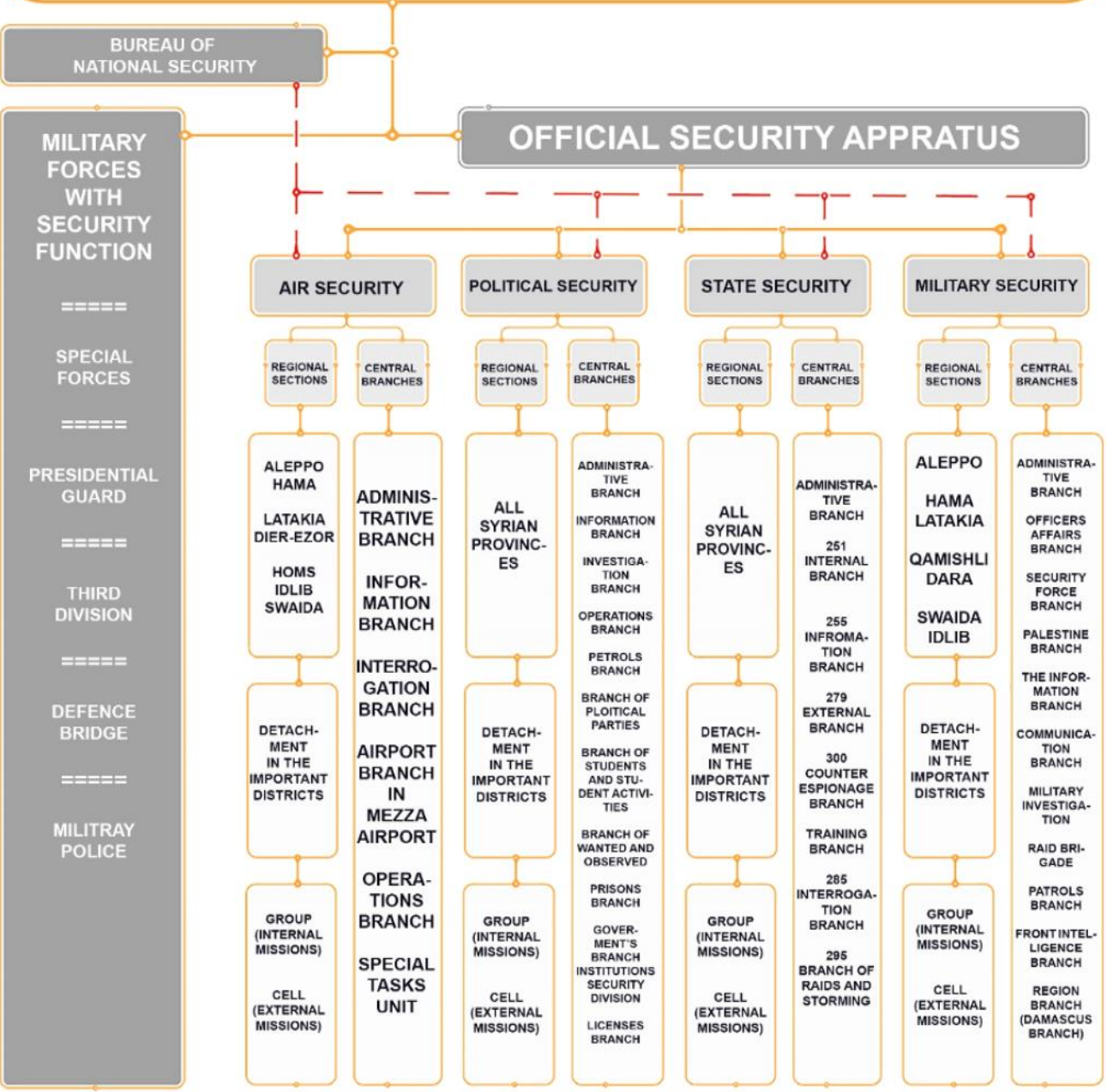


Figure 1 the structure of Syrian security apparatus

4.2.3. High-Level Security Command

Two authorities, the Presidential Security Office and Bureau of National Security, controlled the Syrian *Mukhabarat*. However, they were not equally as important. The first one was considered more important than the second was, to the extent that it supervised, directed, and gave orders to the second one. Regardless, they both were at the top of the security hierarchy, and they shared the supervision of security activities in Syria.

Work was divided between the high-level offices in the security apparatus. The PSO supervised directly and precisely the security agencies, quasi-security agencies, and the BNS itself, on an ongoing basis. On the other side, the BNS took over the development of security strategies, coordinated between security agencies, unified the work standards, and implemented a framework to prevent duplicating efforts and take contradictory measures. It can explain as follows:

First, the Presidential Security Office also called 'the Special Office'; the office's Chairman was al-Assad himself, who was singularly responsible for supervising the other agencies. Other than al-Assad, the PSO personnel could be considered secretarial, responsible for regulating the president's supervision of the security apparatus. Meanwhile, it was independent of the chief bureau of the president, which was responsible for the president's public affairs, outside those concerning security.

Nevertheless, PSO supervised, connected, and directly ordered the security directorate's leaders. It also leads the BNS and the QSA, which received orders now from PSO as well. Several reliable officers close to the president had worked in PSO, whose mission was just to transmit presidential orders and carry out the tasks related to those orders.

In addition to the supervision process, the office also had its own small intelligence and security agencies, such as the Foreign Liaison Office, which oversaw the activities of foreign diplomats inside Syria. Moreover, the office managed, supervised, and controlled the security of the presidential headquarters. In general, PSO work varied between the transfer of the president's orders, supervision of SSA, and monitoring of sensitive files. Yet, there was no direct executive security function, such as detention and interrogation.

The second side of the High-Level Security Command was the Bureau of National Security. This agency, in theory, was built to control all other security services. Abd al-Karim al-Jundi established the Bureau of National Security in the late 1960s as one of the Baath Party's

Regional Command offices. This command had a prominent role in Syrian political life since the time, meaning that BNS perched on the hierarchy of the security sector in Syria.

Al-Jundi was an influential figure in Syrian political life. He was a member of the Military Committee of the Baath Party and was loyal to Salah Jadid, Hafiz al-Assad's opponent at that stage. Al-Jundi continued to head the Bureau of National Security until March 1969. This was when al-Assad began to make preemptive moves to protect himself ahead of the expected decisions of the Tenth Extraordinary Regional Congress of the Baath Party that was dominated by Salah Jadid. Al-Assad's predictions came true, as they decided at that Congress to relieve al-Assad of command. But later without al-Jundi and the Bureau of National Security, they could not apply their decisions.

In beginning his protection against such decisions, al-Assad removed Jadid's strong man, Abd al-Karim al-Jundi, who committed suicide after al-Assad's military supporters surrounded his headquarters. The BNS was so crucial that getting rid of it tilted the balance towards al-Assad, who seized full power later in the Corrective Movement in 1970.

Additionally, al-Assad applied the same pragmatic policy with the Bureau of National Security. As he changed the structure and personnel by clawing out the BNS which had been experiencing an eclipse since that time. BNS was no longer involved in interrogations, detention, and no armed forces belonging to them. However, it still has a big security-and intelligence-collecting role. It played a vital role through getting benefits from Baath party's members. Due to the dependence on the strong ties with huge numbers of Baath members, the antennae of the Bureau could reach into marginal neighborhoods, small towns, and even remote rural areas, which the rest of *Mukhabarat* could not cover effectively (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992).

Consequently, The National Security Bureau in the al-Assad era was entrusted with the task of forming security policies in Syria. It stayed following the Regional Command of the Baath Party, met weekly and submitted periodic general reports and summaries of reports of other security agencies. It also decided many key issues related to the country's security and coordinated between the security apparatus components.

The Bureau expanded again and gained new important responsibilities of evaluation candidates to the Syrian Parliament (named People's Assembly) and other important councils in the country. This included reviewing potential candidates for Local Councils, Trade Union, and Professional Associations Councils, etc.

4.2.3. Official Security Agencies

The Syrian 'official' regime's intelligence-security bodies were four, two civilians (SSD, PSD) and two militaries (MSD, ASD). The word 'official' does not mean that others were not official, yet it reflects the direct and daily-basis nature of its security missions.

Each of those agencies had a certain hierarchy, in which it was divided into branches, and each branch was divided into detachments. Each division according to specializations: either into cells (in the case of external missions) or into groups (in internal assignments). Therefore, the hierarchical division from top to bottom was as follows: the security apparatus, directorate branch, detachment, group, or cell (depending on the mission).

In the cases of MSD and SSD, each branch had a triple identification number, but in the cases of ASD and PSD, the branch was known only by a name. These branches were, in turn, categorized into central branches in the capital, Damascus, in addition to regional branches in the governorates.

First, Military Security Division (Military Security, MSD) that experienced many transformations. While the roots of the Military Security: Deuxième Bureau go back to the French Mandate era (1923–1943), its current structure was established in 1969. In theory, MSD was supervised by the Ministry of Defense administratively, in relation to financial dependence and armaments. In practice, MSD was engaged with choosing the Defense Minister, Chiefs of Staff, their deputies and determining the assignment of military officers and personnel.

Meanwhile, the President himself appointed the MSD's head. Right after its establishment, the MSD was in charge of the security military units, military personnel, border guards, the security of officers, and military installations. MSD oversaw the military police, which provided security members to protect the homes and offices of the regime's elite. The MSD's main task was to safeguard the army's loyalty.

The MSD, which was considered as the Syrian army's executive security arm in society, that was based on the motto: protect the military institution, its principles, and values. At the same time, this approach was used to justify its role and intervention in civilians' personal affairs.

In theory, MSD's branch in Lebanon was charged to supervise and monitor Syrian military and security affairs affiliated with Syrian military units existing in Lebanon. In

practice, the MSD branch, led by colonel Ghazi Kenan, was so powerful to direct Syrian politics in Lebanon and rule Lebanese political, security, and foreign affairs (Rathmell,1995, p:7).

The twelve Central branches of military security were located in Damascus, they varied in their responsibilities to definite duties. These were the Palestine Branch, Administrative Branch, Officers' Affairs Branch, Forces Security Branch, Information Branch, Technical Branch, Communication Branch, Wireless Waves Branch, Military Investigation, Raid Brigade, Patrols Branch, Front Intelligence Branch, and Damascus Governorate Branch.

The most important branch was the Palestine Branch, the oldest and the largest of this apparatus, almost equal in size to a single security apparatus. Palestine Branch's activities were both internal and external. It was assumed that this branch specialized in actions against Israel and matters related to Palestinian Movements, hence its name. Still, during the era of Hafiz al-Assad, the scope of its duties was enlarged. For example, there was an extensive new counter-terrorism section with activity including chasing down Islamists and either infiltrating, attempting to control, or direct them, if necessary, creating fake Islamist movements. In addition, the Palestine branch had a unit called the Fedayeen Officer Unit, which was specialized in the affairs of Palestinian armed activities operating from Syria.

Furthermore, the Officers' Affairs Branch, otherwise known as Officers' Security or Officers Interrogation Branch, supervised army officers and student officers. It was a powerful branch because all Syrian officers were under its supervision regardless of rank. When interrogated, the officer would be made to remove his strips, losing the protection of his status. Due to the importance of this Branch, its head could directly communicate and submit his reports to the President.

Likewise, the Forces Security Branch was in charge of monitoring all military units, apart from the Air Force and Air Defense as the latter is affiliated with ASD. This branch contained files for soldiers, military camps, and military units to explain their status, preparedness, and allegiance to the regime. It distributes its informants among the soldiers to monitor any signs of rebellions or insurrections.

In every military formation, there was a Security Officer directly connected and related to the Forces Security Branch. Yet these security officers were affiliated to the Security Force Branch more than they were to their military unit's Commander. Taking into consideration the authority of *Mukhabarat* on the army, each movement and decision in the armed forces must

take place with approval and coordination with Forces Security Branch. Consequently, the Security Officer in any military unit is more powerful than the unit commanders themselves. Meanwhile, it adopts supervisory authority over Military Police.

Due to the crucial and significant status of Damascus in any coup attempts, MSD contained a Branch specialized for the capital's affairs, named Damascus Branch (also known as the Region Branch). It was a unique branch since other security directorates, i.e., ASD, SSD, PSD, did not have a central unit responsible for the capital. In other directorates of SSA, regional branches located over the governorate except for Damascus, which solely had the higher and more essential headquarters i.e., the Central Branches. However, central branches are more important than Regional Branches.

The only branch in MSD that focused on external security threats was the Front Intelligence Branch, also known as Sa'sa' Branch. It was specialized for intelligence affairs of the Syrian occupied territories in the Golan Heights, Syrian military units situated in the front against Israel, and monitoring the International Emergency Forces operating there.

Other branches, such as Wireless Waves, Technical Branch, Communication Branch, were specialized in monitoring internal and external communications. While Raid Brigade and Patrols Branch responsible for raids and arrest activities in the directorate.

The Regional branches of the MSD consisted of the branches of Aleppo, Hasaka (located in Qamishli), Idlib, Hama, Latakia, Homs, and the Desert (also called Palmyra Branch). As outlined, they spread in different governorates in a way not subjected to the administrative division of the governorates but according to the military blocks, which were built accordingly with military priorities and importance.

Second, the Air Security Division (Air Security, ASD) which possibly was the country's most powerful security directorate, due to the direct supervision of Hafiz al-Assad himself, since he was the Air Force commander. After al-Assad became president in 1970, he appointed al-Khouli, a top advisor to him, as the head of ASD.

The relation between al-Assad and al-Khouli constituted a rare combination in the Syrian political arena. As to a point a Sunni command to the ASD is not common, given that most of ASD's staff were primarily from the Alawite sect, followed by the rest of the minorities. This is consistent with this research's hypothesis that al-Assad took advantage of the Alawite sect.

Whereas, the only exception to this, when he sought for on other factors such as trustful and reliable persons, regardless of their sect.

ASD security missions began with somewhat traditional responsibilities concerning Syria's air force and its national civilian airline. With the ascension to the directorship of General al-Khouli in the mid-1970s. With an office near the presidential palace, he was in charge of the security of al-Assad in Damascus and Latakia. Despite its name, it is mainly involved with issues other than air force intelligence security ones and took an active part in the suppression Muslim Brotherhood rebellion in the 1980s. Additionally, agents of this directorate were frequently stationed in Syrian embassies or external offices of the Syrian national airline.

On the one hand, many characters gave ASD particular importance. Initially, Air Security had remained comparatively small in terms of staff, forming an elite cadre within the SSA. The vast majority of its members belonged to the Alawites sect, the most reliable community for al-Assad's regime. On the other hand, very little information was known about ASD, due to the secret nature of its missions, and the scarcity of accidental contact with civilians.

Air Security had widely varied responsibilities, including the security of presidential headquarters, in coordination with PSO. Gathering internal and external political intelligence, security liaison with Iran and Libya, and Syrian military attaché accompanying Syrian embassies abroad.

Central branches of ASD were located in Damascus. ASD had relatively fewer central branches in comparison to SSD, since the former is responsible only for qualitative duties and operations. The central branches of ASD are as follows: Airport Branch, Operations Branch, External Operations Branch, Special tasks branch, and Special Tasks Unit.

The Airport Branch was located inside the famous Mazza military airport. It was responsible for airports' security, the safety of the presidential plane, and the President's safety when traveling abroad. Moreover, it has a vital significance as al-Assad used to accomplish his daily duties in Mazza military airport at the time he was the commander of the Syrian Air Forces.

ASD was an intensified, and a qualitative directorate. Thus, it had not any regional branches, but regional sections, which were distributed according to the air forces sectors. Since the Syrian Air Force and Air Defense divided the country into several sectors according to their needs and priorities, each sector had its military Air Forces and its own leadership. Consequently, each regional section in ASD was responsible for both civil and military airports

and air defense bases within the geographical segments. In addition to that, regional branches in ASD had contained files for all officers, soldiers, pilots, and hosts of airports.

The Regional sections were six, including Damascus, Southern Region, Central Region, Northern Region, Eastern Region, and Coastal Region. The first and the second located in Damascus and the others located in Homs, Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, and Latakia, respectively. Nevertheless, it operated in all Syrian territories, let alone external stations. Since each regional section has parallel sub-sections in the governorates that do not have a main regional section. The structure of ASD also includes other detachments and sub-units in different areas, districts, and towns as required.

As in MSD, there was a security officer in every military unit. ASD, by turn, had a security officer in every airport, civilian or military. These officers were connected directly with the ASD sections in which the airport's sector is located. Furthermore, they were related and connected to ASD sections more than with the command of the airport or the air defense base they worked in. The relationship between the *Mukhabarat* and the Army was reflected in the relation between the Security Officer and the Airport Command, which makes the orders made by the airport Security Officer was more potent than the airport chief or air defense formation.

Third, State Security Directorate (SSD, State Security). Which was established in 1969 by legislative decree no 14. According to that decree, SSD was a civilian entity and formally be under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry even though the Ministries of Defense and Interior directed all active military personnel inside of it. Therefore, these officers were directly connected to Ministries they belong to, either Defense or Interior, in financial and organizational matters. SSD was in charge of the civil police and border guards and conducted surveillance over the Baath Party, the civilian bureaucracy, and the public. The SSD was nominally a civilian agency but was in practice a completely autonomous entity, under military leadership and answerable only to the Presidential Security Office without going through any ministry or state institution, except when receiving plans and general instructions from NSB.

The SSD is known for its vast number of civilian contractors and personnel assigned by the Defense and Interior Ministries. In addition to that, SSD's branches had three digits of their own, and its central branches are located exclusively in Damascus. Those branches are as follows: The Internal Branch, External Security Branch. Interrogation Branch, Raids and Storming Branch, Counterespionage, Training Branch, Economic affairs Branch, in addition to

the Regional SSD's branches that spread across all of the Syrian governorates, tracked the administrative division of Syria.

The Internal Branch specialized in monitoring the different political groups, parties, political activities, and armed opposition actions, mainly Islamic currents. Therefore, one of the sections affiliated to it is a section called the Counter-Terrorism Department of a similar one in the Palestine Branch of the Military Security Directorate.

On the other hand, the External Security Branch was responsible for most intelligence activities outside Syria more than any other Syrian security branches. The fundamental difference with external missions of ASD was that the missions of this branch were more like quantitative routine-type missions, rather than qualitative missions. Its activity abroad extends to monitoring expatriates, opposition, Syrian citizens during their Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages.

Internal Branch Reports to the SSD director's office manages all affairs supervised by the director and is involved in all other branches' matters. Alawite people constitute most of those employed in this branch.

Fourth, Political Security Directorate (Political Security, PSD). It was the most active directorate that targeted penetrating society. It was in friction with civilians, widespread among citizens, and covered the entire segments of society. Most citizens' formalities required approval from this directorate, which made it the regime's reservoir for information of the civilian citizens.

This close relation with civilians made it easy for officers and personnel of this Directorate, more than other branches, to abuse and exploit power by bribing and enforcing royalties. Every citizen has a profile within this apparatus, which may contain information about his/her political and religious views, character, social relations, morals, even family relations, and possibly internal marital life. The functions of this apparatus are entirely internal and do not carry out any external activity as practiced by the previous three Directorates.

The twelve central branches of the political directorate located in Damascus. They were Police Security Branch, Information Branch, Prisons Branch, Branch of the Governmental Institutions Security, and Interrogation Branch.

While the Regional Branches of PSD were spread in all provinces of the country following administrative division, these regional branches have a file for each citizen who exists in their area and record every relevant or irrelevant information regarding citizens.

Although each Directorate had unique characters and responsibilities, yet there were some clear similarities in structure and function. Three central branches were common among the four Directorates, which were: The Interior Branch, The Information Branch, and Investigation Branch.

The Interior Branch contained the files of all workers within the Directorate it belonged to, which monitors Directorate workers to prevent any breach, and promotes deportation or transfer of workers within the Directorate. Likewise, the Information Branch specializes in the various studies of the unit and provides it with important information. It contains various sections, such as a section for religions and political parties. The branch also monitors the activities of local and international media platforms in all means (audio, written, and visual). The Investigation Branch served as the primary investigative body for the Directorate, although each central and regional branch had its own interrogation section.

Each of the regional branches contained similar sub-departments to those of the central units located in the capital. They could carry out the same duties and tasks as their corresponding central Branch but within their scope of responsibility. Each component operates and oversees departments, subunits, and departments scattered over their entire region.

4.2.4. Quasi-Security Agencies (QSA)

There is no department or institution in the Syrian state called quasi-security agencies; hence this research uses that term to refer to the five paramilitary commandos and military police services with security missions, namely Special Forces, Presidential Guard, Third Division, Defense Brigades, and Military Police. Al-Assad depended on QSA vigorously and extensively to control sensitive and risky joints in the security system.

The Syrian intervention in Lebanon in 1975 accelerated QSA's expansion and improvement. On the other hand, that intervention prepared QSA for large-scale missions against civilians. In the late 1970s, popular support for the Syrian opposition grew, accompanied by Islamist rebellion. These QSA groups and their intelligence counterparts were given unprecedented power to eliminate the regime's adversaries through mass arrests, torture, collective punishment, and summary executions (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 39).

Al-Assad dealt with QSA units as a safety valve and a solid backline of defense. Thus, they were not in charge of daily security missions as much as their duty is to deal seriously, quickly, and reliably with crucial security points, face emergencies, and potential coups d'états. For that reason, al-Assad permanently assigned its leadership to strongly trusted, loyal military commanders with whom he often had close ties. They were as follows:

First, the Special Forces that were founded in 1968, when Salah Jadid was the most powerful man in Syria. Special Forces being the first parallel military unit, it was built to be as the regime's Praetorian Guard, as its name implies. Special Force was an elite military unit, so its commandos trained specially in addition to its armor, helicopters, weaponry, and paratroopers are Alawites. When al-Assad came to power, he improved the policy of the Quasi-Security Agency by expanding the plurality, dependency and appointed the most trustworthy relatives in their leadership.

From 1978 to 1982, al-Assad exploited these troops to suppress the opposition on numerous critical occasions. In addition to its military counter-insurgency mission. Special Forces acts as an intelligence and police agency. Over the years, it arrested a mass number of people. Since 1985, its security work has focused mainly on Lebanon. As part of its security missions, it detained thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians and was held responsible for many abductions and summary executions (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992).

Second, the Presidential Guard (known as the Republican Guard) founded in 1976. As a result of the Syrian intervention in Lebanon, President al-Assad's popularity declined among some Alawite officers. Hence, the Presidential Guard was initiated in order to secure al-Assad against any potential assassination or coup. Adnan Makhlef, a nephew of al-Assad's wife, headed the agency. And Basil al-Assad, the president's son before he died in a car accident in 1994, had run the Presidential Security, one of the Guard's sub-units responsible for the president's security. Presidential Guard's duties include the protection of the president, as its name refers, and general security in Damascus, a critical task that it shares with other agencies. (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 50)

Thirdly, the 3rd Division of the Army. It was an elite armored force, commanded by famous al-Assad's loyalists Gen. Shafiq Fayyad. Although the Third Division was one formal division of the army, yet distinctive in many aspects. As it was in charge of complicated military maneuvers and internal security actions. The Third Division's strategic location in al-Qutayfah,

characterized by owning vast territories located in between Lebanon and Israel. It commanded the Syrian army entrance to Lebanon, Aleppo, and suffocated the Hama uprising. Because the Third Division played such a significant political role, it can be placed alongside the Special Forces and the Defense Brigades. Since the mid-80s, its rigorous intelligence role was restricted and reduced, besides it is rarely involved in arrests, interrogation, or similar activities (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 50).

Fourth, the Defense Brigades (its full name was Revolutionary Defense Brigades). Founded in 1971, these forces, led by Rifaat al-Assad, located in the al-Mezze near Damascus, close by the Mezza airport, which was like an operation room for al-Assad since he was the Command of Air Force. The Defense Brigades' essential mission was to protect sensitive government headquarters from possible coups and shield the regime against internal dissent and potential coup-makers. However, when Rifaat turned it against his brother, the Brigades were soon disbanded.

The Defense Brigades was distinctive from all other military and security forces even in its unique uniform. They were manned by Alawites and to a lesser extent other minority more than any other military unit. They significantly grown during the late 1970s and became looks like an entire army division at the peak of their power in the early 1980s. The Brigades had an active security department with branches for investigation, arrest, and interrogation (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 50).

After Rifaat's failed attempt to control power by taking advantage of Hafiz al-Assad's sickness, Hafiz al-Assad regained the reins, and stabilized his rule over the country, he decided to promptly exile Rifaat out of the country, and dissolve the Defense Brigades, and gradually distribute its soldiers to other military units.

Fifth, the Military Police, which its main mission was to ensure enforcement of military regulations over the military elements. As well as providing security for elements of the ruling elite and the Office of the Chief of Reconnaissance. Its relationship with security missions was the subject of controversy among scholars of the Syrian security issue, but what gave it particular significance relating to the coup-proofing policy were two reasons: first, its authority over conscripts and soldiers to implement military laws and ensure their commitment to them. Second, it was supervised by military security. Theoretically, that fell under the jurisdiction of

the Defense Ministry and the General Staff. Nevertheless, having a headquarters located nearby the Military Security. The latter did some sort of supervisory function over the Military Police.

4.2.5. Features of al-Assad's Security Strategy

Due to its secrecy and privacy, it is difficult to give a strict and limited description of the security apparatus in an authoritarian regime, such as Syrian *Mukhabarat*. However, it is possible to draw outlines and describe the main characteristics of the SSA, through the information mentioned in the previous sections. By analyzing the structure, function, and staff and taking into account the history of the SSA. Thanks to the in-depth interviews conducted throughout this research, that fills the gap of data and information. Hence, the following characteristics can be stressed:

First, al-Assad did not build a professional security sector, but separated security-intelligence executive agencies, supervised directly by himself via the PSO. Al-Assad divided security missions among these agencies. In case of missions that did not require heavy military power, -such as those related to civilian or individual military officers- al-Assad depended on four security directorates responsible for routine security missions, which requires constant vigilance and monitoring.

The four security directorates were mostly manned by Alawites. Meanwhile, he relied on protecting sensitive security joints on QSA, which were heavy-armed paramilitary, led by the most loyal and close officers to al-Assad, mainly composed of his cousins, and his intimate friends. Just like in the case of his brother Rifaat (before his rebellion attempt). Although most leaders of QSA were Alawites, the sectarian background of its members varied, as what matters here is the leadership, not the elements.

Security tasks are often distributed horizontally, according to geographical regions. Hence, one branch is responsible for a specific sector or region for all kinds of security missions it contains, whether related to military security tasks, political party tasks, or smuggling. However, that did not mean preventing another branch from working in the same area, especially if the mission was so sensitive or essential. Considering that distributing missions were done in a way that none of the security agencies may pose a potential threat to the regime. Furthermore, it

creates some simple sort of checks and balances that pushes agencies to exercise a supervisory role over each other.

Theoretically, every security directorate was established for specific reasons, such as the case with SSD that specialized in securing the army. While practically, there were no specializations when it comes to the regime's own security. In this case, all security agencies were addressed. For example, controlling security with a broad crossing was not influenced by one authority; security supervision on border crossings were distributed horizontally, that every border crossing was subordinate to a specific security agency. Therefore, crossings were distributed among security directorates with quota bases. In this regard, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq is subordinate to Air Security, Military Security, Political Security, and State Security respectively. That distribution led to confusion and chaos in the security policy and opened the door for more corruption. Thus, if the mission is sensitive, then the same task is assigned to more than one security branch at the expense of applying a unifying security policy.

Second, the *Mukhabarat* is the strongest institutions within the state, except for the President. There was no voice louder than the regime's security, even if it was the voice of the security leaders themselves. This was reflected by giving the security apparatus public authority to interrogate, detain, and wiretap without any restrictions. Meanwhile, there was no kind of commitment to the law in detaining, penetrating citizens' privacy rights, and torturing. For serving the regime's coup-proofing policy, the *Mukhabarat* exceeded legal authorities and jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the *Mukhabarat* usually interferes in areas out of its disciplines.

An example of this expanded authority of the *Mukhabarat* was wiretapping. Secret surveillance operations of suspects had expanded illegally without abiding by legal boundaries that security agencies often could wiretap communications of any person or entity. Even if the reason is narrow personal interest for some security staff, and not related to public affairs.

Third, Systematic corruption that used to serve security missions and coup-proofing policy. SSA used the powers and authorities granted to it to bypass the law, monitor citizens and officials, investigate to strengthen its authority. The direct involvement of SSA in the tasks of the anti-drug units, border guards, police, and all other institutions, including civilian and service-providing bureaus, as well as the judicial system, aided in the proliferation of methods that lead to personal advantage and pecuniary gain while turning a blind eye to administrative, professional, and even criminal offenses. At the same time, this conduct deepened the culture of

favoritism, malicious informant reporting and led security personnel to exploit their authority that was sanctioned by the regime, namely to blackmail businesspeople, manufacturers, and investors.

Corruption was a strategic tactic for the security services, which is represented in penetrating the solid strata of society, weakening social movements, and recruiting some opponents. These activities are the result of a lack of supervision authority and accountability mechanisms over security personnel, as well as the fact that any disciplinary measures are limited to internal procedures that are subject to the will of security senior officers.

Forth, terrifying as a deterrence policy that was used systematically since intimidation was used as a method of deterrence. This made citizens give away many political rights for fear of falling into security prohibitions. Citizens stopped criticizing the authority's policies and performance to avoid being accused of criticizing the President himself. Praise and reverence of the regime, especially the president, should be said.

Fifth, sectarianism and the employment of the Alawite in sensitive sectors. To maintain control, chiefs of security services and commissioned officers are appointed on a sectarian and confessional basis. For example, the majority of officers and important personnel in vital departments and divisions of various security directorates are Alawites, as are the majority of staff and officers in ASD. Other minorities, as well, are appointed to major influential jobs on a secondary level. Appointments are still made on the basis of loyalty rather than merit. There are nonetheless sensitive positions within the security services that must remain dominated by Alawites, such as the Internal Branch of SSD, Palestine Branch of MSD. It has been impossible for any non-Alawite to head any of these branches.

To maintain his power, al-Assad relied heavily on his own officers' sect. This included many senior officers who held strategically essential positions in Syria's Armed Forces, along with their supporters, who were available in the patrimonial structure. Non-Alawite Officers held high military positions as a matter of form. Still, they posed no serious threat to an Alawite President, whose personal followers were well equipped to deal with any sign of insurgency.

Seventh, patrimonial form of ruling and structuring the SSA. Since the security apparatus' structure took the shape of a hierarchical one. In which the President sits at the head of the security apparatus hierarchy and directly supervises the drawing up of policies and executive agencies simultaneously. The leaders of the security branches received a direct order from him.

Therefore, the management process of the security apparatus is closer to the patrimonial than to a hierarchical system of management.

Eighth, the geographical distribution of regional security branches within Syria prevails the importance of the capital Damascus. As shown in Figure 2³, the distribution of this apparatus in Syria, the two directorates with the non-military origin, state security, and political security, followed the division of the province and put a branch in every governorate.



³ Source of the map was from the in-depth interviews.

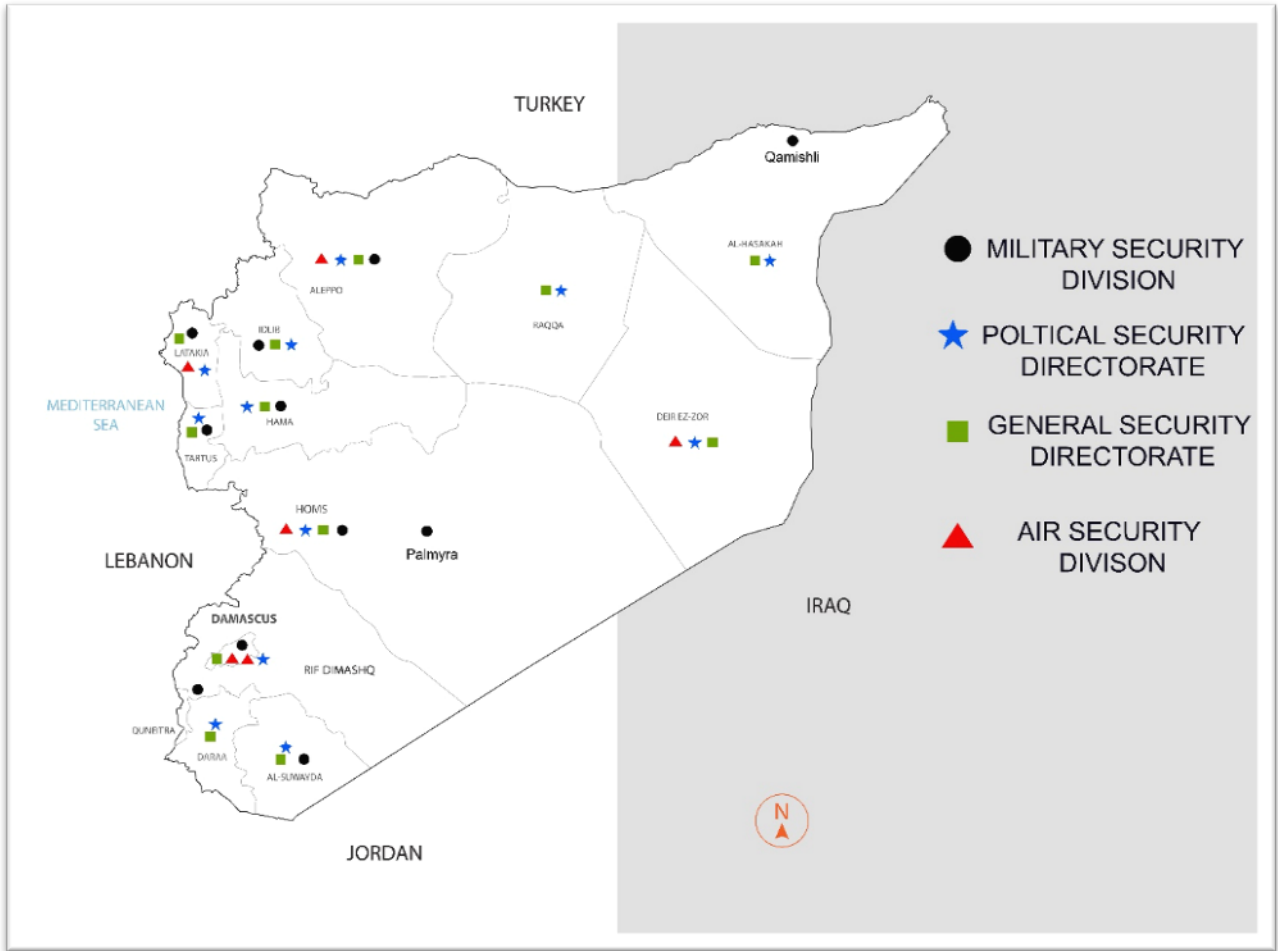


Figure 3 the geographical distribution of security regional branches within Syria

Table 1 interprets the distribution of regional and central security Branches on Syrian governorates and its relationship with squire and population of each governorate. However, the size of the branches varied widely since some units were massive in size and personnel proportionally to the directorate size and population. However, Table 1 contains just the number of Branches due to the difficulty, if not impossible, to measure the size of each branch unless the regime itself publishes it in a way or another. Nevertheless, it is helpful to depend on the number of branches, while the huge branches located in Damascus emphasize the result of the table that these branches distributed to protect Damascus.

percentage of branches	Total Branches	Central Branches	Regional Branches	Percentage to total of squire	Percentage to Total of Population	Governorate name
53.3	40	35	5	10.5	15.2	Damascus ⁴
5.3	4		4	9.9	23.7	Aleppo
5.3	4		4	22.6	8.9	Homs
4.0	3		3	4.8	8.7	Hama
4.0	3		3	3.3	8.4	Idlib
5.3	4		4	1.2	5.2	Latakia
4.0	3		3	12.5	6.5	Hasaka
4.0	3		3	17.7	6.8	Deir ez-Zor
2.7	2		2	2	4.5	Daraa
2.7	2		2	10.5	4	Raqqa
4.0	3		3	1	4	Tartus
4.0	3		3	3	2.1	As-Suwayda
1.3	1	1	0	1	2	Quneitra
100	75	35	40	100	100	total

Table 1 Relative distribution of security Branches in governorates⁵

⁴ Damascus contains refers to tow directorates: Damascus the capital and the governorate of Damascus' countryside

In this table, although Damascus represented 10.5% and 15.2% of the total area and population of Syria, respectively, it contained 53.3% of entire security branches. Therefore, Damascus had more than half of the total number of security branches in all of Syria. On the contrary, there was only one branch in the Quneitra governorate, the front line with Israel. This shows clearly that the existence of these security Branches is an issue related to the protection of the regime from imminent internal threat, not to monitor external threats. In other words, to serve the coup-proofing policy.

The distribution of regional Branches among the other governorates was not equal also. Only Aleppo, Latakia, and Homs contained regional branches of the four security directorates. Other governorates contained two or three regional Branches according to the significance of the respective governorate. The branches are less in the Eastern half, because Hafiz al-Assad's regime focused on the Western part of Syria for various social and political reasons that are not addressed by this research.

Hafiz al-Assad developed a complex security apparatus that interlinks tasks horizontally and to a less extent vertically. More than one branch is taken in charge of one mission or simultaneously monitoring some areas so that one security agency cannot solely take security decisions. In this case, underperformance also will be quickly revealed. The durability of the apparatus structure for more than thirty years during the reign of Hafiz al-Assad and the continuity during his son Bashar's period, was a clear evidence of its efficiency and strengthens in terms of achieving the system's goals.

To conclude, Syria in al-Assad's era did not have a security sector from a technical viewpoint. The security work in Syria was divided into two categories, supervised directly by al-Assad himself: The first was forces and agencies of control and repression; they were the fourth Official Security Directorates. The second was concerning the QSA, which were military units with security-intelligence functions that bear the responsibility of ensuring the regime's security by holding sensitive and crucial security responsibilities.

⁵Column 1, 2, 3 the website of the Syrian Central Bureau Of Statistics, link: <http://cbssyr.sy/index-EN.htm> ay 24/5/2021, Column 4 from figure 1 and 2, Column 5 from figure 1, Column 6 is the sum of the previous two columns, Column 7 is resulted from division of the branches number in the directorate to the total number of branches in Syria

In that sense, two flaws and deviations could be determined: The first one was related to the security structure in fragmentation, staffing in patrimonial and sectarian manners. Second function and work mechanism implicated insufficient, patrimonialism, fluidity, specialization, regional division. This form of apparatus constructed by the regime helped it in some phases to achieve its coup-proofing policy while serving to limit its progress and development at the same time.

4.3. Coup D'état Attempts in al-Assad's Era

In authoritarian regimes, besides the absence of other aspects of democracy, there was no free and fair election. So inevitably, autocrats will face many popular revolutions or coup d'état attempts, because it will be the only way for positive or negative change; Syria in al-Assad's rule was not an exception.

Hafiz al-Assad was exposed to many coups d'état attempts, assassination attempts, and widespread protests. Moreover, those assassinations affected some close leaders as well. For example, Abdul Halim Khadam, foreign minister, was exposed to one of them in 1977. Nevertheless, the secrecy nature of the regime and the lack of a national archive on the one hand, and the failure of most of these attempts in the early phases, resulted in a lack of information on the subject. In any case, there are three main threats or coup d'état attempts that threatened al-Assad's leadership, which are the 1976 troubles, the Muslim Brotherhood unrest, and the accompanying widespread protests in 1979-1982. Lastly, the Rifaat al-Assad coup attempted in 1986.

The following sections scrutinize how Hafiz al-Assad emerged from each coup attempt stronger than ever, while al-Assad benefited from every crisis in rehabilitating the security system and adapting coup-proofing policy to deal with similar attempts in the future.

4.3.1. The Troubles of 1976

Since he came to power, the first notable threat to al-Assad regime was in April 1976. At that time, many Alawites, Baath's officers and troops were not satisfied with Syrian intervene in Lebanon against the Palestinians and the Lebanese left National Movement traditional allies of

the Syrian Baath regime, and at the same time to support of right-wing Maronite militias (Dam, 2011, p. 71).

Security forces detained many senior officers in April, but unrest extended to several airbases in May. Military Security detained scores of leaders and hundreds of disloyal troops from the end of 1976 until the end of 1977. Following the military uprising, left wing, Palestinian, and Islamist militia groups began attacking government buildings and high-ranking officials (Dam, 2011, p. 71) (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 17).

However, this attempt failed. Almost all the assassins were Alawites. At the time, it was indistinct who is responsible for what, and why it happened, whether it was an internal political opposition against Syria's military intervention in Lebanon, for example, or due to Iraqi Baathist regimes, or even whether they were intended to provoke sectarian divisions (Dam, 2011, p. 72).

Despite what all of this sectarian propaganda might lead to assume, 'the potentially most dangerous opposition to Hafiz al-Assad's regime could be exercised primarily by officers who belonged to the Alawite community and only secondarily by others' (Dam, 2011, p. 72). because the fall of the National Command in February 1966, and more particularly after Hatum's abortive coup, most Baathist officers and civilian party members clustered around either Salah Jadid or Hafiz al-Assad, who were at the time Syria's most important political bosses.

At the time, the liberal peaceful protesters contesting the Syrian intervention in Lebanon increased its calls for greater democracy and more respect for the rule of law (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 17). After opposition voices grew up, al-Assad response in two ways. The first, he established the "Committee for the Investigation of Illegal Profits." In 1977, as a reform initiative. The second and actual reply was to boost the SSA, whereas al-Assad reinforced Presidential Guard and expanded the Defense Brigades commanded by his brother Rifaat. However, these procedures were insufficient to stop assassinations of Alawite officials and regime followers or violent attacks on the state and Baath Party department (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 18).

Al-Assad was in the first years of his rule in this stage, so he was very cautious about using violence, as what he had done in Hama after years. However, in that time, the more under siege al-Assad finds himself, the less restrained SSA, because consequences of using coercion and violence were not fully secured in this stage, and unintended consequences or aftershocks may occur. Nevertheless, after the regime's stability, al-Assad gives orders to the Syrian

Parliament (named People's Assembly) on March 14, 1978, to pass a counter-terrorism law giving SSA broader authorities. A preparation procedure allows SSA to use violence against civilians and opponents (Falgiano & LeMaire, 1992, p. 18).

Although al-Assad's regime, to a very extent, was a minority clique, the second lesson al-Assad learned from this trouble is that the Alawite minority was not by itself alone his shelter from enemies and competitors; yet most important is the personal confidence. Hence, al-Assad gathered a group of trusted persons to serve him, either relative and friends and colleagues, which led to a kind of stability in top high-rank officers.

4.3.2 Muslim Brotherhood and the Events of 1976 -82

Since the early seventies, the only severe internal threat to the Syrian regime was the confrontation with the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood's, *Al-Taliaa* wing. The conflict reached a peak with the insurrection in Hama in February 1982, in which the Syrian QSA unites bloodily suppressed it (Dam, 2011, p. 105).

Al-Taliaa seemed ready to lead the country into a Lebanese-style civil war if this were the only way to bring down al-Assad regime. Therefore, they tried to drag the power into an armed confrontation with the people hoping that this would lead to cracking the authority; *Al-Taliaa* depended on the Sunni majority in the army, which, as they thought, its loyalty to the regime could, under sufficient pressure, be broken. At any rate, *Al-Taliaa's* assumptions were wrong. Since officers of the most sensitive and strategically critical armed units were Alawite, added to that al-Assad regime policy put handled the responsibility to Alawite majority QSA unites to deal with widespread unrest.

The Muslim Brotherhood was not, at the time, a part of the power structure and did not possess weapons or immune geographical territories, not even had a high capability of mobilization and mass influence such Nasserist had at previous time. Perhaps this was what made Hafiz al-Assad, with his military and security background, not paying attention to them until the danger was aggravated. They were able to mobilize segments of citizens, benefiting from accumulating a state of discontent, general widespread resentment and Sunni grievance. As well as primary religious organization to pose an imminent threat to the regime, which took many years to contain.

Hafiz al-Assad exploited the weak political performance, divisions within the Muslim Brotherhood, and their sectarian rhetoric to fuel minorities and some secular and non-religious parties and groups, making them line up alongside him. Al-Assad needed to eliminate violence, excessive force, and terrorism only, so he did not use dialogue and ideological rhetoric, but just oppression, which al-Assad did not hesitate to use.

Hafiz al-Assad's learned lesson from the Muslim Brotherhood rebellion was to pre-empt social organization networks and dismantle them in their infancy, at a relatively low cost. Al-Assad chased and pursued the Muslim Brotherhood and similar affiliation, in the highlights of his policy 'drying the springs of terror' before becoming a serious threat that entails high costs to solve. Therefore, al-Assad assigned the security services to track down social networks and dismantle them before they escalate. It was likewise preventing gatherings except within narrow limits that do not allow the establishment of popular leaderships. On the other hand, *Mukhabarat* tightens the freedom of religious and community leaders trying to link them to the regime, either through corruption networks and favoritism or by offering official positions such as the Syrian Parliament (People's Assembly), Baath Party and Regional Command. These positions were just a shape and did not pose a potential threat to the regime.

4.3.3 Rifaat Al-Assad's Rebellion

Since challenges to al-Assad's regime in 1976, troubles came mainly from within Alawite officers, the same minority of the President. Consequently, al-Assad depended more on leaders with close affinities, such as family, tribe, or town. Even al-Assad activated his five brothers who occupied eminent prominent positions in the army, the Baath party, or the government. Rifaat, Hafiz's young brother, was foremost. After the November 1970 coup, Rifaat was in command of the Defense Brigades (Saraya al-Difat) (Dam, 2011, p. 70).

Rifaat's problem was his corruption. As Van Dam (2011, p. 70) noticed, "that the failure of the anti-corruption campaign was yet another example of the paradigmatic situation in which the Syrian Baathist regime had repeatedly found itself since its seizure of power in 1963". This was due to the composition of the hardcore of the political power elite: i.e., political Baathist leaders. Although those elites were pursuing an ideology away from regional, tribal, and

sectarian loyalties, they found themselves more or less forced to revert to those loyalties whenever it came to power to get the robustness needed to realize its ideology.

The problem became a vicious circle, on one side ideological parties such as the Baath is entailing to implement its ideology. Baath party's ideology was against sectarian, regional, and tribal loyalties. On the other side, power is essential to make the necessary drastic social changes. Nevertheless, this power needs the robustness and solidarity of the social ties on those same loyalties thus hindering their suppression (Dam, 2011, p. 73).

This problem or paradox is most obvious and apparent in Rifaat al-Assad's case, who constructed the Defense Brigades on a clear sectarian soul. Most of its members are from the Alawite sect and have a small percentage of the denominations. Rifaat al-Assad was a well-known case of corruption, taking advantage of the protection of his brother Hafiz. Members of the Defense Brigades have a high level of moral transgressions in corruption and sectarianism, such as the exposure of women in public streets and the removal of their headscarves by force. By his behavior, Rifaat has fueled a state of prevalent tension that urged his brother Hafiz al-Assad to go out on official TV and apologize for such mistake, which he promised not repeating such incidents.

The state of populism, the Patrimonial structure, and the blind loyalty upon which the Defense Brigades were built, made them the shelter that Hafiz al-Assad resorted to during the time of unrest, to quell it with the cruelty that Defense Brigades is famous in and make it the stick with which he threatens his opponents.

The problem with the Defense Brigades began to appear when all the internal opponents were defeated, so the Defense Brigades itself became the opponent. When Rifaat exploited the president's sickness and coma, to gather military and security leaders around him or at least neutralize them and prepare to enter Damascus and seize it. Defense Brigades, led by Rifaat had constituted the most significant military unite in Damascus at the time.

On the last of February 1984, al-Assad engaged QSA forces on Damascus, reinforcing the Republican Guard, which was already in the capital, with Special Forces and portions of the 3rd Armored Division. The confrontation developed to another stage on 30 March. As Rifaat ordered Defense Brigades to move into Damascus and seized power by force.

Sheiks of the second minority, Murshidiyya and the sheiks of the Alawites, as well as leaders of QSA tipped the scales of confrontation in favor of Hafiz al-Assad; the conflict ended

only after a face-to-face meeting in which Rifaat accepted his brother resumption in the Presidency position (Quinlivan, 1999). After that, Rifaat was quietly banished outside the country. Meanwhile, Defense Brigades components was distributed gradually to other military unites.

Hafiz learned from his brother's rebellion not to allow any sub-loyalty and lobbies to be a potential future threat, even if they were for his closest relatives. Consequently, al-Assad charged Ali Habib to dismantle the official army units and para-military units, except for the Republican Guard. To reconfigure the army according to purely military organizational rules. Al-Assad was convinced that these gatherings were harmful in this stage, and he did not need it more. After the regime's stability reached a high level, the remarkable loyalty became more harmful than good.

Confident that he undertook this operation after it was confirmed that the significant dangers to his rule had disappeared, and the matter had settled for him. Thus, these Patrimonial gatherings would be like a time bomb that might explode at any moment, as happened with his brother Rifaat.

It is obvious how al-Assad benefited from the three serious threats and coup attempts to empower and evaluate his coup-proofing policy. First after the troubles of Alawite officers, al-Assad learned to be cautious when depending on his sect, so he decreased the circle to the close confident figures. Meanwhile, after the troubles of Muslim Brotherhood, al-Assad decide to fully control society and clamped down social networks to not allow them to be a possible future threat for the regime. Lastly, Rifaat troubles pushed Hafiz al-Assad to improve professionalism in the army. It is easy to notice that the need pushed al-Assad to follow these coup-proofing tactics gradually and he improved coup-proofing policy through trial-and-error.

4.4. Syrian Security Apparatus and Coup-proofing Strategy

To prevent military coups, governments gave their *Mukhabarat* many responsibilities and duties related to the army, which were necessary for the state's security but could no longer be trusted by the military. Thus, *Mukhabarat's* power grew in both the social and military spheres. The *Mukhabarat* reduced the threat of a military coup in two critical ways: Military Security to monitor soldiers and ensuring their loyalty to the leadership, and secondly, by redistributing

many traditional military roles and powers among *Mukhabarat* services (Moharram, 2006, p. 43).

As previously stated, the Syrian *Mukhabarat's* primary mission is not to ensure national security but to apply a successful coup-proofing strategy. That application is a situation or decision-useful to protect the President so that intelligence services act based on or supervise the implementation or even force others to do so.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the main coup tactics can be classified according to the role and position of the security apparatus. In the Syrian case, it can be classified to the following: first, tactics and methods related to security apparatus structure and composition. Second, tactics that security apparatus implemented in its relationship with other state institutions, tactics that it oversees its application to the people. Third, tactics related to implementing external missions and proxy wars.

4.4.1. Syrian Apparatus Structure and Coup-proofing

The first coup-proofing technique was related to the structure of the security apparatus. The form of QSA unites to use the Alawite minority to mobilize its elements, as they are considered *al-Asabiyya* (the clique) of the regime according to Ibn Haldun's terminology. Alawite Baathist officers was dominating Syrian political arena since 1963, before al-Assad's presidency. Alawite's domination was strengthened after November 1970 when al-Assad made his coup.

For many reasons, it can be stated that the Alawite community in total did not rule Syria. Nevertheless, effective participation in the regime was restricted to a limited tribally and regionally linked part of the Alawite sect. large portion of Alawites could profit from this situation since of a greater or lesser degree of sectarian favoritism practiced by Alawite of the ruling elite. Thus, the result was to consolidate Alawites sectarian character in the rule (Dam, 2011, p. 100).

Another coup-proofing tactic related to the structure of the security apparatus was the diversity of security agencies and branches. The competition among *Mukhabarat* services is encouraged to produce positive rivalry and ensure that any security agency could not become too powerful to constitute a threat. In theory, if several agencies gather information, a broader

intelligence picture can be presented to decision-makers. Syria is estimated to have around 165 *Mukhabarat* branch. The number of overlapping *Mukhabarat* services makes it hard to determine their precise roles, actions, personnel, and many of Syria's security agencies that have immediate access to Hafiz al-Assad.

One of the essential tools enabled al-Assad to apply a successful coup-proofing strategy, was utilizing the money in one way or another. Syria was not a prosperous, rentier state like Gulf countries, although it had diversity in resources, but corruption and lousy abuse of resources prevented performing a stable economy.

Consequently, to fund the regime's coup-proofing policy, the regime had to use procedures other than direct payment. The first method was legal and illegal importing permits. Which could provide considerable advantages, and the Syrian regime used to have complete control to distribute them officially or nonofficial. Smuggling was the prominent and most famous example. Drugs, luxury goods, cigarettes, and all ways of smuggling had been under the control of SSA officers, and they exploited it to build economic corruption networks and personal benefits at the same time (Quinlivan, 1999).

The *Mukhabarat* managed the two files efficiently and effectively. It is getting benefit from the nearly total takeover of the state institutions. Besides, the regime also used corruption and favoritism to a vast degree as means of control. By exploiting its powers in issuing licenses, granting security approvals, and recruiting informants to build these networks and employ them in the coup-proofing policy. The regime was riddled with informal clientelist networks, often based on family, tribe, region, and religion. At one extreme, the President's immediate circle appropriates enormous wealth by dint of its ability to 'broker' major business deals (i.e., block them unless substantial kickbacks are paid) and oversee illicit trade and smuggling (George, 2003).

4.4.2. The Relationships between SSA, Other Syrian Apparatuses and Authorities

Due to OSA and QSA authorities, the *Mukhabarat* could constitute a threat to the President himself. Because there was little restraint to practice power, the *Mukhabarat* had

significant influence within the state and society. So long as the *Mukhabarat* remains loyal to the regime, there were few restraints on its behavior (Moharram, 2006, p. 54).

For coup-proofing policy, the Syrian regime gave *Mukhabarat* many responsibilities and duties related to the army since it could no longer trust the army. Consequently, *Mukhabarat* grew in both social and military spheres. The *Mukhabarat* reduced the threat of the military to the least in many ways (Moharram, 2006, p. 43).

In all military units, there was a Security Officer with a high military rank but less than one of the unit's commander. After the security study, the officer was appointed as a security officer, and he/she underwent security courses; SSA supervised these officers' work and ordered them directly. In turn, these officers reported to SSA about each detail in the military unit in a daily basis.

In airports and air defense units, security officers are supervised by Air Security, while in the rest of the army, Military Security was in charge of overseeing the Security Officers. This was with attention to the fact that all security branches could request any information they wanted from any Security Officer, as the Security Officer was subject to the authority of all security branches simultaneously.

Security Officers had broad powers and authorities. Given the requirement for the approval of SSA to military decisions in unite, that made the army units commanders themselves need the support of Security Officers. The military commander cannot take any essential and strategic decision, but rather moving military unite without the approval of the Security Officer.

These procedures, by sum, made the SSA the actual commander of the army in all levels of command. Moreover, it has isolated the generals of the military from political life. This supervision made the generals unable to make crucial decisions; thus, it took from them the ability to recruit human and material resources to carry out a possible coup. Consequently, the danger of the army from carrying out a military coup was secured.

With emptying the Baath Party from the mass ideological mobilization, as authoritarian regimes' unwillingness and inability to mobilize the masses, limiting leadership style of the state apparatus to the pragmatic, practical mentality. In addition to the negative sequence to Baath singularity in the Syrian political arena. So that, Hafiz al-Assad , in practice, transformed the Baath Party into a standard state institution, like other state institutions. Still, it was distinguished from others by absolute loyalty, widespread, and no productive work.

The relationship of the SSA with the Baath Party could be clearly described as a direct supervision from SSA. As the Bureau of National Security supervised, the central party institutions and the regional security branches watched and exploited the governorates' party's members. The main goal of this supervision was to ease SSA's access and penetration into each small portion of that society. Hence, BNS allocated positions in Baath councils to the most cooperative members as a kind of reward.

The policy of writing reports to SSA agencies to inform about violations in the social sphere was marked the relationship between citizens and SSA. Any person frequently attending the security branches would be directly tagged as an informant by his surroundings because there was no reason for hesitation unless he/she cooperated with SSA.

In Syria, citizens were the weakest link in the circle of influence and power, unless he was close to a strong authority; hence, the *Mukhabarat* had no restriction to use its authority in torturing and interrogation even recruiting citizens to work with them by force.

4.4.3 SSA and Proxy Hostile Activities

When al-Assad came to power in 1970, SSA worked actively abroad—involved in guerrilla and criminal activities, particularly those conducted out through proxy parties. In Europe, Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, SSA frequently carried out damaging assassinations and other activities (Rathmell, 1995).

Information and data available about SSA proxy hostile activities, was obtained mainly from the Syrian intelligence activities concerning the terrorism sponsored by Syrian regime. Due to the well documentation of the plentiful Syrian external involvement. Such sponsorship served Syrian purposes; it is both cheap and effective in furthering Syrian political objectives. Its continuous success made proxy hostile activities more and more consistent instrument of the Syrian regime strategy. For example, the Syrian national airline always had been used to smuggle arms to terrorist groups abroad.

Within Syria's *Mukhabarat* sabotaging operation was conducted by Air Force Security, of which Major General Muhammad al-Khawli, an air force officer, served as chief since 1970. Under his command, Air Security operatives had directed at least dozens external subversive operations since late 1986. While the armed allying organization file was under Military Security such as the supervision to Palestinian groups and the PKK.

SSA had a common framework in which it coordinated with several foreign-armed organizations and groups, providing them with specific guidelines, weapons and strategic assistance. The SSA determines which targets and countries are eligible for attack and which are not. To hide their traces, the Syrians employed a complex system of freelancers. This strategy gave the factor of vagueness, which prevents targeted countries from making punitive political decisions toward Syria. Thus, though Syrian intelligence personnel's efforts to hide their involvement in terrorism are not always successful, they were sufficient to preserve the Syrian regime.

On the other side Hafiz al-Assad found in the PKK another successful card to practice pressure against Turkey. The PKK was displaced from Turkey after 1980, so al-Assad found a viable future investment used as a pressure card. Al-Assad gave the PKK shelter and training camps in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, which was under Syrian direct control at the time. Al-Assad gave orders to military security to support PKK military activities, with the assistance of some Palestinian factions. The PKK launched its war against the Turkish state in 1984. Between 1992-1996, the PKK-Turkey war was at its most intense period. The PKK waged a campaign of violence that included both targeted and indiscriminate aspects (Orton, n.d.).

Although PKK was declared as a terrorist organization by the European Union, NATO, and most Western governments, and the United States (Orton, n.d.). However, that did not restrain al-Assad from exploiting them as a proxy to practice pressure on Turkey. Furthermore, al-Assad's support to PKK was clear, since when Turkey threatened Syria, immediately Turkey could detain Ocalan. The PKK file ended for a long time until his son Bashar al-Assad reinvested in PKK after the Arab Spring.

Through all these external arms of security apparatus outside the Syrian border, al-Assad built a successful foreign policy, increasing his internal and external influence and tightened upon his enemies. Added to that, al-Assad well-understanding of international relations, his ability to escape from an open confrontation, the use of agents, assassinations, and the ability to enter any alliance that serves his interest regardless of ideological or moral compatibility. In addition, al-Assad allied with the Maronite right in Lebanon against the Palestinian organizations and the Lebanese leftwing, which is supposed to be the closest ideology to the Baathist ideology.

4.5. The Decision-making Process in SSA

4.5.1. Decision-making Levels in Al-Assad's Regime

In al-Assad's power hierarchy, four levels were discernible. The first is primarily related to the broad trend of policy or the central topics in the regime such as security, intelligence, military or foreign affairs. All the critical threads are concentrated in Hafiz al-Assad's personal supervising (Batatu, 1999, p. 206).

On the second level, there was the anonymous, informal tight circle of command around al-Assad. It was composed of heads of the critical security network commander such as commanders of QSA, OSA, and politically significant commanders. Each of which operates independently, have unique responsibilities, and keep a careful eye on everything in the country, which is significance to the administration (Batatu, 1999, p. 207).

In this level were al-Assad's close assistances, which contains members of both the overt and covert ruling structures. Obviously, al-Assad was not alone at the leading, nor did he operate in a vacuum. An elite cadre that was assisting him in the regime's administration surrounded him. The weight someone holds in the close circle is frequently due to his standing and personal effect on al-Assad and, rather than his position in the regime. In some way, this inner circle represented the prominent bodies in power because of those whom al-Assad trusted would oversee sensitive positions.

The Baath Party Command and some other social Alawite sheikh's leaders stood on the third level. The importance of its member more minor than the previous level, as it contained some social leaders from the Alawite sect and others who supported al-Assad. They were close because their support in times of need stemmed from influence had to many Alawite followers, the crucial sect in the al-Assad regime (Batatu, 1999, p. 207). Such social support was reflected in arming Peasants' Union members in Latakia in 1982 and stood by the regime side during the Muslim Brotherhood unrests.

While there is no doubt that the Baath Party had by 1978 developed into the central political organ in Syria, its power and authority were constrained by several factors (Dawisha, 1978, p. 344). However, the regime still needs the leaders of the Baath party as an ideological justification and for some social support inside Syria and abroad. Additionally, Security

Apparatus benefited from this level, not because of their military or security competence, but because of the ability of these formations to penetrate society segments and prevent the occurrence of substantial social groups opposing the regime, as happened in 1982.

Higher bureaucrats, Ministers, governorates, governors, members of executive boards of local councils, and leaders of the party's supplementary mass organizations and their subordinate organs make up the fourth level in which some open debate is permitted. It is also acceptable to express mild criticism of the way some policies are executed. This did not contradict al-Assad's goals but rather aids him in formulating more viable or meaningful policies and using his power more fluidly and intelligently. He kept them all in line by holding the right balance between the various institutions. He remains above criticism, of course, and his preeminent position is beyond question (Batatu, 1999, p. 206).

4.5.2. Security Decision-Making in Al-Assad's Regime

Al-Assad linked the security decision at all levels to his person, as he supervised and issued his orders through the Presidential Security Office, which he managed and communicated directly and daily with the leaders of the security branches. In addition, al-Assad built the pyramid of security services to be practical of two levels, of which were the president at the upper level and the rest of the branches and directorates at the other executive level. So, the security agencies became like isolated islands connected only to al-Assad directly, reporting and taking feedback from him.

In this sense, the National Security Office aimed to develop plans and submitted reports more than a direct supervisory task. And by that, he linked all stages of the decision-making process, from defining goals, security risks, working methods, the staff of the agency, distributing, with his decision responsibilities, and making those devices work in direct contact with him, regardless of the task other agencies perform.

Taking control of the decision-making process and making it under direct and strict supervision by al-Assad himself turned this decision-making process to be the crucial point in al-Assad coup-proofing strategy, whereas al-Assad became like the head and the security agencies like the executing arms. So, this holding process of security decisions made al-Assad benefiting

from coup-proofing policy without burdening him, because the agencies of the Security Apparatus took over the responsibility of implantation.

Holding on to the security decision-making made the policy of the coup successful just because al-Assad is holding on to it. That is restricting and controlling the decisions enabled al-Assad from verifying coup-proofing methods, strategies and staff to only achieve a successful coup-proofing policy not anything else. That lead to decrease the importance of tribal, sectarian and regional consideration in order to serve the strength of coup-proofing strategy.

Lastly, although there was a small secretarial office to assist al-Assad in administrating and supervising security affairs, which was the Presidential Security Office, but dealing with security sector in direct supervision from only one person hinders the development of SSA in a professional and perfect way. Consequently, SSA stayed unsophisticated, patrimonial, and non-specialty but rather security division built on sectorial and geographical basis. Maybe al-Assad was conscious to these defects, but the priority was to coup-proofing affairs not productivity.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The Syrian regime during the era of Hafiz al-Assad exemplified a typical form of an authoritarian regime, with its full-fledged characteristics that illustrate what is mentioned in academic resources and textbooks about classic authoritarian regimes. Yet, Syria's al-Assad was also unique in various manners due to its peculiarity and the extreme level of authoritarianism displayed in it. This is also applied to the coup-proofing policy that the regime had followed, which had common characteristics with the coup-proofing policy used in other countries.

Interestingly, in the three decades in which Syria was ruled by al-Assad, it cannot be compared with its most similar neighbors. That is to say, Syrian authoritarianism, security, coup-proofing policies, and the decision-making process had a lot to do with the personality of Hafiz al-Assad, who entirely controlled the regime. Al-Assad was so intelligent, firm, and pragmatic that he could transform many of the state's weaknesses into points of strength and overcome difficult stages in Syria's history, using both legitimate and illegal means. All of that left an indelible stain on the security apparatus and state structure as a whole.

Although authoritarianism had started in Syria before the era of Hafiz al-Assad, he deeply instilled it in the state and society. One way al-Assad achieved this was through legitimizing authoritarianism. The emergency law remained active for nearly all his ruling era. At the same time, he issued a legislative decree to place regions under military control and established the Baath party constitutionally in the power of the state and society. On the other hand, applying practical authoritarianism at all levels of leadership, thereby 'sabotaging accountability'. Al-Assad ensured that nobody in Syria could criticize or reject his domination over the country, which ended up with a full dictatorship, zero accountability, and eventually a hereditary rule.

Looking at authoritarianism as a practice, it was active and practiced at all levels of authority. As per law and practice, al-Assad dominated executive, legislative and judicial

powers; he also directly supervised the work of the army and security apparatus. His brother Rifaat's coup attempt taught al-Assad to only trust himself, when it come to the regime's command level.

The second circle of power, represented by the leaders of the *Mukhabarat* and the army, was confined to a group of nearly twenty men, with close associates to al-Assad. Those leaders remained in this circle as long as they were sincerely loyal to the President. Additionally, the Baath Party and its supplementary organizations dominated the third circle as leaders of the state and society. Once again, Hafiz al-Assad was the Assistant Secretary-General of the Baath Party, meaning he exercised full control over the party and its organization too.

A small margin of freedom remained in the fourth level of the public administration apparatus, represented by ministries and various technocratic institutions. However, due to favoritism and the difficult economic situation Syria experienced at that stage, these institutions did not have sufficient resources to make crucial decisions. Consequently, considering all these levels together, al-Assad was the first and only figure in Syrian politics at the time, representing the ideal autocrat's status.

Like other dictatorships, the coup-proofing policy that Hafiz al-Assad resorted to have a priority in implementation among other state policies. The security apparatus were the primary evidence and the backbone for implementing this policy.

The Alawite minority were most favorable for staffing and the overwhelming percentage of all the elements of sensitive security agencies such as the Air Security and the Defense Brigades. These security apparatuses multiply to nearly dozens of major bodies between official and semi-official, and their tasks are intertwined. Therefore, they exercised a supervisory role over each other. It also played a significant role in indoctrination through incitement and intimidation, and it managed networks of corruption and patronage.

At the same time, conducting proxy hostile activities in Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq, and exploiting Palestinian organizations for the sake of giving the dictator more negotiation papers through which he can expand his regional power and influence. Likewise, it played a role in

spreading terror internally and externally by penetrating terrorist organizations and carrying out external operations and bombings.

All those services provided by the *Mukhabarat* made it a paramount apparatus for the president. As a result, al-Assad gave it preferential benefits to make it easier to perform its tasks, so it was not under the rule of law. Moreover, the best resources were allocated for it, either directly or indirectly, through franchising and ignoring corruption networks. Those networks had also been strengthened and linked to the security apparatus at all levels through economic privileges and authority to grant licenses to the enterprise. They also benefited from the source given to them to observe, arrest, and even assassinate those who did not collaborate with them.

Thus, the security apparatus in Syria has turned into what is called *Mukhabarat*, which was an apparatus aimed to prevent coups by all possible means. So that a complex network of security branches has been built horizontally and vertically that shared tasks and competes in serving al-Assad, as it was an apparatus that was found to protect the autocrat not to threaten.

Taking advantage of the prior security system, Hafiz al-Assad developed the security apparatus in a comprehensive and complex structure the '*Mukhabarat*' building according to strict coup-proofing strategy, also giving it broad powers to monitor all state aspects and institutions. The apparatus itself divided into independent parts so that each one would be a strict watchdog over others, the army, and the society. In addition to this, al-Assad in Syria was the forerunner in establishing Quasi-Security Agencies. They played the role of the safety valve for al-Assad's security strategy. Therefore, the security-decision-making process had been linked on a daily basis to the strategic and tactical level of the Presidential Security Office. Which is the representative of the President himself on security issues. Al-Assad will generally use this process to stabilize the rule and prevent coups at any cost. This office directly and separately executed the security divisions and paramilitary units.

The Presidential Office sits at the head of the security authority hierarchy having direct contact with the leaders of the security branches and the auxiliary security units. That transformed the shape of the security authority hierarchy into a distorted one with only two levels, of which was the level that contains the Presidential office only and another inferior level that contains all other branches and QSA. Consequently, the Presidential Security Office, which

identifies opponents and security threats by itself, defining it as all threats that affect the president or, in other words, coup-proofing policy, starting from the simple community nets based on a religious or regional basis, through the opposition parties, ends to spreading terror among the people, as a way to terrify any potential threat.

The Presidential Security Office also identifies external threats and alliances. As for the internal situation, every citizen is a potential threat until he proves the opposite, which means demonstrating his loyalty to these agencies and cooperating with them in the highlights of coup-proofing policies.

Based on the previous, the *Mukhabarat* security apparatus, in the way it was in the era of Hafiz Al-Assad, was a hindrance to political and social development and destroyed social and political ties. Instead of this, it built distorted relations that go in the direction of serving coup-proofing tactics. This is to say; even loyalty to the home was transformed towards loyalty to the President. Moreover, it played a distinctive role in sabotaging external files that it interfered with, ruining the spirit of resistance to the occupation in Lebanon and among the Palestinian organizations, and even among the Syrians themselves, and spreading the principle of power and benefit instead of truth and justice. It also did not find any embarrassment in supporting sabotage operations, terrorist organizations such as the PKK, and others to obtain more external pressure cards that enhance the influence of Hafiz al-Assad.

Therefore, the adverse side effects of coup-proofing policies gave birth to societal and political imbalances within and outside Syria. At any rate, the solution to such dilemmas lies in building a professional and institutional security-intelligence apparatus that is not patrimonial. The function of protecting national security, not protecting the president, works according to the administrative hierarchy of state institutions and is subject to the law, respects human rights, dominated by loyalty to the homeland instead of persons.

Similarly, the democratic transformation in Syria and authoritarianism included transparency, institutionalization, and power-sharing relies on the security apparatus, which therefore has to work like any other state institutions, i.e., to protect the people, not its executioners, who need fundamental and substantial changes in structure, function, and decision-making process.

On the ground, that decision-making process is the mastermind and blueprint, whether it is positive or negative. Therefore, the correction begins from this decision-making process. The main aim for security apparatus must be protecting national security, not personal security. Because that will correct the process of defining its aims, enemies, and objectives, passing through Subject to the law and employing the most qualified and technocrats in it instead of favoritism and narrow sectarian affiliations, to end the era of patrimonial construction towards an effective institutional one.



ABBREVIATIONS

Al-Assad	Hafiz al-Assad, the president of Syrian Arab Republic in the period 1970-2000
SSA	Syrian security apparatus
MSD	The Military Security Division (Arabic: شعبة المخابرات العسكرية, Shu'bat al- <i>Mukhabarat</i> al-'Askariyya) called for short "Military Security".
ASD	The Air Force Security Directorate (Arabic: إدارة المخابرات الجوية, Idarat al- <i>Mukhabarat</i> al-Jawiyya).
GSD	The General Security Directorate (Arabic: إِدَارَةُ الْمُخَابِرَاتِ الْعَامَّةِ, 'Idārat al-Mukhābarāt al-'Ammāh) is also known as State Security [Amn al-Dawla],.
PSD	Political Security Directorate (PSD, Arabic: إدارة الأمن السياسي, Idarat al-Amn al-Siyasi). Political Security Division nominally affiliated to the Ministry of the Interior
BNS	Bureau of National Security
PSO	The Presidential Security Bureau, also called as 'the Special Office'
Mukhabarat:	
QSA	quasi-security agencies
OSA	Official security agencies
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party

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