the US military. For readers who expect more of diversity than mission accomplishment, it remains unclear whether diversity will work in the military. On its own terms, however, \textit{Inclusion in the American Military} certainly exceeds its objectives.

Reviewed by \textbf{Martin Armstrong}  \\ \textit{The Ohio State University}


This book tracks how Egypt’s military leaders have “hegemonized” the country’s politics and economics for over six decades. Inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, in the author’s words:

It traces the genealogies of military penetration into the urban spaces of all social classes of the population toward their full subjugation. It reveals how officers in recent history deployed neoliberal means both to make business profits and to establish constant surveillance and omnipresent control over docile or rebellious masses. While propagating nationalistic rhetoric about guarding it, the Egyptian army has militarized the nation for long decades in the past and diligently continues to do so in the present (p. 2).

Following a chronology, the author recounts how military officers’ power expanded throughout the 1950s and 1960s, even to the chagrin of the principal officer in mufti, President Gamal Abdel-Nasser. Abul-Magd confirms the role played by Nasser’s best friend-turned-foe, Field Marshal ‘Abd al-Hakim ‘Amer, whose control of the armed forces was a serious impediment to Nasser’s Arab socialist goals. If Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, oversaw some demilitarization during his 1970s liberalization of Egypt’s political economy, this situation was greatly altered after Sadat’s 1981 assassination. Hosni Mubarak allowed the charismatic Field Marshal, ‘Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazala, to expand greatly the military’s role in the production of civilian goods during the 1980s. This set the stage for the emergence of a new “Milbus” class of “neoliberal officers” from the early 1990s onward, with the officers themselves exempted from the usual regulations regarding taxation and labor relations. Retired officers now exercise significant control of Egypt’s economy, but they are also, importantly, omnipresent
throughout the state bureaucracy at the national, provincial, and urban levels—i.e., perfectly placed for critical surveillance purposes.

Abul-Magd has completed an impressive research agenda. Beyond tapping into important secondary sources, she has mined the archives of the mainstream newspapers *al-Ahram* and *al-Gumhurriyya*, and the leftist *al-Abali*, pored over official documents, read the memoirs of former state officials, deconstructed imagery created by popular novels, movies and television series, and skillfully exploited the informational treasure trove of post-2011 “revolutionary” social media. She conducted interviews with a few knowledgeable actors, but the sensitivity of the subject matter—much of which involves corrupt behavior—precluded reliable interviews with former and present officials and/or their business partners. The overall result is a book that is highly descriptive and rich in empirical evidence. It is also a courageous study, as Abul-Magd “names the names” of officers who have, from one sector to the next, seized control of economic activity, as well as vast tracts of land, and exploited military conscripts’ labor largely for their own personal gain.

In my view, by maintaining her Foucauldian-inspired focus on the military state, which she depicts as growing and adapting to achieve a stranglehold on Egypt’s political economy, Abul-Magd creates the impression that Egypt’s political game is monochromatic. Lost, or reduced greatly in significance, is the great variety of actors representing alternative value sets and visions relating to Egypt’s political fate. The genuine socialists of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the participants in the massive 2011 and 2013 revolutionary movements, occupy mere paragraphs or scant pages in this otherwise impressive book. Her analysis has implications for her policy prescriptions, which include divesting the Egyptian military of its business enterprises and curbing the support that current President Sisi’s regime receives from conservative Gulf states or other foreign backers (Russia, France, the IMF, and at times, the United States). No mention is made of the need for the civilian leaders of rival ideological currents to strive for consensus over a political value system.

Egypt is a large, variegated country, with materially powerful upper and middle class actors of diverse Islamist, secular liberal democratic, and right-wing authoritarian orientations. In addition, it retains the concerns held by the 10 percent of the population who are Coptic or other Christians, and by Egyptians who live in fear of expressing their sexual preferences. Furthermore, each of these “camps” possesses its own autonomous human and material resource base that has been mobilized
to offer resistance to, or support of, the military regime. Abul-Magd errs in glossing over the continued strength of these rival currents, especially the Islamist and liberal democratic ones, and in failing to acknowledge the degree to which this divisiveness in the political culture has permitted military officers to retain power. After all, is it not the presence of non-Islamist, pro-secular forces that permits military officers to play upon the Islamist “terror threat”?

Among the book’s minor flaws, which are few in number, Abul-Magd repeatedly refers to President ‘Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi as the fourth officer, following Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak, to take off his uniform and rule Egypt. What of Egypt’s first republican president, Gen. Muhammad Naguib (1952–1954)? I have taught students for decades that one ignores Naguib’s presidency at the peril of incorrectly responding to a Trivial Pursuit question, so I cannot let this pass.

As Egyptians would say, Abul-Magd has a beautiful pen. Her book is logically constructed and lucidly argued. It also enjoys an excellent comparative dimension, both regional and global in nature. She has made an excellent contribution, not just to the MENA literature, but to the body of work on military authoritarian regimes in the world in general, and to the important debate over how best to understand the longevity of such polities.

Reviewed by Kirk J. Beattie
Simmons College


Scholars have paid much attention of late to the growth of far-right politics in Europe, including the electoral victories of right-wing populist parties but also the activities of neo-Nazis and neo-Fascists. Alessandro Orsini, in his ethnographic study of an Italian Fascist militia he calls Sacrifice, is able to lend concrete detail to the scholarly literature. Spending three months as a participant observer in two militia cells, Orsini gathered evidence on everything from the reading habits of militants to the role that extreme sports play within their world. For those interested in how individuals actually live day-to-day according to Fascist ideology, Sacrifice is an important contribution. It will be especially appealing to