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CENTER AND PERIPHERY IN SYRIA: A
POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIC STUDY.

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CENTER AND PERIPHERY IN SYRIA:
A POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIC STUDY

by
Alasdair Duncan Drysdale

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Geography)
in The University of Michigan
1977

Doctoral Committee:

Professor George H. Kish, Chairman
Associate Professor Clement Henry
Professor John F. Kolars
Professor Ann E. Larimore

PREFACE

Throughout this study I have used the Library of Congress system of transliterating Arabic words with only three exceptions. First, place names with commonly accepted English equivalents, specifically Damascus and Aleppo, have been rendered in their more familiar form. Second, in all other Syrian place names sun letters have been elided with their preceding definite articles. This is in keeping with spellings used on maps in the American Geographical Society's Focus on Syria. Finally, diacritical marks have been omitted from the names of Syria's major ethnic groups. A special word is in order concerning the 'Alawis, who have variously also been referred to by others as Alawites, Alaquites, Nosairis, and Ansariyeh. In English quotations, the particular name used by an author has been left in its original form. In translations of French quotations, I have used my preferred rendition of 'Alawi.

Because this study's subject matter ranges over several decades, Syrian province definitions present a special problem. Some provinces were formed only recently, while the names and boundaries of others have changed over the last three decades. I have consistently used present names and, unless otherwise stated, current definitions. There are two exceptions to this rule. First, Ṭarṭūs province, which was formed in 1967, has always been aggregated with its parent al-Lādhiqīyah province to permit time series statistical comparisons. This is of particular importance in this study because both provinces are alike in their predominantly 'Alawi composition. Second, al-Qunayṭirah, most of which has

been Israeli-occupied since 1967, has been aggregated with Dar'ā. Although strictly speaking this larger region is known as the Ḥawrān, I have preferred to call it Dar'ā.

Most of my research was conducted in Lebanon, during better times. There, many Syrians, especially from al-Lādhiqīyah, freely shared their knowledge and offered their help. I am especially grateful to them, for this study would not have been possible without their willing cooperation. Virtually all wished to remain anonymous. I must emphasize, however, that the following interpretation of events in Syria since 1963 is my own and that several Syrians with whom I talked would have variously painted a more and less charitable picture. I am also obliged to the library staff of the American University of Beirut, who cordially drew my attention to much pertinent material. My graduate committee deserve special thanks. George Kish, my chairman, offered a steadying hand and advised and encouraged me at all stages of research. Ann Larimore and John Kolars provided invaluable, incisive criticisms when they were most needed. I would particularly like to thank Clement Henry for going far beyond his call of duty as my cognate advisor. His enthusiasm, stimulation, and inspiration are greatly appreciated. Finally, I am deeply indebted to Catherine Baker, who accompanied me to the Middle East, read drafts of the manuscript, and, with considerable fortitude and patience, typed it.

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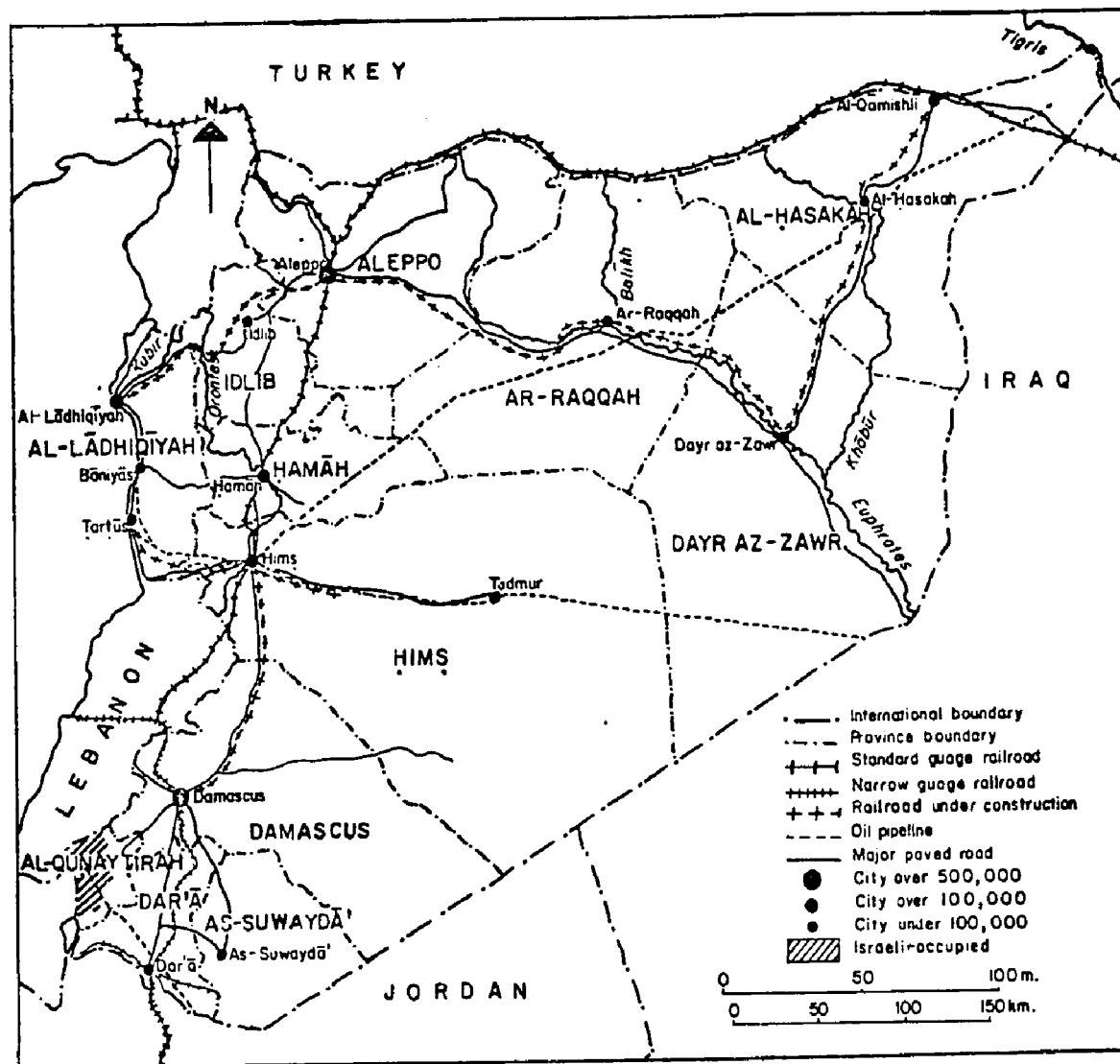
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study broadly examines the causes and consequences of a dramatic change in the geographical composition of the Syrian national political leadership in the mid-1960s.

Historically, the majority of principal decision-making positions within the national political, bureaucratic, and business elites were occupied by persons from Damascus and Aleppo, Syria's major urban centers. The political primacy of the state's core regions, which typified political geographic power relationships within many Third World countries, reflected, confirmed, and exacerbated other geographic inequalities. It exemplified the profound chasm between city and hinterland and center and periphery.

Political power shifted abruptly in 1963, however, after a military coup d'etat. As a result of the coup, "Damascus and, to a lesser extent, Aleppo lost their primacy, while rural areas became much better represented in power than in the past."¹ This geographical revolution, which brought the Ba'th political party to power, was one both of village against city and periphery against center. Led by persons whom Seymour characterized as "dedicated ploughmen,"² it catapulted to national prominence persons from the geographically marginal, relatively backward, and poor provinces of al-Lādhiqīyah, Dar'ā, as-Suwaydā', and Dayr az Zawr (see map 1.1).

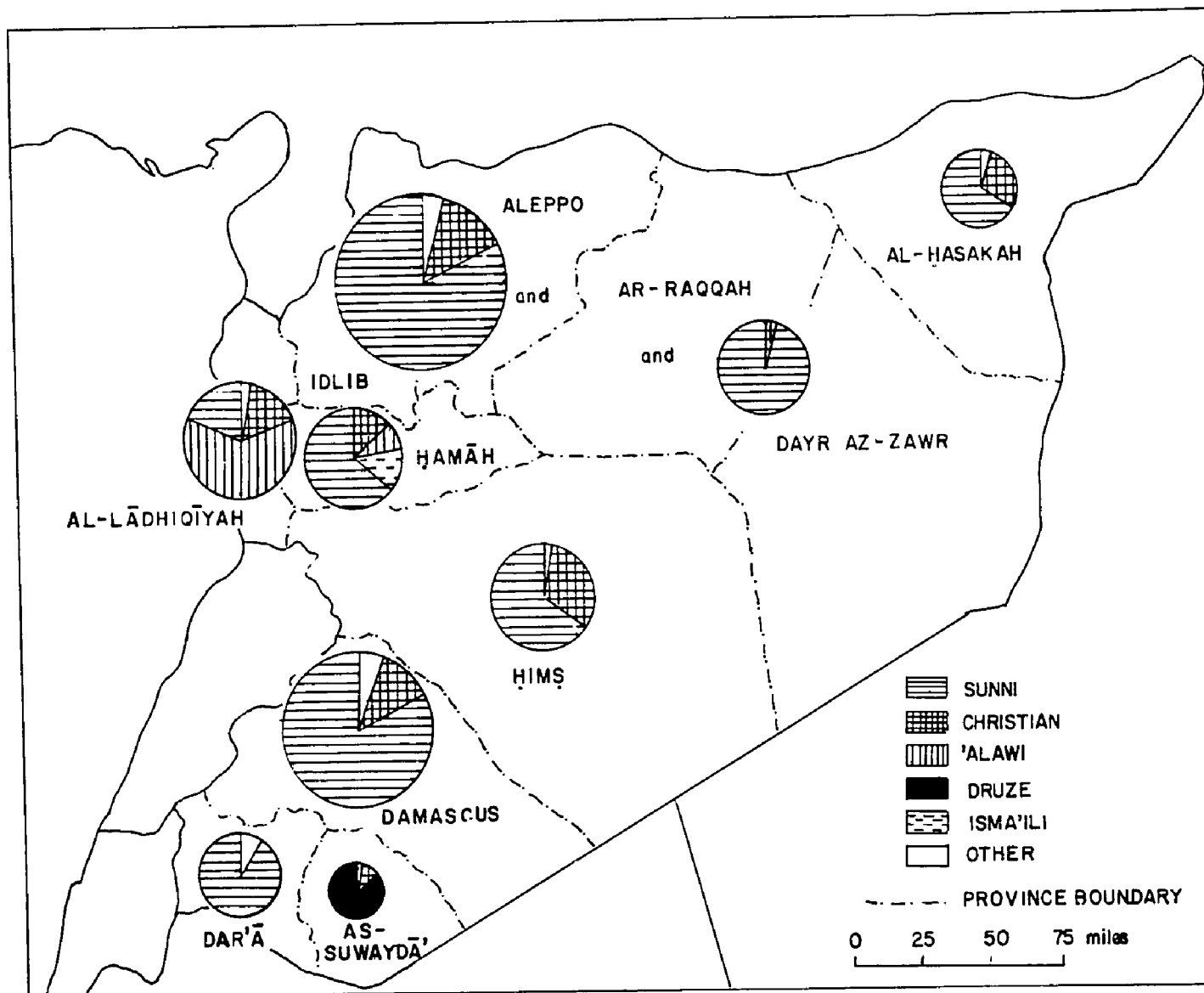


Map. 1.1. Syria: Towns, Provinces, and Communications (Redrawn from "Syria," in Focus on the Middle East, ed. Taylor, p. 152)

The Ba'thi revolution also had a marked sectarian coloration, for geographic center and periphery coincide with the location of the state's religious majority and minority populations.³ Prior to 1963, orthodox Sunni Muslims, who constitute 71 percent of Syria's population of 7 million (est. 1974) but 82 percent of the inhabitants of Damascus and Aleppo provinces, dominated the political system. After 1963, persons from the 'Alawi and, initially, Druze and Isma'ili heterodox Shi'a Muslim sects appeared to control much of the state's governing apparatus.⁴ These regional minorities constitute approximately 11, 3, and 1 percent respectively of the population but form sizable majorities in peripheral al-Lādhiqīyah and as-Suwaydā' provinces (see map 1.2)

Differences between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims are ostensibly doctrinal and rooted in disagreement over the Prophet Muḥammad's rightful heir as the Islamic community's head. Sunnis recognize only four elected successors as caliphs. Shi'a Muslims believe that the caliphate should have passed directly to 'Alī, Muḥammad's son-in-law, and do not accept the legitimacy of the first three caliphs. They differ among themselves, however, about the proper line of succession after 'Alī. The great majority accept twelve successors, or imams. The Isma'ilis, by contrast, are spiritual followers of Isma'il, whom they regard as the seventh imam. The Druzes believe that a series of "hidden" imams followed Isma'il's son and that God last appeared personified in the form of a Fatimid caliph during the eleventh century. The idea of divine emanation reaches its extreme among 'Alawis, to whom Muḥammad was a forerunner of 'Alī.⁵

Many Sunnis view the esoteric beliefs and eclectic practices of these Shi'a splinter groups as heretic, disputing whether they are Muslim at all. Historically persecuted, the latter thus formed discrete



Map. 1.2. Syria: Distribution of Religious Communities (Prepared from data in Baer, Population and Society, p. 109)

geographical, social, and political communities, as well as religious ones.⁶ Functionally, they have therefore been viewed by scholars as distinct ethnic groups, although like the vast majority of Syrian Sunnis they speak Arabic.⁷

The newfound political power of these regional minorities signified a dramatic break with the past, for traditionally they were obdurate, sullen members of the state, if not effectively disenfranchised. Their classically centrifugal, mountain heartlands, the Jabals 'Alawi and Druze, were not finally integrated within Syria until 1942. While Damascus and Aleppo constituted Syria's "land of government," or what in Morocco was termed the bled al-makhzen by the French, they formed its "land of dissidence," or bled al-siba, at least until the early 1950s.

Portraying the Ba'thi revolution solely in narrow geographic and ethnic terms, however, understates the nature and extent of changes which accompanied it. Insofar as one can delimit Marxian classes within Syria, the 1963 coup marked a broad, if ambivalent, class revolution which transcended geographic and ethnic divisions.⁸ Syria's landed aristocracy and parasitic mercantile oligarchy were swept away by land reform and large-scale nationalizations of industry and commerce. Installed in high office in their stead were the sons of peasants and the provincial petite bourgeoisie.

Problem Statement and Hypotheses

This study's principal hypothesis is that the Ba'thi revolution, in spite of its peripheral geographic and ethnic attributes, was above all a nation-building revolution triggered by the inability of Syria's

traditional elite to solve the state's major developmental problems.

Foremost among these problems were: a weak, unstable, and divided political center; the lack of an independent, well-developed Syrian identity; the low level of national integration; and acute social and geographical inequalities of wealth, power, and opportunity.

The geographic periphery has paradoxically provided Syria with a strong governmental center . . . for the first time in centuries--a center which succeeded in overcoming the centrifugal and autonomous tendencies of various social groups and in gaining considerable authority over the population as a whole. Inter-regional fragmentations were abolished, class differences reduced . . . and the feeling of Syrian territorial identification amplified.⁹

Syria's chronic political instability of the 1950s and early 1960s is largely a thing of the past. The regime, particularly since 1970, has won unprecedented, though by no means complete, popular legitimacy. It has used its decade and a half in power to develop a national economic infrastructure and widen political participation. This

has gone far toward bridging the traditional chasm between the city and the country. . . . New organizational linkages . . . now directly and systematically tie political center and periphery together.¹⁰

To the political geographer, this raises a number of questions. Why was Syria's nation-building revolution led by people originating in the geographic periphery, rather than by those from the center as is more usually the case? Why was the traditional elite unable to create a cohesive, stable political geographic community or a strong governmental center? How were the disadvantaged from the periphery able to achieve power, and under what conditions did they attempt to do so? Has the advent to power of leaders from the periphery arrested geographical inequalities? Does the Syrian nation-building experience suggest

that conventional characterizations of the periphery as centrifugal and typically the last region of the state to be suffused with the "state-idea" require revision? Or is Syria an exception to the rule? Did the nation-building impetus come from the periphery because its people alone had the requisite opportunities and motives?

Before specifying this study's subsidiary hypotheses, it is necessary to examine briefly theories of national integration and, specifically, center-periphery interaction.

Nation-building patterns and processes diffuse from, are instigated by, or are contingent upon the existence of a center of one kind or another. To political geographers, this center may be a core area, around which territory accretes or a hinterland evolves. Whittlesey, for example, argued that every state typically "crystallized about a nuclear core that fostered integration," and Pounds and Ball concluded that "most European states . . . grew by a process of accretion from germinal areas."¹¹ More recently, Merritt has suggested that the inter-related spatial concepts of core area, hinterland, and boundary are "central to the study of political integration," for

the core area of a region--whether defined in geographic, economic, linguistic or other terms--serves as the focal point for organizing the life of the rest of the region, known as the hinterland.¹²

Alternatively, the center may be a node, central place, or hierarchy of central places from which public administration, transportation grids, a national educational or economic infrastructure, and the like spread. Here, nation-building is a concomitant to the spatial diffusion of modernization.¹³

The center may also be an abstract, iconographic idea, for there

must be "some concept . . . justifying the existence of (the) . . . state. . . . The state must have a raison d'être."¹⁴ This idea is "the basic centripetal force" that binds together the regions of the state and counteracts centrifugal forces of geographic distance and ethnic heterogeneity.¹⁵

Other social sciences come close to geography here. Sociologists, for example, have posited the existence of a nonspatial center which is vital to the functioning of a society:

Society has a center. There is a central zone in the structure of a society. . . . The central zone is not, as such, a spatially located phenomenon. . . . Its centrality has . . . nothing to do with geometry and little with geography. The center . . . is a phenomenon of the realm of values and beliefs. It is the center of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs which govern society.¹⁶

Political science models of nation-building and political development view center and periphery both as spatial concepts and as metaphors for "a dominant party, coalition, or leadership" and "depressed classes, castes, tribes and so forth."¹⁷ In these models, the formation of such a metaphorical "political center" is a prerequisite to successful nation-building.

Despite varying definitions, there is basic agreement that for a state to function effectively or efficiently, it must have a nucleus or center, be it a core region, central place, state-idea, set of symbols, values, or beliefs, or a nation-building elite.

Political geographers have, by and large, rejected the concept of core area in favor of that of a centripetal state-idea as being basic to nation-building:

A core area is neither sufficient nor essential to the evolution of a nation or state. . . . What is essential is a common idea that convinces the people in all the regions (of the state) that they belong together.¹⁸

While this represents a great advance, still further progress might be achieved by acknowledging more explicitly that the state-idea must have an instrument or instruments to diffuse, propagate, and circulate it. In short, political geography might profitably exploit the concept of the nonspatial "political center." Bergman's inclusion of a chapter on "the instruments of nation-building" in a recent introductory political geography text represents an innovative and encouraging step in this direction.¹⁹

Although Syria manifestly had a core region prior to the Ba'thi revolution, it lacked a basic centripetal state-idea and, equally important, an effective nation-building elite, well-developed political parties, and stable, durable political institutions. My first subsidiary hypothesis, then, is that Syria historically had a weak political center.

It has been one of Syria's misfortunes that those assigned the task of nation-building by default in the postindependence era were wholly indifferent, if not antipathetic, toward the very idea of a Syrian state. They believed Syria to be the illegitimate political geographic offspring of Anglo-French imperialist machinations after World War I. To them, it was an entity which fell far short of the pan-Arab state-idea which prevailed within Syria. In the words of Shishaklī, Syria's president in 1953:

By our Fatherland we mean the current official name for that country which lies within the artificial frontiers drawn up by imperialism when it still had the power to write Arab history.²⁰

Those whose fundamental task it was to prevent "loyalty to any outside state unit" were often the very ones who encouraged such.²¹

Because of Syria's illegitimacy, supra- and subnational political allegiances have traditionally been stronger than national ones. Syria's

pre-Ba'thi political center can thus be viewed in two ways. First, it defined itself in peripheral terms, for political leaders variously looked to more powerful Egypt or Iraq to form the nucleus of a pan-Arab state of which Syria would be a part. In some senses, Syria's functional political center throughout the 1950s lay not in Damascus, but in Cairo or Baghdad.²² Second, Syria's political center was geographically divided. Thus, national power traditionally rotated not only among factions and parties but also between Damascus, Aleppo and, eventually, Ḥamāh. In the decade after independence in 1946, national politics were partly involved with

which of these centers could, through a variety of complicated structural relationships, get a sufficiently predominant portion of the army on its side and . . . make a coup that would give it total (i.e., undifferentiated political) control.²³

Because none could achieve such control, Syria's political center remained "divided, disputed, (and) doubted."²⁴

My second subsidiary hypothesis is that Syria's geographic periphery had greater motivation to form a strong political center and solve the state's major nation-building problems than did the geographic core. Specifically, it had a stronger interest in replacing supra- and subnational allegiances with national ones and reducing geographical inequalities.

Because groups like the 'Alawis, Druzes, and Isma'ilis have traditionally feared being engulfed within a larger pan-Arab state, they have been more receptive to the existence of a separate Syrian state than the Sunni Arab majority. In Syria the state-idea, in other words, has been strongest at the periphery, where in other nations it is normally weakest. Significantly, since 1963 the Syrian Ba'th has been accused of betraying

its unionist principles and cultivating Syria's distinctiveness. Critics have charged it with being Arab nationalist in name, but Syrian nationalist in practice.²⁵

If only because of arithmetic, political regionalism and sectarianism invariably work to the advantage of the majority rather than the minority. So long as geographic and ethnic identities in Syria constituted a primary basis for political allegiances, the heterodox periphery would be effectively excluded from power. To avoid being placed at a perpetual disadvantage, regional minorities had an obvious interest in stressing what united Syrians rather than what divided them. Accordingly, they have been, and still are, attracted to Syria's secularist political parties, such as the Ba'th, in disproportionate numbers. While they used subnational ties to achieve power, and to a lesser degree use them to maintain it, they did more after 1963 to introduce secularist reforms and undermine political regionalism than did the traditional Sunni elite in the previous two decades.

Regional inequalities, especially between center and periphery, are among the most debilitating nation-building problems in Third World countries.²⁶ According to one school of thought, such inequities are transitory and will dissolve in the face of economic development. Regional convergence will occur because of the "tendency of wealth to spill over" from growth areas or because of "trickling down."²⁷ Thus,

regional income inequalities are corrected by a relatively free flow of factors of production, which eventually bring about an equalization of income between center and periphery. No intervention is required in the periphery: economic development will spread automatically from center to peripheral areas.²⁸

Others are less sanguine, viewing center-periphery inequalities as the product of an inherently exploitative relationship between the two

geographic sectors:

Polarizing effects . . . concentrate services and innovations at the center, accentuating the imbalance between center and periphery. Capital movements, trade flows, internal migration and institutional controls all tend to have an absolute negative effect on the rate of growth and development at the periphery.²⁹

Polarizing effects stem from what Ullman described as the self-generating momentum of growth centers,³⁰ or what Myrdal termed cumulative causation, for

once particular regions have by virtue of some initial advantage moved ahead of others . . . new increments of activity and growth will tend to be concentrated in the already expanding regions because of their derived advantages.³¹

Rather than wealth spreading out from center to periphery, various "backwash" effects will frustrate growth at the periphery and sustain it at the center.³²

More important, "the predominance of backwash in the periphery and the concentration of economic and political power in the bureaucratic center are intimately related."³³ Regional inequality is therefore a function of political power as well as free-market economic forces. Friedmann noted one pertinent political geographic consequence of this relationship:

The increasing flow of information from core to periphery, together with aroused awareness of potentially modernizing elites in the periphery of the conditions of their own dependency, produce conflict with core region authorities.³⁴

Dualism between center and periphery can thus be resolved politically by the suppression of peripheral elites by the center; by the neutralization of peripheral elites; by their co-optation; or, finally, by the replacement of center by peripheral elites.³⁵

In Syria, the political center's weakness and fragmentation made

the first three alternatives impractical. The traditional elite had neither the means and will to reduce geographical inequalities nor the ability to cope with the periphery's ensuing discontent. Perhaps the only way in which dualism between center and periphery could be resolved was the periphery's achievement of power.

Organizational Outline

This study's first task is to substantiate that there has indeed been a major change in the geographical composition of Syria's national elite since 1963, for much of what has been written about Syrian politics since the revolution has been based on fragmentary, impressionistic data. Until now, there has been no rigorous, cross-sectional, statistical analysis of elite members' geographical origins, although the Ba'th came to power well over a decade ago. Chapter II corrects this deficiency and assesses the extent to which the periphery has supplanted the center in national power.

Chapter III examines how leaders from the periphery achieved power. Specifically, it analyses pre- and postindependence military recruitment patterns, for ultimately it was the heterodox periphery's overrepresentation in the armed forces that enabled it to supplant the center.³⁶

An examination of the circumstances under which the periphery actively sought power follows. Chapter IV thus describes the traditional political center's response to the state's nation-building problems, the genesis of the Ba'th party, and the ascendance of the periphery within the latter.

The final substantive section, Chapter V, examines the regime's economic and social policies, focusing on whether it has arrested or reduced center-periphery inequalities, as hypothesized above.

Methodology

Three types of primary data are used in this study. They concern the geographic and ethnic composition of the contemporary elite (Chapter II), the geographic and ethnic composition of the armed forces during particular periods (Chapter III), and the spatial distribution of economic and social development under the Ba'thi regime (Chapter V). The collection, compilation, and analysis of each presents unique methodological problems.

All analyses of political elites confront two initial methodological problems. First, an elite must be defined and delineated and criteria for membership within it specified.

Although there is general agreement concerning what constitutes an elite,³⁷ criteria for elite membership have been inconsistent. As a result, units and scales of analysis vary and exhibit an element of arbitrary definition. Frey, for example, examined 2,210 elite members in Turkey, whereas Zonis, Marr, and Dekmejian had elite samples of only 307, 177, and 133 in Iran, Iraq, and Egypt respectively.³⁸

Some limit membership to those holding formal political office. Bayly Winder, for instance, studied only cabinet ministers and parliamentary deputies in Syria.³⁹ The advantages of this approach are twofold. First, the unit of analysis has a precise boundary and elite membership is therefore unambiguous. Second, data are more amenable to statistical description and analysis; this in turn permits both cross-national and cross-time comparisons.

But this approach also has its disadvantages. Zonis notes that there is a tremendous variance between "the distribution of power according to the formal institutions and structures of government and its

actual distribution in the political system."⁴⁰ Thus, in Syria powerful, influential persons may often be grey eminences. Furthermore, too often elaborate statistical descriptions and analyses of political elites reduce research to "a branch of mechanics."⁴¹

An alternative approach to defining elite membership uses looser, functional criteria. Waterbury, for example, defined the Moroccan elite as "a group . . . who . . . have an actual or potential influence on decision-making and the distribution of spoils and patronage," and included within it cabinet ministers, senior civil servants, governors, bank chairmen, prominent businessmen, trade union leaders, and senior military officers.⁴²

This approach, however, reduces, if not eliminates, the possibility of cross-national and time series statistical comparisons. In addition, the use of functional criteria to identify "real" power holders can "open a veritable Pandora's box of arbitrary decisions."⁴³ Nonetheless, it does have the asset of flexibility and open-endedness and minimizes the chances of grey eminences evading scrutiny. Although axiomatic, it must be emphasized that the choice of units for analysis and of criteria for elite membership shape a study's results and conclusions.

For Syria, a combination of both formal and functional methods is most appropriate. Analysis will focus first on the membership of the Regional (Syrian) Command of the Ba'th party. Political power is highly concentrated in this body, and its members possess unequalled power to make decisions affecting the lives of all Syrians. The characteristics, attributes, and orientations of these persons are of paramount importance to any study of the country's elite. Between 1963 and 1973, a total of sixty-two Syrians were members of the Regional Command. Mention must

also be made of an informal group of military officers who, since 1970, have been the power behind the regime, and many of whom are also Regional Command members.

Cabinets form a second level of a hierarchy within the elite. Although they are the face which the regime presents to the world, they are not simply rubber stamps for the Regional Command. Ministers can and do wield considerable power in some areas. While the Regional Command may lay down general policy guidelines, often it is the cabinet minister or his senior civil servants who make, recommend, or implement particular decisions and plans. Nevertheless, some ministers are "serving time" and certain portfolios are little more than sinecures. Between 1966 and 1973, ninety-four Syrians served as cabinet ministers; several of these were also Regional Command members.

While analysis of the Regional Command and government cabinets is largely quantitative, that of other elite positions is necessarily qualitative and impressionistic, for information concerning editors, provincial governors, trade union leaders, director generals of ministries, chairmen of state organizations, and the like is extremely hard to obtain in Syria. Conclusions presented concerning this sector of the national elite are highly tentative and made on the basis of a jigsaw puzzle that will probably forever remain incomplete.

A second methodological problem confronted in any elite analysis is that of establishing limits to the time period being studied. Although a revolution or military coup d'etat may be a convenient starting point and may herald a change in elite composition, it seldom produces a complete turnover in elite membership. At most, turnover and accretion may quicken dramatically during such periods of crisis and change. Where

to end analysis is even more problematical. This is particularly so when an elite remains intact, as in Syria.

Here, analysis of the elite starts in 1963 for the Regional Command and in 1966 for government cabinets. This staggered start requires some explanation. Although the Ba'thi revolution took place in 1963, it was not until a coup d'etat in 1966 that the political power of the heterodox periphery was complete. The 1966 coup represented both a break with the past and a strengthening of changes set in motion by the 1963 revolution.

Between these two revolts, Syria lived under an unconsolidated, factioned regime. Simply and very briefly stated, during these years, two precarious and fluid coalitions representing opposing wings of the Ba'th party waged a protracted and massive power struggle. On the one side were more conservative, traditional Ba'this led by the founders of the party, Michel 'Aflaq and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Biṭār. This wing was comprised largely of urban, bourgeois civilians. The other faction consisted of younger, more radical Ba'this, many of whom were also in the armed forces and came from peripheral provinces. Each of these two sides became entrenched within particular niches of the party's hierarchically structured organization; the more conservative, older Ba'this dominated the party's so-called National Command, their opponents the Regional Command.

The Ba'th, as an all-Arab political party, has branches throughout the Middle East. Each country has a regional (national) command which is in theory subordinate to the one National (international) Command. Because of the relative success of the party in Syria, however, Syrians also dominated the pan-Arab command. Thus, the ideological and generational

conflict within the Syrian Ba'th was played out in an interorganization power struggle. The 1966 coup d'etat marked the final victory of the radical Syrian Regional Command, or the neo-Ba'th as it is sometimes called, over the conservative Arab, but really also Syrian, National Command. It was only with the 1966 coup d'etat that the neo-Ba'th effectively controlled Syria. Only after the coup also did government cabinets have the Regional Command's complete backing. It is for this reason that analysis of the Regional Command's membership begins in 1963 and that of government cabinets only in 1966.

Although the Ba'thi regime remains intact at the time of writing, for convenience I have chosen to end analysis with the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973.

While there have been many studies on Middle Eastern elites in recent years, most have given only passing attention to geographical data.⁴⁴ Furthermore, with the exception of Bayly Winder's analysis of parliamentary deputies and cabinet ministers between 1919 and 1959, there have been virtually no rigorous statistical analyses of Syria's national elite.⁴⁵ In part, this is because most scholars have assumed that "the lack of hard data on Syria is all too apparent."⁴⁶ A recent study of Syria's elite, characterized by such a deficiency, bemoaned the fact that:

Syria is one of the countries of the Middle East of which almost no sociological studies have been carried out in the last fifteen years. . . . Any analysis of the social forces at work in contemporary Syria largely depends on fragmentary data, information that can be gleaned from political and historical studies, and impressions that can be gained from the heavily censored press and from observers. . . . Studies of Syria's former elite are practically non-existent.⁴⁷

Indeed, while studying the preliminary feasibility of conducting an elite analysis, I was frequently given advice echoing a recent article on

opportunities and facilities for research in Syria:

The basic rule is simple: no research pertaining to contemporary politics or having obvious political connotations should be attempted within the borders of Syria. . . . In general, any research which might be construed as casting doubt on the legitimacy or effectiveness of the present regime, as inquiring too closely into the nature of support for or opposition to the regime, or as unduly emphasizing the confessional differences within the country's population, must be forgone.⁴⁸

While it is true that research in or on Syria is beset with difficulties and constraints, western scholars have generally failed to use the abundance of data which, contrary to current opinion, are relatively easily available.

Biographical data on elite members were obtained from a variety of sources. The most important have been Syrian government publications. Specifically, after each new cabinet is formed, the Arab Office for Press and Documentation issues brief biographical sketches. These typically contain the place and date of birth, education, and profession of ministers. Although not all of these documents were obtained during my research, various Lebanese Arabic and French newspapers, such as al-Nahār, al-Ḥayāt, and L'Orient—Le Jour, occasionally publish brief biographical profiles of new ministers and filled in some of the gaps. Together, these sources provided a solid data base. It, in turn, was supplemented and cross-checked by interviews conducted with political figures in Lebanon and by more extensive reading of the Lebanese and Syrian press.

Data on the composition of the Regional Command of the Ba'th party are less readily available. These were mostly obtained by interviews and from newspapers. In addition, since a degree of mobility exists between the Regional Command and cabinets, it was often possible to gather biographical data on Regional Command members after they became ministers.

From all these sources, it was possible to identify with confidence the geographical origins of seventy-nine of the ninety-four Syrians who served as cabinet ministers during the 1966-73 period, and of fifty-four of the sixty-two Regional Command members between 1963 and 1973.

Although this study is primarily concerned with elite members' geographical origins, it also examines other social background characteristics, such as ethnic origin, age, occupation, and socio-economic class, for two reasons. First, an elite member's geographical identity is only one among many identities that may influence his attitudes and behavior. In ignoring the many dimensions of social background and explaining political behavior and policy solely in terms of the geographical makeup of the elite, one might well be making the same sort of mistake made by the man who after getting drunk on scotch and soda, gin and soda, and vodka and soda concluded that soda made him drunk. Second, nongeographical biographical data are examined in order to make this study comparable with other studies on Middle Eastern elites.

Data on the Syrian armed forces' composition are less readily available. This is to be expected, for armed forces are among the most secretive of all institutions. Because of their role in national defense, attempts to examine them are met with profound suspicion.⁴⁹ This is especially so for a military which, like the Syrian, also wields national political power, or is regularly on a war footing. Nevertheless, sufficient data exist for one to make empirical observations and statistical generalization concerning geographic and ethnic recruitment patterns during particular periods.

This information has been compiled from two principal sources.

First, France, as colonial ruler, issued data on the ethnic composition of the Troupes Auxiliaires Syriennes, the nucleus of the modern Syrian army, between 1924 and 1928. These data were published in France's annual reports to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, which supervised colonial rule in the Levant between the two world wars.⁵⁰ Second, data compiled by Van Dusen on officer cadets graduating from the Syrian Military Academy prior to 1951--a remarkable scholarly achievement--have been redacted and placed in a form amenable to statistical analysis. Culled from Syrian official gazettes and miscellaneous other sources, his data are contained within several lengthy appendices (almost forty pages) which list the name, place of birth, and ethnic affiliations of over 700 officer cadets. They are "raw" data in the sense that they are not systematically statistically summarized.⁵¹

The greatest number of methodological problems were associated with research for Chapter V, which examines whether geographical equalization has occurred as a result of the periphery's advent to power.

The Syrian government publishes an abundance of economic and social data and is continually improving and refining methods of collection and compilation. These data are contained in decennial national censuses, annual budgets, five-year development plans, annual statistical abstracts, and various publications of the government Arab Office for Press and Documentation, such as the annual Rapport sur l'économie syrienne and assorted studies on specific facets of economic and social development.

Despite this abundance, there is a conspicuous dearth of geographical, statistically comparable time series data. Thus, although the

1960 national census contains multivariate data which could be used to measure static geographical inequities (using factor analytic techniques or assorted indices of geographical concentration), it is of virtually no use to this study because there are no comparable data for 1970. Only abbreviated, preliminary results of the 1970 national census had been published at the time of my research. Here, I am concerned with measuring inequities through time, rather than inequality per se. The absence of aggregate, geographical, time series multivariate data imposes strict practical limits on what can be done.

Annual budgets and five-year development plans, which under ideal conditions should provide an invaluable geographical data base for testing an equalization hypothesis, are similarly of little direct use. Apart from inconsistent definitions of allocation categories, budgets and plans seldom--and then apparently randomly and arbitrarily--specify the geographical distribution of investments and expenditures. In short, although we know something about how the government spends money, there is absolutely no way of knowing where it spends it. Furthermore, budgets and plans reveal projected allocations rather than actual ones. As will be noted in Chapter V, there is a distinct and often vast difference between intentions and results.

The most important source of quantitative data is the annual Statistical Abstract. These data meet three requirements for operationalizing the equalization hypothesis: they are geographical, comparable over a number of years, and concerned with the distribution of welfare facilities, over which the regime has a degree of locational control. Specifically, they permit one to examine whether regional convergence has occurred in the two key areas of education and health care delivery

in the eight years since the Ba'thi revolution.⁵² Use of simple analytic techniques was considered to be most appropriate, given both the narrow range of variables being examined and the limited reliability of some of the data. Equalization or, conversely, polarization were measured principally by changes in the proportional provincial distribution of facilities over a sixteen-year period, by the proportional provincial distribution of new social welfare infrastructure since 1963, and by spatio-temporal variations in per capita facility provision. Provincial variations in facility growth rates measured and compared changes in the eight years after the Ba'thi revolution with those which occurred in the eight years prior to 1963.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Marcel Colombe, "Remarques sur le Ba'th et les institutions politiques de la Syrie d'aujourd'hui," Orient, no. 37 (1966):59.
2. Martin Seymour, "The Dynamics of Power in Syria since the Break with Egypt," Middle Eastern Studies 6 (1970):38.
3. For succinct descriptions of Syria's communal structure, see Richard F. Nyrop, et al., Area Handbook for Syria (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 56-65 and 87-100; Gabriel Baer, Population and Society in the Arab East (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 108-113; and Bernard Orgels, "Les raisons d'être de la Syrie: Étude de géographie politique," Revue belge de Géographie 86 (1962):13-40. Estimates of the actual religious and linguistic composition of the population vary widely. Throughout this study, figures are based on those from the Syrian Statistical Abstract for 1956. The government has not issued comprehensive data on Syria's ethnic composition since then.
4. This was acknowledged in cafe conversations, where the regime was referred to as the hukm al-'adas (rule of the lentil). 'Adas is an acronym for 'Alawi, Druze, and Isma'ili. Many of the regime's Druzes and Isma'ilis were ousted after 1966.
5. Although little is known about 'Alawi doctrine--'Alawis are prohibited from revealing the secrets of their faith (historically on pain of death) and not all 'Alawis are 'initiated'--there are several sketchy accounts available. See in particular, René Dussaud, Histoire et religion des Nosairis (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1900). More generally, see Jacques Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites (Tours: Ar-rault et Cie., 1940) and Munīr al-Sharīf, Al-Muslimūn al-'Alawīyūn (Damascus: Al-Maṭba'ah al-Umūmīyah, 1960). On the Druzes, see Philip K. Hitti, The Origins of the Druze People and Religion (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928) and Samī Nasīb Makarem, The Druze Faith (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1974). The Isma'ilis are described in Selim Hichi, La communauté des Isma'ilites de l'époque des Mamelques à nos jours (Beirut: n.p., 1972).
6. Thus, although 'Alawis are a majority in al-Lādhiqīyah, until recently they were confined to the region's mountainous, rural interior. As late as the 1930s, al-Lādhiqīyah town had only 500 'Alawis, compared to 18,400 Sunnis. Even in the small towns of the interior, they were far outnumbered by Sunnis. This distribution, while changing since the 1950s, underlines their disadvantaged economic and social status (Jacques Weulersse, "Un peuple minoritaire d'Orient: Les Alaouites," La France méditerranéenne et africaine 1 (1938):56-57).

Even by 1958, 'Alawis were only 11 percent of al-Lādhiqīyah town's population, but 66 percent of al-Lādhiqīyah qadhā's population (al-Sharīf, Al-Muslimūn al-'Alawīyūn, p. 56).

7. Throughout this study, my definition of ethnic group follows Harik's. An ethnic community is one "conscious of sharing similar characteristics, such as a distinct language, religion, a culture, or a historical experience of its own and also conscious of its difference from other communities by virtue of these characteristics" (Ilya Harik, "The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East," International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 3 (1972): 303).
8. Sunnis from peripheral provinces--particularly al-Lādhiqīyah and Dar'ā--have played a major role in the regime.
9. Moshe Ma'oz, "Society and State in Modern Syria," in Society and Political Structure in the Arab World, ed. Menahem Milson (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), p. 87.
10. Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Local Politics in Syria: Organization and Mobilization in Four Village Cases," Middle East Journal 30 (1976): 22.
11. Derwent Whittlesey, The Earth and the State (New York: Henry Holt, 1939), p. 2; Norman J.G. Pounds and Sue S. Ball, "Core Areas and the Development of the European State System," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 54 (1964):24.
12. Richard L. Merritt, "Locational Aspects of Political Integration," in Locational Approaches to Power and Conflict, eds. Kevin R. Cox, David R. Reynolds, and Stein Rokkan (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974), p. 188. Merritt has a good review of pertinent literature. For other discussions of the core area concept, see Harm J. de Blij, Systematic Political Geography, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973), pp. 103-115 and Norman J.G. Pounds, Political Geography, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 187-200.
13. See, for example, Peter Gould, "Tanzania, 1920-1963: The Spatial Impress of the Modernization Process," World Politics 22 (1970): 149-70; J. Barry Riddell, The Spatial Dynamics of Modernization in Sierra Leone (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970); and Edward Soja, The Geography of Modernization in Kenya: A Spatial Analysis of Social, Economic and Political Change (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968). For a major critique of this literature, see Harold C. Brookfield, Interdependent Development (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975). The so-called geography of modernization has been profoundly influenced by Karl Deutsch's model of nation-building as set forth in Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1966).

14. Richard Hartshorne, "The Functional Approach in Political Geography," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 40 (1950):110.
15. Ibid. The state-idea concept is related to Jean Gottman's "iconography." See "The Political Partitioning of our World: An Attempt at Analysis," World Politics 4 (1952):512-19. It is further developed by Stephen B. Jones in "A Unified Field Theory of Political Geography," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 44 (1954):111-23.
16. Edward Shils, Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 3.
17. Rajni Kothari, "The Confrontation of Theories with National Realities: Report on an International Conference," in Building States and Nations, vol. 1, eds. S.N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan (Beverly Hills, Ca.: Sage Publications, 1973), p. 104. See also the works of Stein Rokkan: "Electoral Mobilization, Party Competition, and National Integration," in Political Parties and Political Development, eds. Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 241-65; with H. Valen, "The Mobilization of the Periphery," in Approaches to the Study of Political Participation, ed. Stein Rokkan (Bergen: The Michelsen Institute, 1962), pp. 111-59; and "Cities, States, and Nations: A Dimensional Model for the Study of Contrasts in Development," and "Centre Formation, Nation-Building and Cultural Diversity," both in Building States and Nations, eds. Eisenstadt and Rokkan. See also Daniel Lerner, "Some Comments on Center-Periphery Relations," in Comparing Nations, eds. Richard L. Merritt and Stein Rokkan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) and Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication.
18. Hartshorne, "The Functional Approach," p. 116. See also Roger Kasperson and Julian V. Minghi, eds., The Structure of Political Geography (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 75-76.
19. Edward Bergman, Modern Political Geography (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1975), pp. 270-94.
20. Cited in Patrick Seale, The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Post-War Arab Politics, 1945-1958 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 130.
21. Hartshorne, "The Functional Approach," p. 105.
22. See Seale, The Struggle for Syria, for an account of the powerful influence of Egypt and Iraq on postindependence Syrian politics.
23. Lerner, "Some Comments on Center-Periphery Relations," p. 262.
24. Ibid.
25. Nikolaos Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power in Syria and the Ba'th Party, 1958-66," Orient (Hamburg) 14 (1973):20.

26. There is now a vast literature on the problem. See most notably Andre Gunder Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969); John R.P. Friedmann, "Regional Economic Policy for Developing Areas," Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association 11 (1963):41-61, his Regional Development Policy: A Case Study of Venezuela (Cambridge, Mass.: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1966), and his "A General Theory of Polarized Development," mimeographed (Los Angeles: University of California School of Architecture and Urban Planning, 1969); Albert O. Hirschman, The Strategy of Economic Development (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958); Harvey S. Perloff, et al., Regions, Resources and Economic Growth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1960); Gunnar Myrdal, Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions (London: Duckworth, 1957); and J.G. Williamson, "Regional Inequality and the Process of National Development: A Description of the Patterns," Economic Development and Cultural Change 13, part II (1965). Excellent reviews of this voluminous literature are D. E. Keeble, "Models of Economic Development," in Socio-Economic Models in Geography, eds. Richard J. Chorley and Peter Haggett (London: Methuen and Co., 1967), pp. 243-301; Alan Gilbert, Latin American Development: A Geographical Perspective (London: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 209-33; and Anthony R. de Souza and Philip W. Porter, The Underdevelopment and Modernization of the Third World (Association of American Geographers Commission on College Geography, Resource Paper no. 28, Washington, D.C., 1974), pp. 60-64.
27. J.R. Hicks, Essays in World Economics (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 163. The latter phrase is used by Hirschman in his Strategy of Economic Development.
28. This is a characterization of such views by de Souza and Porter, Underdevelopment and Modernization, p. 61. Cf. Williamson, "Regional Inequality."
29. de Souza and Porter, Underdevelopment and Modernization, p. 60.
30. Edward L. Ullman, "Regional Development and the Geography of Concentration," Papers and Proceedings of the Regional Science Association 4 (1958):179-98.
31. Keeble, "Models of Economic Development," p. 258.
32. The term is from Myrdal's Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions.
33. de Souza and Porter, Underdevelopment and Modernization, p. 64.
34. Friedmann, "A Generalized Theory of Polarized Development," p. 30.
35. Ibid.
36. It should be noted that the armies of most Third World, and many developed, countries are geographically and ethnically unrepresentative. The bulk of the Pakistani army, for example, is drawn from

- four districts of northern Punjab and two districts of the former Frontier province, with the result that 95 percent of all soldiers are either Punjabi or Pathan. (Khalid B. Sayeed, "The Role of the Military in Pakistan," in Armed Forces and Society, ed. Jacques Van Doorn (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1968), p. 276). In Kenya shortly before independence, three-quarters of all soldiers were from the Kamba tribe, which formed only 11 percent of the total population of Kenya (William F. Gutteridge, The Military in African Politics (London: Methuen and Co., 1969), p. 12). In neighboring Uganda, the Achole and small northern tribes initially dominated the military at the expense of the otherwise privileged Baganda; subsequently Lugbaras, and most recently Kakwas, have been overrepresented (Audrey I. Richards, The Multicultural States of East Africa (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1969), p. 41 and Ali A. Mazrui, Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy (Beverly Hills, Ca.: Sage Publications, 1975)). Similar patterns existed in Nigeria before 1967, where particular regional ethnic groups clustered in different ranks (Robin Luckham, "Authority and Conflict in the Nigerian Army," in On Military Intervention, eds. Morris Janowitz and Jacques Van Doorn (Rotterdam: University of Rotterdam Press, 1971), p. 212). For other instances, see Morris Janowitz, The Military in the Political Development of New Nations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 52; Ruth First, Power in Africa: Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'Etat (London: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 77-78; Samuel De-calo, Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Style (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 39-121; and Alfred Stepan, The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 38.
37. William B. Quandt, for example, defines the Algerian elite as those "who exercise a disproportionately large amount of political influence within the political system," in Revolution and Political Leadership: Algeria, 1954-1968 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1969), p. 21. Phebe A. Marr defines the Iraqi elite as "the group of people who make decisions on national policy," in "The Political Elite in Iraq," in Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. George Lenczowski (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), p. 109. The Israeli elite is defined by Emmanuel Guttman and Jacob M. Landau as "those groups that actually exercise, or could exercise considerable political influence, . . . those having power in the system," in "Political Elite and National Leadership in Israel," in Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. Lenczowski, p. 163.
38. See Frederick Frey, The Turkish Political Elite (Cambridge, Mass.: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1965); Marvin Zonis, The Political Elite of Iran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); R. Hrair Dekmejian, Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1971); and Marr, "Political Elite in Iraq." For an excellent review of methodological problems, see I. William Zartman, "The Study of Elite Circulation," Comparative Politics 6 (1974): 465-88.

39. R. Bayly Winder, "Syrian Deputies and Cabinet Ministers, 1919-1959," Middle East Journal 16 (1962):407-29 and 17 (1963):35-54. Phebe Marr similarly confined her study to holders of formal political office in "Iraq's Leadership Dilemma: A Study in Leadership Trends, 1948-1968," Middle East Journal 24 (1970):283-301. R. Hrair Dekmejian compared only cabinet ministers from three countries in Patterns of Political Leadership: Egypt, Israel, Lebanon (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974).
40. Zonis, Political Elite of Iran, p. 345.
41. Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Study of Elites: Who's Who, When and How," World Politics 18 (1966):95. Stated differently, "and then after all, what do we know when we know all these fascinating things about these supposedly powerful people? Outside of the society column . . . we are not interested in mere facts about who people are; social science is concerned with explaining why things happen, or more precisely why people do things. . . . The value of developing detailed, conceptual descriptions of those in power is to be able to grasp better the problem of explaining what they do" (I. William Zartman, "The Elites of the Maghreb: A Review Article," International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 6 (1975):498).
42. John Waterbury, The Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 82.
43. Marshall Singer, The Emerging Elite: A Study of Political Leadership in Ceylon (Cambridge, Mass.: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1964), p. 12, cited in Rustow, "The Study of Elites," p. 70. Zonis attempted to avoid this problem by defining his Iranian elite by "two-stage reputational analysis." In other words, he presented the names of 3,100 Iranians to a panel of ten "experts" who ranked them according to their perceived power. The 10 percent attributed most power formed his universe (Zonis, Political Elite of Iran, pp. 345-61).
44. In addition to works already mentioned, see Frank Tachau, ed., Political Elites and Political Development in the Middle East (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), which contains a number of country studies.
45. Winder, "Syrian Deputies and Cabinet Ministers." An exception is Ronald R. Macintyre's "Syrian Political Age Differentials, 1958-1966," Middle East Journal 29 (1975):207-13. Because it focuses on only one variable, however, it is of limited usefulness. Two recent nonquantitative studies of the Syrian elite are Gordon H. Torrey, "Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria," in Political Elites in the Middle East, ed. Lenczowski, pp. 151-61 and Michael H. Van Dusen, "Syria: Downfall of a Traditional Elite," in Political Elites and Political Development, ed. Tachau, pp. 115-55.
46. George Grassmuck, in a review of Lenczowski, ed., Political Elites in the Middle East, Middle East Journal 30 (1976):570.

47. Torrey, "Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria," pp. 153-4.
48. Stephen Humphreys, "Opportunities and Facilities for Research in Syria," Bulletin of the Middle East Studies Association of North America 8 (February 1974):16-17.
49. In his study of West Point cadets, Janowitz noted that "no profession resists inquiry into its social origins as stubbornly as does the military" (Morris Janowitz, The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait (New York: The Free Press, 1960), p. 80).
50. See République Française, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Rapport sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban (Paris: 1924-1929). According to the terms of the mandate, France had to submit annual reports with data on specific subjects to the Permanent Mandates Commission. The latter, as a watchdog body, examined these reports and questioned representatives of the French government about them at least once a year. For some reason, no data on the composition of the Syrian armed forces were published after 1928.
51. Michael H. Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict in the Syrian Army" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, 1971), Appendices 1-4, pp. 375-414.
52. The most recent year for which data were available during my research was 1971.

CHAPTER II

THE SYRIAN ELITE: A SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The Regional Command of the Ba'th party forms the apex of national political power within Syria. Significant changes in the regime's orientation and conflict within it are reflected more clearly here than in any other political body. Because it also shapes the composition of other, less important sectors of the elite, its composition is central to understanding the makeup of the national elite as a whole. Here, the congruence between holders of formal political office and holders of actual political power is close.

Between the 1963 military coup d'etat which brought the Ba'th party to power and the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, there were ten Regional Commands in Syria. In theory, command members were elected by the Ba'th's Regional Congress, which is comprised of branch delegates and party functionaries. In practice, democratic processes count for little at this level in the party hierarchy.¹ Some command members advanced through the party and were legitimately elected to the body, but most owed their positions to participation in military coups d'etat or were selected by existing command members. Membership changes occurred following coups d'etat (1970 most notably) or during annual or extraordinary sessions of the Regional Congress. The size of individual commands has varied; the smallest and earliest had only eight members, the largest and most recent twenty-one.

Cabinet ministers possess less power than Regional Command members, although collectively they are the most visible, formal, national political officeholders. Their qualifications and attributes are therefore far more open to public view. Cabinets are also manipulated to placate or co-opt potential opposition groups and are tailored to present a facade of consensus politics to the public. Consequently, they include both non-Ba'this and Ba'this and have a symbolic importance over and above their normal functions.²

During the period of analysis, there were also ten government cabinets. Their size and longevity similarly varied. The smallest cabinet contained twenty ministers, the largest thirty-one; the shortest survived for only five months, the longest for eighteen.

Although political differences within both Regional Commands and cabinets have been acute at times, they are temporarily held constant in order to examine geographical and ethnic biases in elite membership. It must be emphasized that persons from the same region or ethnic community cannot be considered an undifferentiated, cohesive group. Geographic and ethnic classification of elite members can and does mask profound differences that often exist among persons from the same regional or ethnic group. It also grossly underestimates the complexity and fluidity of political alliances and interactions and understates the multidimensional nature of conflict within the elite.

The Geographical Composition of the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party, 1963-1973

Given the traditional predominance in political life of Damascenes and Aleppans, and to a lesser extent of persons from Ḥims and Ḥamāh, the provincial and peripheral origins of the various commands' members

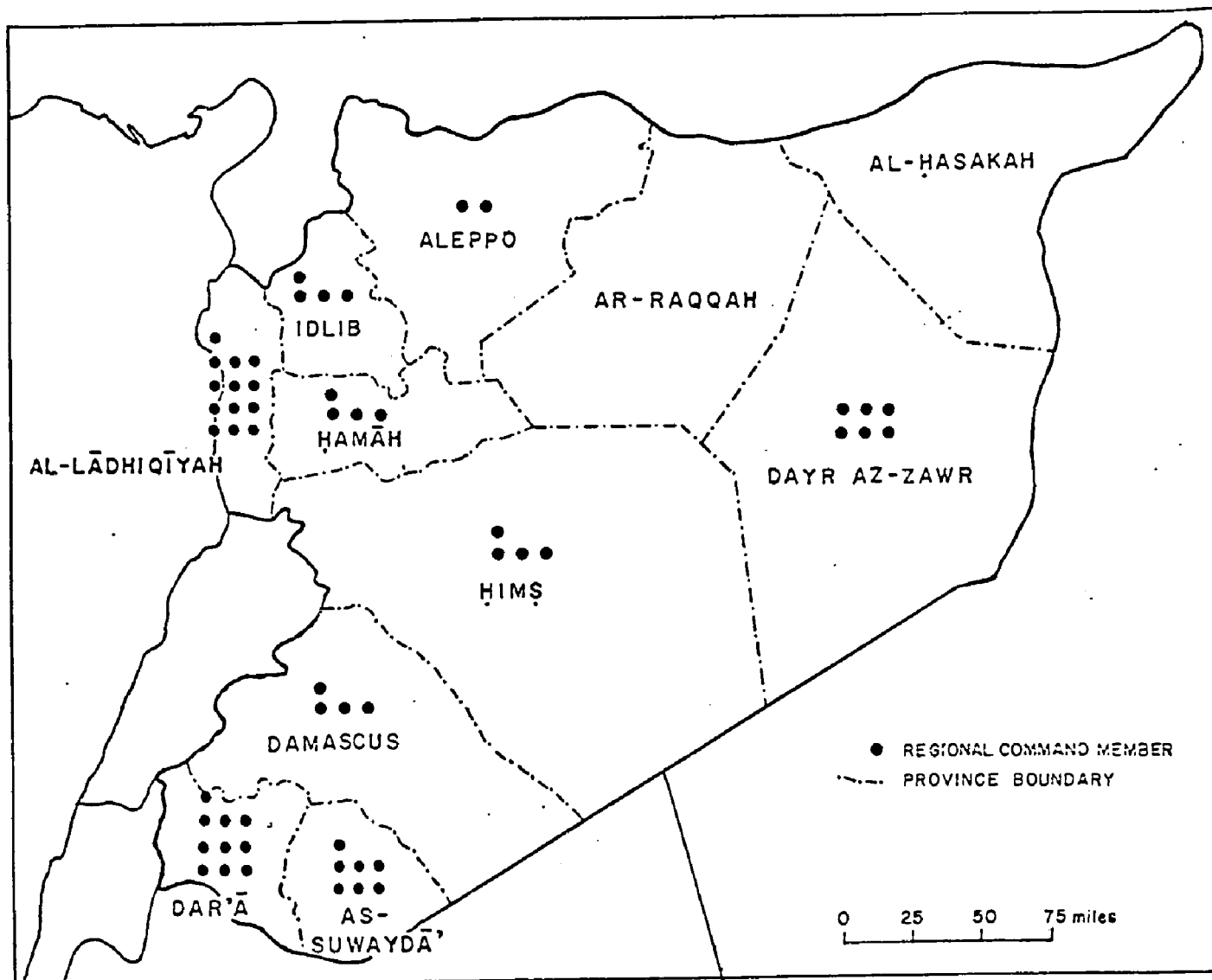
confirm that the Ba'thi revolution was indeed geographical.³

Between 1963 and 1973, sixty-two persons served in at least one Regional Command. Of the fifty-four whose geographical origins have been established with certainty, only four came from Damascus and only two from Aleppo. The virtual exclusion of persons from these major urban centers contrasts sharply with the predominance of Ba'this from peripheral provinces in general and from al-Lādhīqīyah province in particular. Almost one-quarter of all members came from this latter region alone, confirming the widespread belief within Syria that it has provided a disproportionate number of persons to the national elite.

Al-Lādhīqīyah forms one corner of an approximately triangular country. Syria's other corners were also very overrepresented, with Dar'ā, as-Suwaydā', and Dayr az-Zawr provinces providing ten, seven, and six members respectively. Almost two-thirds of all command members whose geographical origins could be identified came from these four marginal provinces. When representation is compared to each province's share of the total population the extent of the Regional Command's geographical imbalance becomes fully apparent (see map 2.1 and fig. 2.1).

Undoubtedly several of the eight members whose provincial origins are unknown came from Aleppo or Damascus. Nevertheless, the sample's large size implies that each province's relative representation would remain approximately the same even if data were complete.

The Regional Command is also ethnically unrepresentative. The ethnic affiliations of forty-eight command members (77 percent) have been identified. Of these, twenty-four were Sunni, and twenty-four were from minority communities. Numerically, the ten 'Alawis were most important among the latter. This imbalance again becomes most apparent



Map. 2.1. Geographical Origins of Regional Command Members, 1963-1973

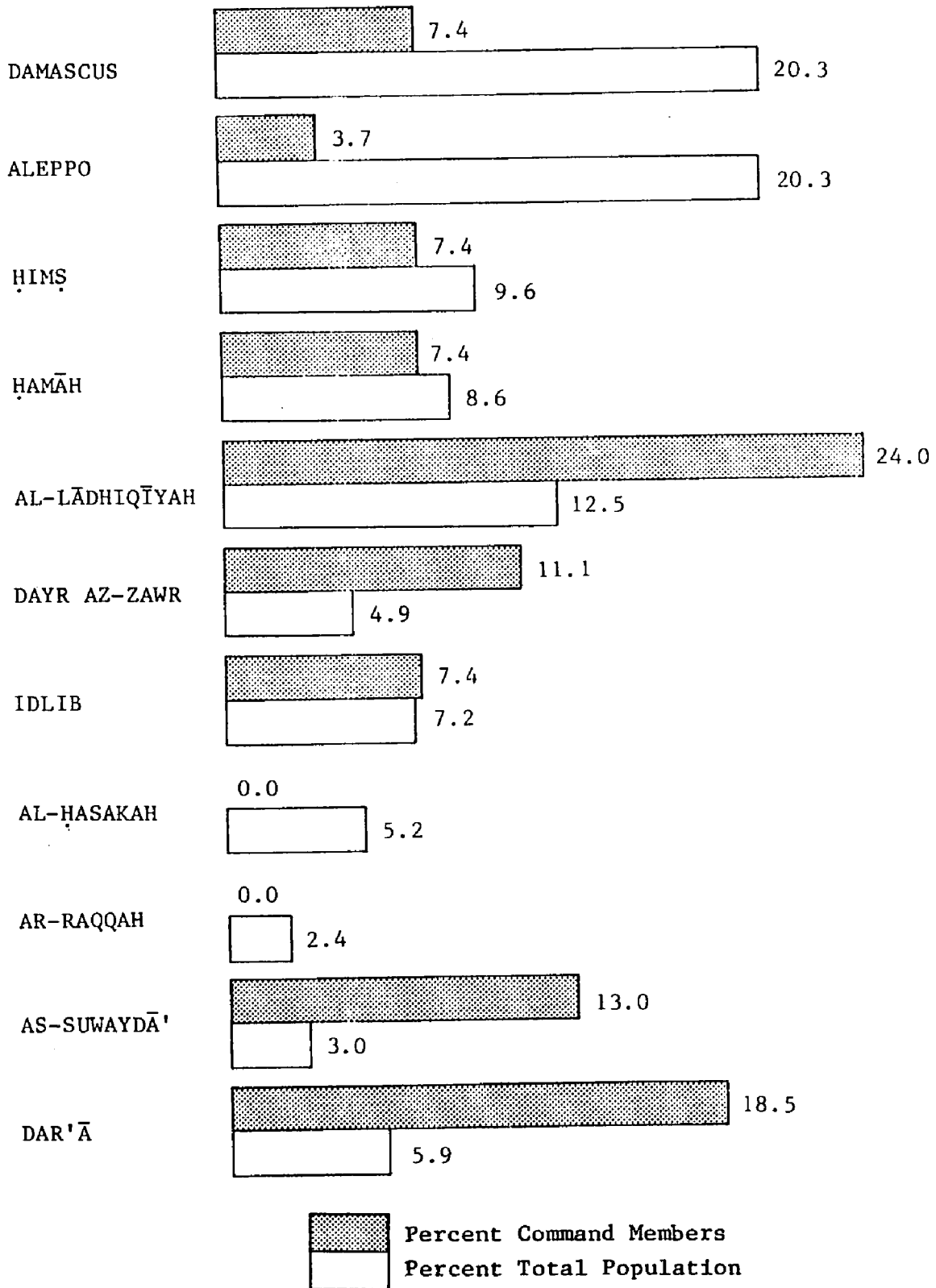


Fig. 2.1. Geographical Composition of the Regional Command, 1963-1973

when representation is compared to the makeup of the population as a whole (see figs. 2.2, 2.3).

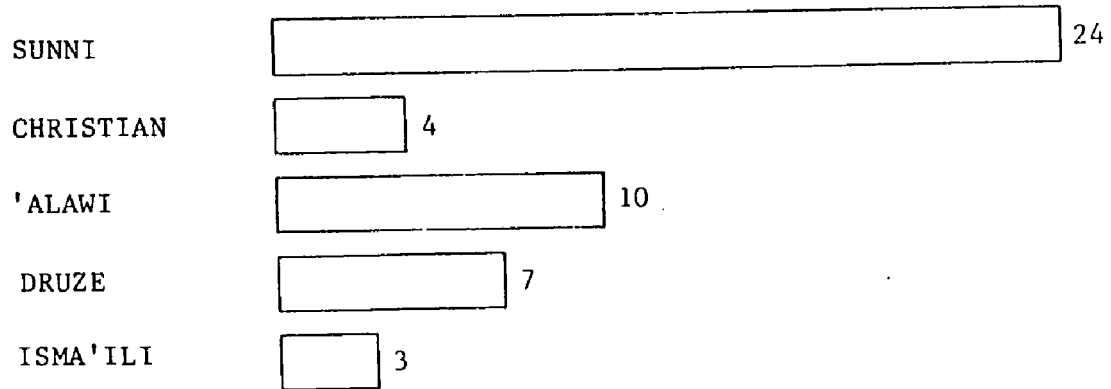


Fig. 2.2. Ethnic Composition of the Regional Command, 1963-1973

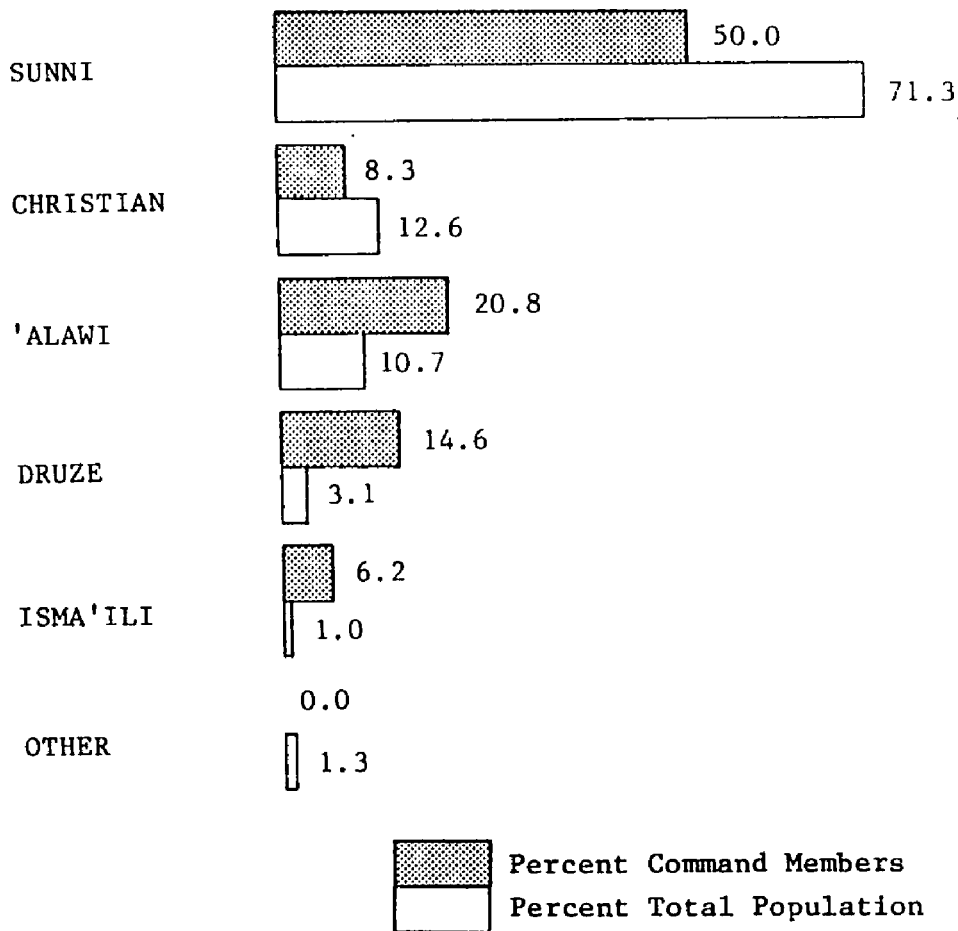


Fig. 2.3. Ethnic Composition of the Regional Command, 1963-1973 (in percent)

Most 'Alawi, Druze, and Isma'ili command members are probably in the sample of forty-eight, while the majority of those whose affiliations have not been identified are most likely Sunni. This is because Sunni origins tend to be ignored while heterodox origins are remarked upon by the Sunni majority. Nevertheless, even if all of the unknowns are unrealistically assumed to be Sunni, minorities would still be over-represented.

While most command members were Sunni, a disproportionate 17 percent came from the predominantly 'Alawi province of al-Lādhiqīyah. Moreover, all had close links with 'Alawi command members. Muḥammad Rabāḥ al-Ṭawīl, who for a time occupied the sensitive post of Minister of the Interior, was a member of the group of predominantly minority officers who executed the February 1966 coup d'etat.⁴ 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, the present Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, is said to be related through marriage to 'Alī Zāzā, the current Minister of Interior and one of President Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad's closest 'Alawi military supporters.⁵ 'Adnān Shumān taught at the government school attended by Asad in al-Lādhiqīyah town.⁶ The fourth Sunni from this province, Muṣṭafā Rustum, was once prominent in the Ba'th party's local branch as one of Asad's proteges.⁷ The province also furnished a Christian, Jūrj Ṣaddīqnī,⁸ and an Isma'ili, Aḥmad al-Mīr, to the Regional Command.⁹

While not all command members from al-Lādhiqīyah are 'Alawi, all 'Alawis do not come from al-Lādhiqīyah; Muḥammad 'Umrān, Sulaymān al-'Alī, and 'Abdallāh Aḥmad came from villages in Ḥamāh and Ḥimṣ provinces.¹⁰ Therefore, examining the geographical and ethnic composition of the Regional Command separately underestimates a multitude of cross-cutting

ties. Specifically, almost 30 percent of all command members are 'Alawi or come from al-Lādhiqīyah.

The geographic and ethnic makeup of individual commands fluctuated. Al-Lādhiqīyah Ba'this typically accounted for approximately one-third of each command. They comprised 17 percent of one command, however, and 38 percent of another (see table 2.1). Such a high proportion underlines their strong position, for of all command members, only 25 percent came from here. This implies that their longevity--and hence importance--was greater. Data on political survival confirm this. The median length of individual membership was twenty months. Ba'this from al-Lādhiqīyah, however, remained in the Regional Command for forty-nine months on average, and seven of the fifteen longest-serving members were from this province (see table 2.2).

Table 2.1

Geographical Composition of Individual
Regional Commands, 1963-1973

Province	Date of Formation									
	Sept 1963	Feb 1964	Mar 1965	Aug 1965	Mar 1966	Sept 1967	Sept 1968	Mar 1969	Nov 1970	May 1971
Damascus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Aleppo	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hims	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2
Hamāh	0	3	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Al-Lādhiqīyah	2	2	3	3	5	5	5	5	4	6
Dayr az-Zawr	0	1	1	3	3	4	2	1	1	1
Idlib	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Al-Ḥasakah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ar-Raqqah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
As-Suwaydā'	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	0	1
Dar'ā	0	1	2	2	4	5	3	3	2	3
Total Known	6	12	11	15	15	18	15	13	14	20
Total Unknown	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	3	0	1

Table 2.2

Time Served in the Regional
Command, 1963-1973

Province	Mean Number of Months
Al-Lādhiqīyah	49.0
Hims	46.0
Dar'ā	35.0
Dayr az-Zawr	33.0
Damascus	28.0
As-Suwaydā'	26.5
Ḥamāh	25.0
Aleppo	14.5
Idlib	8.5
Average	20.0

The absence of any Damascenes in the Regional Command for the entire 1963-73 period and of any Aleppans from 1966 onwards is striking. Even if data were complete, the underrepresentation of these provinces in individual commands would still be marked. That Syria's core provinces should have been unrepresented or so underrepresented for seven years is proof enough that a village revolution occurred in the early 1960s.

Damascenes have nevertheless been well represented in post-1970 commands. This change, also reflected in the composition of government cabinets, followed Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad's 1970 coup d'etat and the ousting of his radical arch-opponent, Ṣalāḥ Jadīd. The coup resulted in an almost complete turnover in the Regional Command, a Syro-Egyptian rapprochement, and a perceptible moderation in the domestic policies of the regime. Although the al-Lādhiqīyah-'Alawī base of the regime remained intact, it became more subtle.¹¹ One of Asad's objectives in staging a coup was to preserve and consolidate this base by increasing the

regime's legitimacy. In particular, he sought to placate the cities which had been virtually excluded from the political process for seven years and were, as a result, centers of disaffection and opposition to the regime.¹²

Asad's conciliatory moves towards the cities were matched by an effort to increase Sunni political representation. Thus, Sunnis, who comprised only one-third of a command formed before Asad's coup, accounted for 75 percent and 63 percent of Ba'this in the last two commands under analysis. Conversely, the proportion of minority Ba'this in individual commands decreased from two-thirds in 1964 to one-quarter in 1970 and one-third in 1971 (see table 2.3). Again, the relatively high proportion of 'Alawis in each command compared to their share of all persons who have been command members suggests their greater political longevity.

Table 2.3

Ethnic Composition of Individual
Regional Commands, 1963-1973

Ethnic Group	Date of Formation									
	Sept 1963	Feb 1964	Mar 1965	Aug 1965	Mar 1966	Sept 1967	Sept 1968	Mar 1969	Nov 1970	May 1971
Sunni	3	4	6	10	9	8	6	6	9	12
'Alawi	1	4	1	1	3	3	4	3	3	5
Christian	0	0	1	0	1	3	2	2	0	5
Druze	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	0	1
Isma'ili	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
Total Known	6	12	10	15	15	18	15	13	12	19
Total Unknown	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	2

Raw numbers and percentages understate the maldistribution of power, for not all command members have equal political weight.

Generally, military members are disproportionately influential because the Ba'th came to power by way of a coup and remains there through the army's support. The number of officers in each command has varied, averaging slightly under five. More to the point, six of the fourteen officers who served in at least one command came from al-Lādhiqīyah, and five of the nine 'Alawis who served on the body were officers. The proportion of all members from one region or ethnic group who were officers was nowhere so great.

The final command under analysis illustrates how 'Alawi political prominence rests on their strength within the armed forces: of the four 'Alawis, three are commanding officers. President Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad, at one time Commander of the air force, is now Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Nājī Jamīl is presently Commander of the air force and Deputy Minister of Defence, and 'Abd al-Ghanī Ibrāhīm is head of the armed forces' political organization. Both were also among Asad's principal military supporters in the 1970 coup.¹³

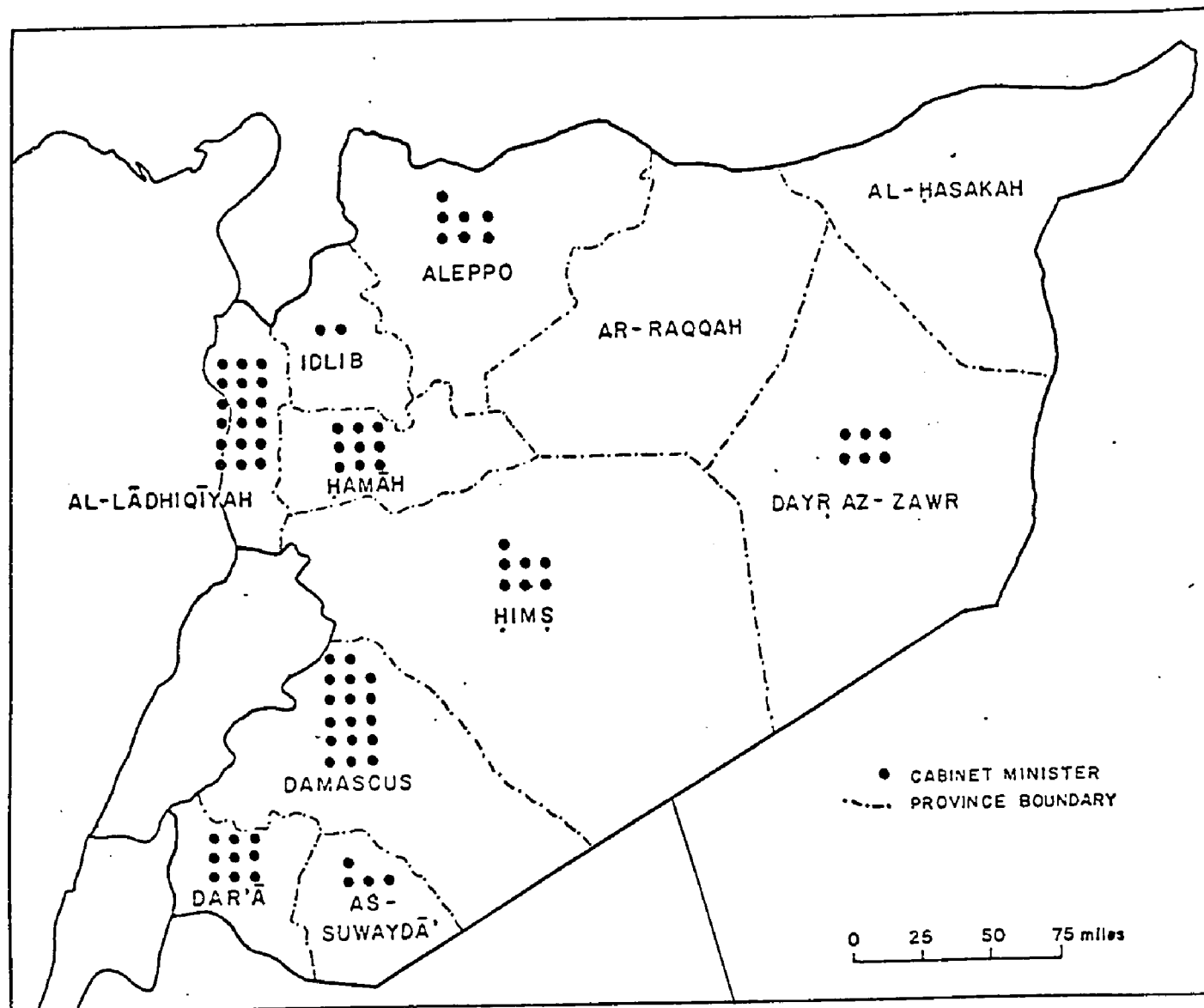
Asad's conciliatory moves to the Sunni urban center are somewhat deceptive. Since his coup, the armed forces have played a greater role in national politics, while the Regional Command has played a lesser role. Specifically, an informal group of officers, colloquially known as "The Big Ten" ('Asharat al-Kibār), now hold considerable power. Most of them are thought to be 'Alawi.¹⁴ In addition to Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad, the group includes his younger brother, Rif'at, commander of a 20,000-man elite palace guard allegedly comprised almost entirely of 'Alawis.¹⁵ Several of President Asad's other relatives also hold strategic military positions, although they are not in the so-called Big Ten. One of his nephews commands a brigade within Rif'at al-Asad's palace guard, a

brother-in-law the 20,000-man special forces, and a cousin a paratroop brigade.¹⁶ Also in the Big Ten are 'Abd al-Ghanī Ibrāhīm and Nājī Jamīl (both of whom are in the Regional Command), Hikmat Shihābī (Chief of Staff and formerly Head of Intelligence), 'Alī Zāzā (Minister of the Interior and former Director of Military Intelligence), and 'Alī al-Madanī (Head of Military Police).¹⁷

The Geographical Composition of Government
Cabinets, 1966-1973

Representation patterns are more muted in government cabinets because of their visibility and symbolism, but not sufficiently to obscure the predominance of ministers from al-Lādhiqīyah. Of the seventy-nine ministers whose geographical origins were indentified, slightly under 23 percent came from this province. Dar'ā, as-Suwaydā', and Dayr az-Zawr similarly provided a disproportionate share of ministers. Together with al-Lādhiqīyah they accounted for almost one-half of all ministers. Damascenes and, to a lesser extent, Aleppans are far more strongly represented in cabinets than in the Regional Command (see map 2.2 and fig. 2.4).

The geographical origins of ministers from 1966-73 differed dramatically from those of ministers prior to the Ba'thi revolution. From independence in 1946 until 1958, Damascenes and Aleppans held 66 percent of all cabinet portfolios.¹⁸ Between 1966 and 1973, their share of positions dropped to slightly over 30 percent. Conversely, the proportion of ministers from al-Lādhiqīyah increased markedly (see fig. 2.5). This abrupt change was evident in the geographical composition of cabinets immediately preceding and following the 1966 coup that signified the neo-Ba'th's victory. Whereas Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Biṭār's twenty-six man



Map 2.2. Geographical Origins of Cabinet Ministers, 1966-1973

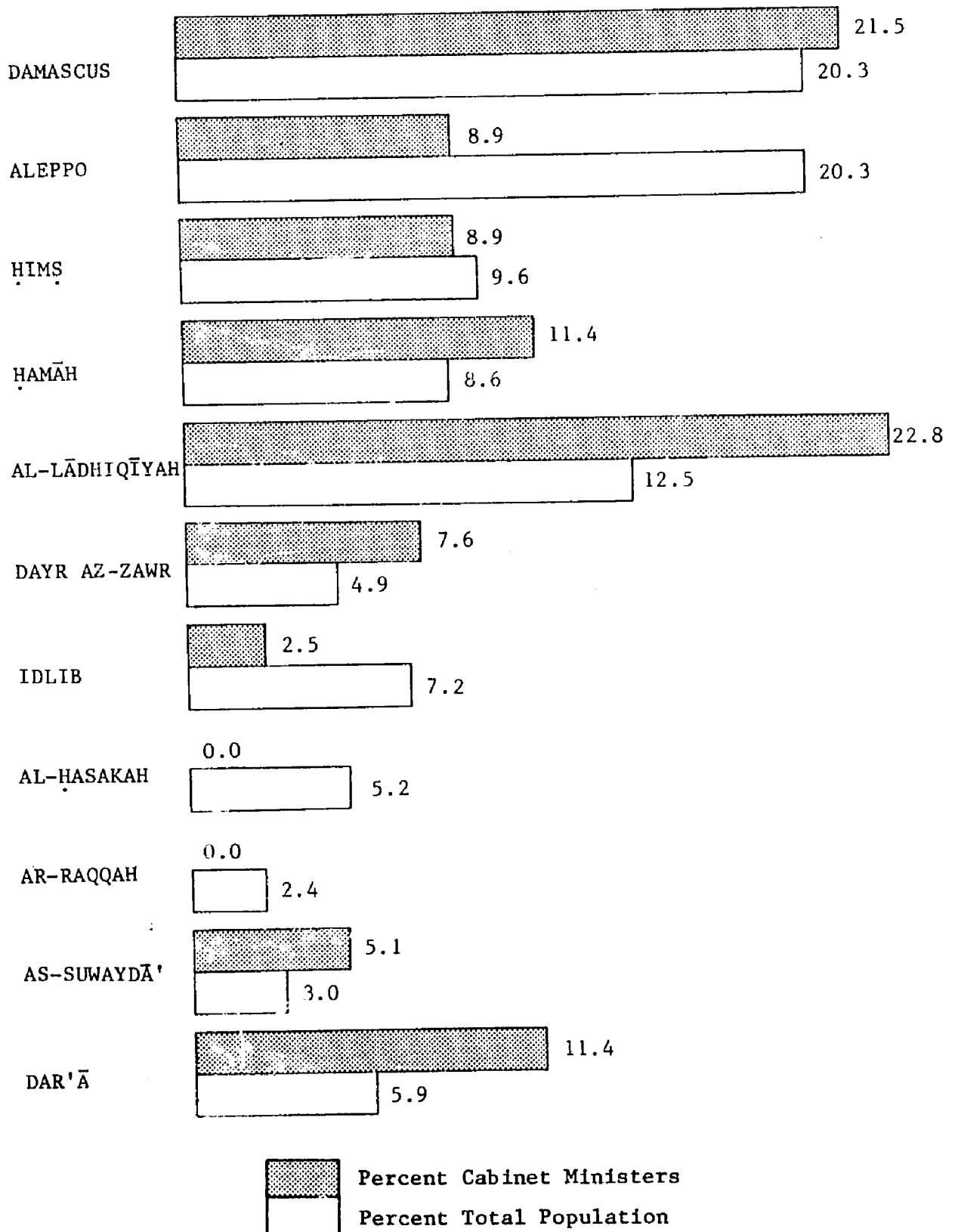


Fig. 2.4. Geographical Composition of Cabinets, 1966-1973

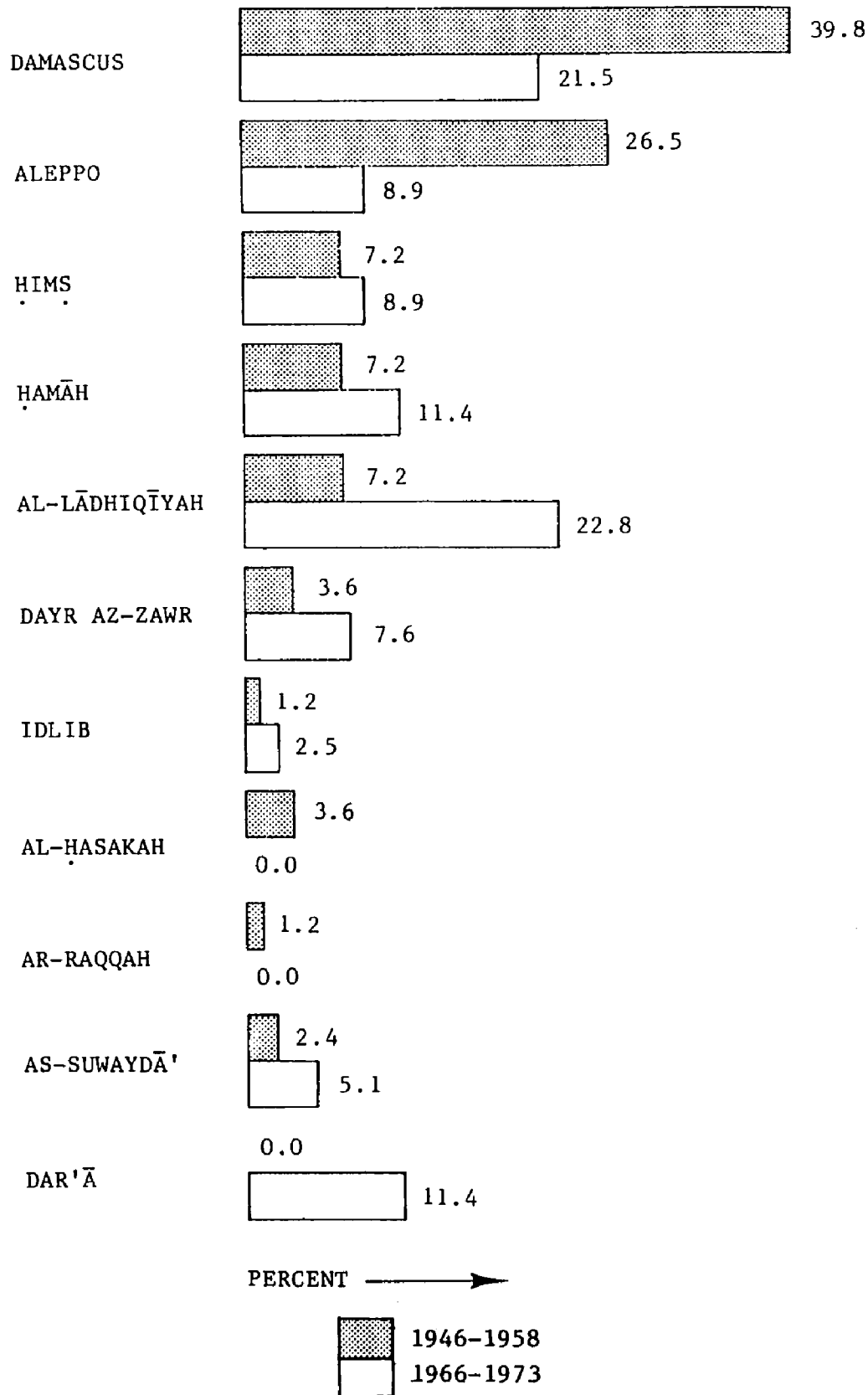


Fig. 2.5. Geographical Composition of Cabinets in 1946-1958 and 1966-1973

cabinet had ten ministers from Damascus and five from Aleppo, only four of the twenty in Yūsuf Zu'ayyīn's cabinet formed in March 1966 came from Damascus, and only one came from Aleppo (see table 2.4).

Table 2.4
Geographical Composition of Cabinets before
and after the February 1966 Coup d'Etat

Province	Jan 1966 Cabinet		Mar 1966 Cabinet	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Damascus	10	38.5	4	21.0
Aleppo	5	19.2	1	5.3
Ḥims	3	11.5	2	10.5
Ḥamāh	1	3.8	2	10.5
Al-Lādhiqīyah	4	15.4	4	21.0
Dayr az-Zawr	1	3.8	2	10.5
Idlib	1	3.8	1	5.3
Al-Hasakah	0	0.0	0	0.0
Ar-Raqqah	0	0.0	0	0.0
As-Suwaydā'	0	0.0	1	5.3
Dar'ā	1	3.8	2	10.5
Total Known	26	100.0	19	100.0
Total Unknown	0		1	

Differences in individual cabinets' composition since 1966 are very apparent, with notable variations in Damascus's and al-Lādhiqīyah's representation particularly. The number of ministers from the latter increased steadily from only four in the March 1966 cabinet to eight in that formed in September 1973. Although cabinets grew larger during this period, the proportion of al-Lādhiqīyah ministers rose from 21 to 31 percent. The proportional representation of Damascenes rose markedly in 1970 following Asad's coup. In the cabinet formed immediately after the events of 1970, Damascenes received eight portfolios, double the number they held in the preceding cabinet (see table 2.5).

Table 2.5

Geographical Composition of Individual Cabinets, 1966-1973

Province	Date of Formation									
	Mar 1966	Oct 1966	Sept 1967	Oct 1968	May 1969	Nov 1970	Apr 1971	Mar 1972	Dec 1972	Sept 1973
Damascus	4	4	3	4	4	8	7	5	6	6
Aleppo	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3
Hims	2	2	0	1	3	2	1	2	2	2
Hamāh	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4
Al-Lādhiqīyah	4	5	6	6	8	7	8	8	8	8
Dayr az-Zawr	2	3	3	2	1	1	2	1	2	1
Idlib	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	1	1
Al-Ḥasakah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ar-Raqqah	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
As-Suwaydā'	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Dar'a	2	3	2	2	4	3	2	1	1	1
Total Known	19	19	20	21	26	29	28	24	26	26
Total Unknown	1	4	2	1	1	0	0	6	5	4

The relatively high proportion of al-Lādhiqīyah ministers in individual cabinets compared to their share of all persons who have served as minister (23 percent) again suggests their greater political longevity. On average, ministers served for 29.6 months.¹⁹ Those from al-Lādhiqīyah, however, typically stayed in office for 38.3 months. This was longer than any other geographical group except the two ministers from Idlib. A rank-ordering according to time in office also emphasizes the strong position of ministers from al-Lādhiqīyah: ten of the twenty-one persons in the upper quartile of the scale and four of the five longest servers came from there. The relatively lengthy tenure of Aleppans, 30.7 months on average, seems surprising. This, however, is partly related to their weak position, for the longest-serving Aleppans held the rather unimportant portfolios of Culture and National Guidance, Justice, and Communications. Cabinet turnover seems to occur most often in positions of intermediate importance (see table 2.6).

Table 2.6

Time Served in Cabinets, 1966-1973

Province	Mean Number of Months
Idlib	39.0
Al-Lādhiqīyah	38.3
Dayr az-Zawr	32.5
Aleppo	30.7
Hamāh	29.4
Hims	26.4
Damascus	25.4
Dar'ā	23.1
As-Suwaydā'	17.5
Average	29.6

In each cabinet since 1970, persons from al-Lādhiqīyah and Damascus have held over one-half of all portfolios. Approximately equal numerical representation, however, bears little relation to the actual power of persons from these provinces within cabinets. The real strength of the al-Lādhiqīyah group is measured not by their number but by the portfolios they hold.

Some ministerial positions possess more power and are more crucial for the regime's maintenance than others. Such posts are invariably held by Regional Command members. Correspondingly, non-Ba'this often hold less important portfolios, many of which are sinecures. Any attempt to rank cabinet positions by their strategic importance or power is beset with difficulties and necessarily involves arbitrary and subjective decisions. It is possible, however, to distinguish the most important portfolios and the least important ones.

Among the most important portfolios are executive ones, those that imply authority within a cabinet, and those explicitly concerned with

regime maintenance and stability through links with the armed forces or internal security organizations: the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, and the Ministers of Defence and Interior. The Foreign Affairs portfolio is also included in this category because of its great prestige and because it is often held by a Deputy Prime Minister. Of the fifteen persons who held one or more of these positions between 1966 and 1973, six (40 percent) came from al-Lādhiqīyah. Only two came from Damascus and one from Aleppo (see table 2.7). Ministers from al-Lādhiqīyah were in a minority in only one of the ten cabinets. In six, they held one-half of these positions, and in the most recent two, three of the five ministers in top portfolios came from this one province. Significantly, either the Minister of Defence or the Minister of Interior, or both, came from al-Lādhiqīyah in every cabinet.

Table 2.7

Geographical Origins of Ministers Holding
Most Important Portfolios, 1966-1973

Province	No.
Damascus	2
Aleppo	1
Hims	2
Al-Lādhiqīyah	6
Dayr az-Zawr	2
As-Suwaydā'	1
Dar'ā	1
Total	15

The subjectively defined least important positions either have little political power or deal with problems affecting a minority of Syrians: Tourism, Culture and National Guidance, Religious Endowments, Higher Education, Justice, and Cabinet Affairs. These portfolios are

not unimportant. They are, however, less crucial than ones such as Economy, Agriculture, Industry, Planning, Health, Education, Public Works, and Social and Labor Affairs. Twenty-two persons served in the least important positions. Of nineteen ministers whose geographical origins have been identified, seven came from Damascus and four from Aleppo. These two provinces provided 61 percent of all ministers in this category. By contrast, only one minister came from al-Lādhiqīyah (see table 2.8).

Table 2.8

Geographical Origins of Ministers Holding
Least Important Portfolios, 1966-1973

Province	No.
Damascus	7
Aleppo	4
Ḥamāh	1
Al-Lādhiqīyah	1
Dayr az-Zawr	1
Idlib	2
As-Suwaydā'	1
Dar'ā	2
Total	19

The clustering of persons from Syria's two largest cities in these relatively impotent posts, in conjunction with the overwhelming predominance of persons from al-Lādhiqīyah at the top of the cabinet hierarchy, emphasizes the spatial biases in elite recruitment.

The ethnic affiliations of cabinet ministers were impossible to identify in the majority of cases. These are seldom known to the public. Although 'Alawis are also overrepresented in cabinets (particularly in the most sensitive positions), Syrians believe that most ministers are Sunni. With one exception, the Prime Minister has always come from this

community. Again, al-Lādhiqīyah origins should not be equated with 'Alawi origins: 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, for example, is Sunni al-though he comes from this predominantly 'Alawi province.²⁰

The Age Structure of the Elite

An individual's geographic and ethnic identities are not necessarily the most salient determinants of his political behavior or attitudes. Other dimensions of social origin and attributes of identity may be equally, if not more, important.

If post-1963 elite members have predominantly peripheral geographical origins, so also are they strikingly young. In some senses, the Ba'thi revolution was a generational one. Possibly the elite's radicalism partly reflected its youthfulness and comparative political inexperience, for age, among other variables, conditions social perceptions.

The median age of ministers in thirty-two Syrian cabinets examined by Bayly Winder from 1936 to 1959 was 50.²¹ By contrast, the median age of ministers between 1966 and 1973 was only 39½. The highest median age of any cabinet, 43, was close to the lowest median age of cabinets in the earlier period, and the lowest median age of any cabinet was an astonishing 35½ (see table 2.9).

Macintyre's age data for cabinet ministers and Regional Command members for the 1963-66 period confirm this general youthfulness of the elite. During these years, 65.6 percent of all ministers were under 40, and the median age of Regional Command members was only 36.²² Colombe traces the advent of relatively youthful cabinets to the March 1963 coup d'etat. In the cabinet immediately preceding the coup, the

Table 2.9

Age of Ministers, 1966-1973

	Date of Formation									
	Mar 1966	Oct 1966	Sept 1967	Oct 1968	May 1969	Nov 1970	Apr 1971	Mar 1972	Dec 1972	Sept 1973
Median Age	38	35½	37½	38	39	40	41	42	42	43
Average Age	39	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	43	44
Total Known	11	12	16	21	20	26	27	24	26	25
Total Unknown	9	11	6	1	7	3	1	6	5	5

average age of ministers was 49; the Prime Minister was 60. The average age of ministers in the cabinet following the coup dropped to 41.²³

Significantly, the median year of birth in each cabinet only ranged between 1928 and 1930. In each of the last seven cabinets, in fact, it was 1930. A striking number of elite members were thus at the critical political socialization age of eighteen to twenty-one during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and its immediate aftermath. The traumatic defeat and subsequent discrediting of a corrupt, incompetent ancien régime probably had a more profound effect on the attitudes of this Syrian generation than on any other.

The Ba'thi revolution evidently made elite positions accessible to a younger generation with remarkable suddenness. The median age of cabinet ministers showed a steady increase, however, from 35½ in 1966 to 43 in 1973. This indicates not only that Young Turks are becoming old but also that they are not recruiting more Young Turks into their ranks. Conceivably, intergenerational conflict could soon be a source of conflict within the elite unless this steady aging is reversed.

The Occupational Structure of the Elite

The occupational composition of the Regional Command, government cabinets, and pre- and post-Ba'thi elites differ.

The Regional Command's occupational structure is summarized in figure 2.6. The limited range of occupations among the forty-six Ba'this whose primary occupation has been identified is striking, for almost 90 percent were officers, lawyers, doctors, or teachers. Elite recruitment is evidently narrow, drawing especially on Ba'this who attended the Hims Military Academy or received their legal or medical training at Damascus University in the early 1950s. Undoubtedly many were professional colleagues, if not close friends, a decade before the revolution.²⁴

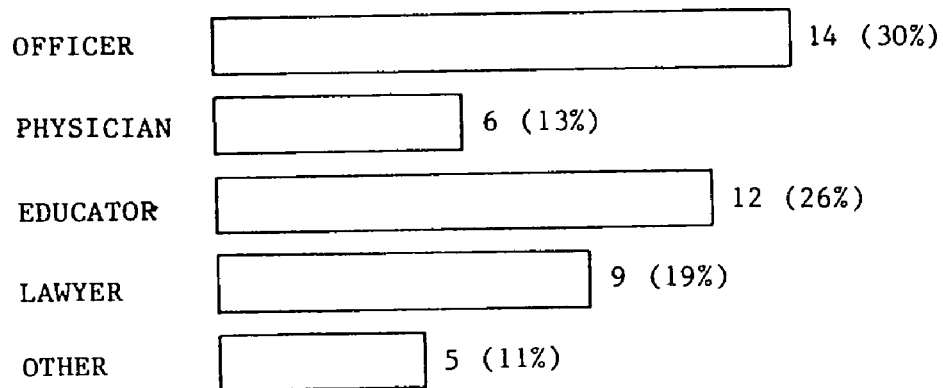


Fig. 2.6. Occupational Structure of the Regional Command, 1963-1973

Superficially, cabinet ministers pursued more diverse careers (see fig. 2.7). This comparison is somewhat misleading, however, because almost identical proportions of command members and cabinet ministers were lawyers, doctors, and educators. The major occupational difference between the elite's two sectors is the far higher proportion of officers in the Regional Command (30.4 percent) than in cabinets (14.0 percent).

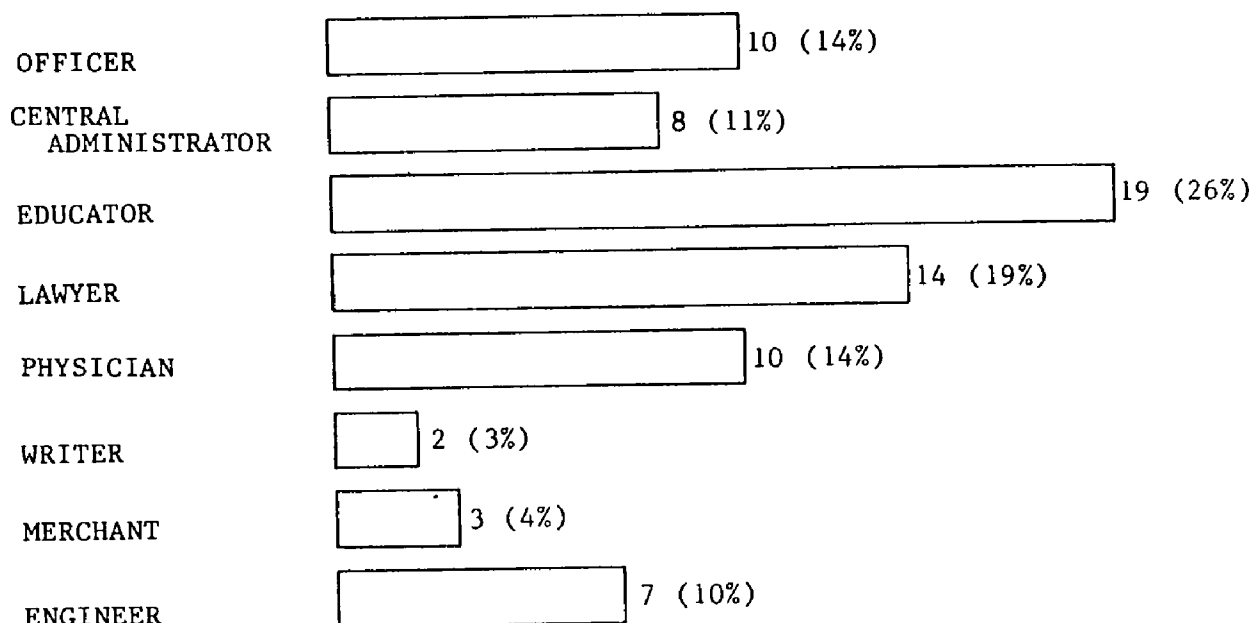


Fig. 2.7. Occupational Structure of Cabinets, 1966-1973

This is understandable, for ultimately the regime is a military one; this will be more clearly reflected in the Regional Command than in any other body of formal political officeholders. Officers are less conspicuous in the more visible cabinets because the regime has no desire to broadcast its military base.

In addition, the functions of the Regional Command and cabinets differ. Because the former is purely political, the occupational credentials of its members matter little. With the possible exception of officers, Ba'this are elected to the Regional Command in spite of their professional qualifications rather than because of them. Cabinet ministers, by contrast, are often responsible for directing bureaucracies concerned with economic development and social welfare. Their technocratic qualifications and managerial skills are therefore highly valued, if not actually prerequisites to ministerial appointment. Engineers and senior civil servants are, as a result, prominent in cabinets but almost

absent from the Regional Command.

Two representative examples suffice to illustrate the relationship between technological skills and cabinet appointments. 'Abd al-Laṭīf Quṭayṭ, who was born in Damascus in 1932, studied mechanical engineering at the University of Alexandria in Egypt. Before being appointed Minister of Industry in 1970, he was variously Director General of the Organization for Public Sector Industry and Director General of the Union of Textile Industries.²⁵ 'Umar al-Sibā'ī, an Aleppan, received his degree in electrical engineering in France. Subsequently, he was an engineer with the Electric and Transport Company of Aleppo municipality and director of Syria's only tractor assembly plant. Since 1970, he has been Minister of Communications.²⁶

The similar proportion of teachers among command members and cabinet ministers is deceptive. Teachers in the Regional Command invariably taught at provincial secondary schools.²⁷ By contrast, most cabinet ministers in this occupational category were distinguished university professors, appointed for their technical expertise rather than their political beliefs. Aḥmad al-Ḥasan, for example, was Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Dean of the Faculty at Aleppo University. The author of many works on industrialization and technical education, he was appointed Minister of Oil, Electricity, and Industrial Affairs in 1967.²⁸ Madanī al-Khiyāmī is another example. He received his Ph.D. in medicine from the American University of Beirut and specialized in cardiology in France. Before becoming Minister of Health, he was Dean of the Medical Faculty and Rector of Damascus University.²⁹ In the Regional Command, only one Ba'thi was a professor, and he was also a cabinet minister.³⁰

Comparisons between the proportion of command members and cabinet ministers who were physicians are similarly not entirely valid because of crossovers from one body to the other. Five of the ten cabinet ministers in this occupational category were also Regional Command members.³¹ Furthermore, of the remaining five, three were actually chemists. Two of these were appointed as token communists.³² By and large, doctors in the Regional Command were general practitioners from the provinces. One of the cabinet ministers, however, was a nationally prominent specialist: Maḥmūd Sa'dāh, who was Minister of Health for two years, was an expert in pulmonary diseases and President of the Syrian Doctor's Association.³³

Differences between lawyers in the Regional Command and cabinets are more pronounced.³⁴ The former were almost exclusively from the provinces and tended to be young and unknown within their profession before achieving political prominence. Many of the latter, by contrast, were from Syria's major urban centers. They tended to be older and often celebrated within their profession.

Representative examples of lawyers in each body underline these differences. Muḥammad 'Īd 'Ashāwī was born in 1930 in Dayr az-Zawr province. After graduating with a law degree from Damascus University, he embroiled himself in local Ba'thi politics. At the age of thirty-three, he was rewarded with a provincial governorship, and by the time he was thirty-five, he was a prominent member of the Regional Command. Within two years, he was variously Minister of Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs.³⁵ Ibrāhīm Ḥamzāwī had an altogether different career. He was born in 1916 in Damascus, where he received his law degree. Over a twenty-year period, he held a variety of positions within his profession: member of the Council of the Syrian Order of Barristers, justice

of the peace in Damascus, judge in the Dayr az-Zawr and al-Lādhiqīyah courts of appeal, magistrate in Damascus, and finally lord mayor of that city.³⁶

Ministers in the 1966-73 period also differed significantly in their occupations from ministers in the pre-Ba'thi period. Between 1919 and 1959, lawyers and central administrators formed the backbone of cabinets, accounting for 44 percent of the 363 ministers studied by Bayly Winder (see fig. 2.8).³⁷ By and large, they came from powerful landowning and mercantile families. The latter's influence is indicated by the fact that industrialists, merchants, and rural landlords comprised 22 percent of all ministers in the 1919-1959 period. Such persons were completely absent in the post-1966 cabinets. This is scarcely surprising given the Ba'th's ideological orientations and policies. After coming to power, one of its first actions was to destroy this oligarchy through land reform and nationalization.

The Social Origins of the Elite

Politically, the most salient difference between pre- and post-Ba'thi elites is their altogether dissimilar social origins, rather than their differing age and occupational characteristics. The Ba'thi revolution brought to power persons whose most striking feature, apart from their geographically peripheral origins and minority affiliations, were their middle peasant and provincial town petit bourgeois backgrounds.

It is said, probably in jest, that wearing a tie or talking like a city dweller at meetings of the Ba'th party's Regional Congress in the mid-1960s were feared to be sufficient grounds for expulsion from the party.

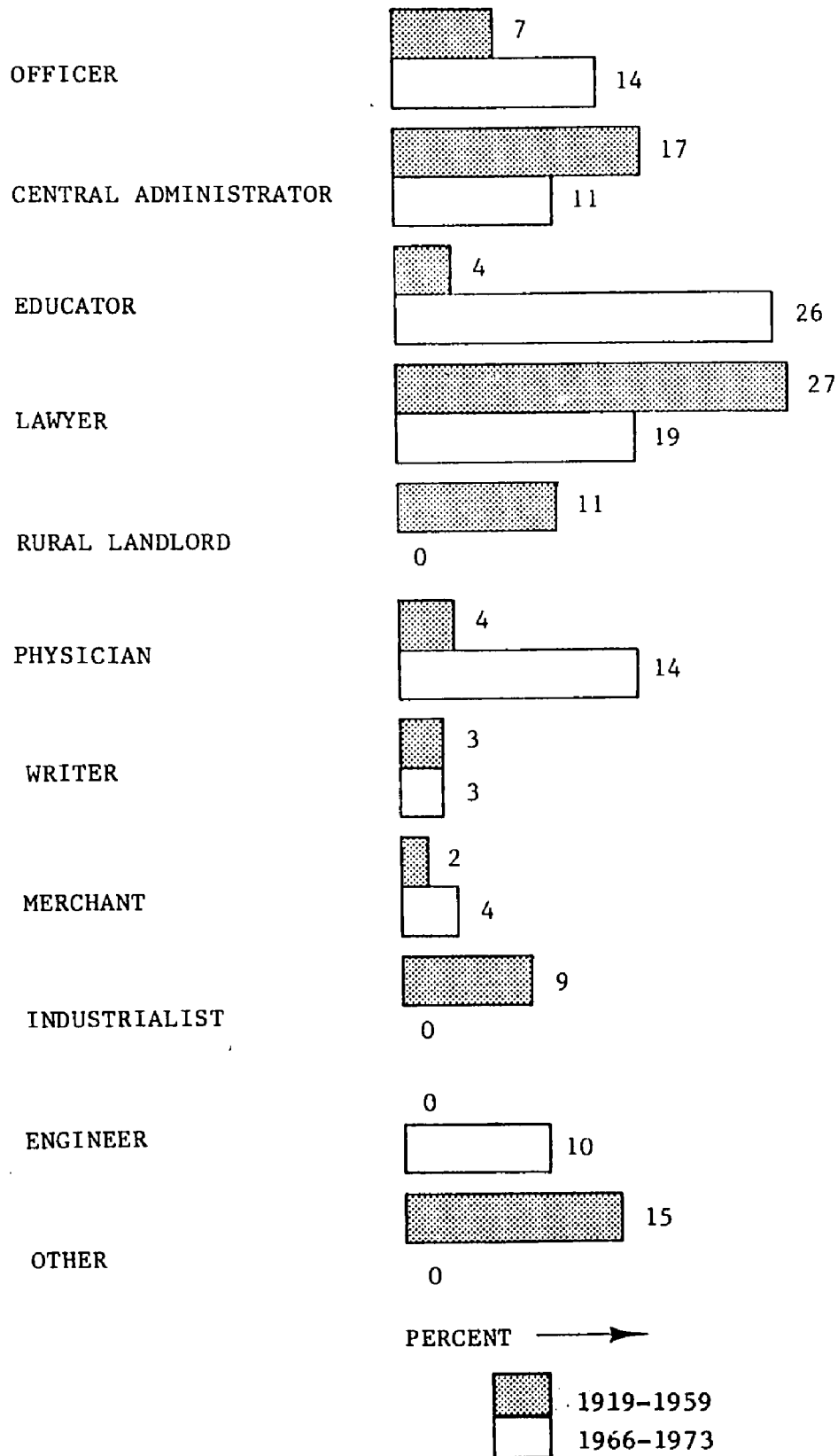


Fig. 2.8. Occupational Structure of Cabinets in 1919-1959 and 1966-1973

That there have been many villagers in the Regional Command is beyond dispute. Many of the officers in particular had peasant backgrounds: Ṣalāḥ Jadīd, Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad, Muḥammad 'Umrān, and Muṣṭafā Tlās, for example, came from the villages of Duwayr, Qardāḥah, al-Mukharrem, and Rastan respectively.³⁸ Salīm Ḥaṭūm and Aḥmad Suwaydānī similarly came from villages in as-Suwaydā' and Dar'ā.³⁹ Of the officers, in fact, only one, Amīn al-Ḥāfiẓ, came from Aleppo and one, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Khulayfāwī, from Damascus.⁴⁰ Muḥammad Rabāḥ al-Ṭawīl and Ḥamad 'Ubayd came from the middle-sized towns of al-Lādhiqīyah and as-Suwaydā' and 'Abd al-Karīm Jundī from the small town of Salamīyah.⁴¹ To conclude that these officers, by virtue of their predominantly rural background, are from the poorest section of the population is premature. The Jadīd family, for example, was by village standards moderately affluent; Ṣalāḥ received his education in Damascus and two of his brothers also became army officers.⁴² Indeed, the remaining officers by the mere fact of the educational qualifications required for entrance to the Ḥimṣ Military Academy must have at least come from middle peasant families. 'Umrān, whose mother was a servant and whose father sold his only cow to finance his son's education, was an exception.⁴³

A career in the officer corps has traditionally been a preferred means of upward social mobility among the sons of the middle peasantry. It has also been one of the major employment outlets for those with a secondary education but too poor to attend university. School teaching has appealed to the same sectors of the population for the same reasons. Persons who opted for military or teaching careers therefore tended to have similar social origins.

The backgrounds of the Regional Command's teachers confirm this

expected similarity, for virtually all came from hinterland villages or small provincial towns. That they could eventually advance to high national positions indicates that the Ba'thi revolution was also a social one, permitting rapid advancement for persons who might otherwise have remained in a provincial rut. Their origins would have precluded their achieving such prominence under an ancien régime dominated by landlords, merchants, and industrialists.

Adīb Miḥīm is an example. Born in 1939, he started teaching in primary schools in al-Ḥasakah in 1961. After teaching in Algeria for some years, he returned to Dayr az-Zawr where he became prominent in local Ba'thi politics. He was appointed Inspector of Primary Education in the province in 1969--at the age of thirty--and then received a university degree in 1970. In 1971 he was elected to the Regional Command and in the following year was appointed Minister of Local Government.⁴⁴ Such advancement was almost unheard of before the revolution.

Remaining Regional Command members tended to come from more affluent provincial petit bourgeois or bourgeois families. Typically, they were from regional central places, where they received their early schooling. Most were trained as doctors or lawyers in Damascus and were part of a provincial intelligentsia.

The Ba'thi revolution also opened many doors to such persons. Dāwūd Riddāwī's rapid advancement provides an example. Riddāwī, a doctor, was born in Dayr az-Zawr in 1935. At a young age, he became a member of the local branch of the Ba'th party and was appointed Director of Health in the province. He was appointed national Minister of Health at the age of thirty-four and was elected to the Regional Command at thirty-five.⁴⁵

Some, however, came from prominent local families. Nūr al-Dīn al-Atāsī, for example, was from a poorer segment of the vast Atāsī clan from Ḥims that provided several cabinet ministers and parliamentary deputies during the ancien régime. Sāmī al-Jundī came from a landowning family in Salamīyah. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām's father was a prominent lawyer from Bāniyās, a small town south of the city of al-Lādhiqīyah. The Khaddām family also sent deputies to parliament under the ancien régime.⁴⁶

Notably absent from this nominally socialist body are persons from Syria's small working class. 'Abdallāh Aḥmad, an 'Alawi laborer who, in the words of one informant, "dug ditches,"⁴⁷ Khalīd al-Ḥakīm, a trade unionist, and 'Abdallāh Aḥmar, a small trader from a village near Damascus, appear to be exceptions.

If Regional Command members had not actually experienced acute poverty, they often grew up in its midst and were immeasurably more aware of its existence than traditional Damascene and Aleppan politicians, many of whom owned scores of villages and hundreds of acres of land. If they were not peasants themselves, their parents often were, and they were sympathetic to the aspirations of the peasantry and committed to agrarian reform and rural transformation. In this sense, one can speak of them as the initiators of a village revolution. As a whole, they were young, well-qualified professionals with a provincial town or rural petit bourgeois background. Although their occupations ostensibly did not differ greatly from those of many elite members under past regimes, their collective outlook and social origins were altogether different.

It is more difficult to generalize about the social origins of ministers, who encompass a greater range of backgrounds. Generally,

ministers resemble Regional Command members in that compared to pre-Ba'thi ministers, many came from provincial petit bourgeois families. In contrast to command members, however, many more had urban middle and even upper middle class backgrounds.⁴⁸ Generally also, more powerful cabinet ministers resembled command members in their humble social origins, while less important ministers often had backgrounds similar to those of pre-1973 ministers. Clearly there are exceptions to so broad a generalization.

Other Elite Positions

Data on other elite members, such as editors, senior civil servants, trade union leaders, and chairmen of state banks, public utilities, government monopolies, and nationalized industries are far harder to obtain. Moreover, existing data do not lend themselves to statistical analysis. As a result, generalizations about this sector of the elite are based on fragmentary evidence and must be regarded as tentative.

Whereas the composition of government cabinets and other primary political decision-making bodies can be transformed suddenly, other less clearly defined sectors of a national elite resist abrupt change. In part, forces of inertia ensured some continuity in the latter after the revolution. Damascenes and Aleppans continue to hold high office, particularly in the civil service, by virtue of their greater experience and initial advantage.⁴⁹ Their traditional prominence was not easily undermined by a change of political regime, no matter how abrupt or far reaching. Nor is there much evidence that they were systematically excluded from nonstrategic elite positions after 1963.

Nevertheless, the revolution did affect the composition of all sectors of the national elite by opening many doors to traditionally disadvantaged regional and ethnic groups. After the mid-1960s, peasant or lower middle class origins were not a barrier to advancement, success, or elite membership. On the contrary, they were occasionally a decided advantage, particularly for sensitive positions where the periphery's new power was most conspicuous. Generally, those with adequate or superior qualifications whose upward mobility had formerly been curtailed by provincial origins were direct and immediate beneficiaries of the Ba'th's assumption of power. This usually had less to do with the spoils of office than the fact that the Ba'thi revolution was a social one and opened up new opportunities for such persons. This opening was facilitated by three developments.

Historically, purges accompanying changes of regime were largely confined to the officer corps. They were limited in part because pre-Ba'thi regimes differed little and were often so short lived that rulers were inclined to purge only officers most likely to overthrow them. Nor did they possess the strength and confidence to conduct extensive purges, for today's purger would have been tomorrow's purged. The Ba'thi revolution changed the rules of the game. Thereafter, large-scale purges extended beyond the officer corps and left few areas untouched.⁵⁰

Many of those dismissed were replaced by sympathetic Ba'this from the periphery. This was how many Syrians perceived the situation. They alleged that the new political elite's friends and relatives were obtaining lucrative and prestigious jobs with remarkable ease. Van Dam echoed a widespread sentiment in observing that the Ba'thi revolution was

a large-scale revolution of the Syrian countryside against the cities. . . . Villagers migrated in large numbers to the cities where they joined their family or tribal members who had taken . . . power.⁵¹

One of the revolution's beneficiaries--and later one of its victims--admitted as much when he referred to the "convoys of villagers" who left the "coast and mountains" (which is to say al-Lādhiqīyah) for Damascus after the Ba'th came to power.⁵²

Whereas the dictum that to the victor belong the spoils of office has traditionally been true in Syrian politics, large-scale purges in the mid-1960s meant that there were more offices to win and more spoils to distribute. Purges also led many to believe that 'Alawis in particular were becoming overrepresented in all sectors of the national elite. Although many prestigious elite posts made vacant by purges were often allocated to favored persons, most spoils of office were distributed by way of nonelite positions. The convoys of 'Alawi villagers often received low-level jobs in the state bureaucracy, such as janitor, porter, and border guard.⁵³ Because the public frequently encountered these persons in their dealings with the bureaucracy, 'Alawis were attributed a degree of influence and power which they neither possessed nor claimed. The large number of 'Alawis in visible, low positions was taken as an indication that they were equally numerous in all levels of the bureaucracy. But the widespread view that they had taken over the state machinery was unwarranted and exaggerated. Like the bread of a sandwich, they were in the top and bottom levels of the bureaucracy but not in its middle. Purges helped 'Alawis and other persons from the periphery gain a foothold, but no more.

Opportunities also presented themselves from large-scale Ba'thi

nationalizations in 1964 and 1965. These were accompanied by a proliferation of government agencies, a vast expansion of state machinery, and hence a 64 percent increase in the number of government employees from 34,957 in 1962 to 57,208 in 1970.⁵⁴

Many senior positions in this enlarged state bureaucracy were given to provincial Ba'this.⁵⁵ Indeed, after every wave of nationalizations, Ba'thi headquarters and state enterprises allegedly sent letters to local party branches requesting lists of candidates for top management posts.⁵⁶ Provincial Ba'this did not, however, occupy all top positions within state companies and the like. Damascenes and non-Ba'this were not excluded.⁵⁷ Furthermore, to be Ba'thi is not to be unqualified. In the overwhelming majority of cases, Ba'this appointed to top bureaucratic positions possessed the necessary technocratic or administrative skills. The point is that whereas many of these posts were traditionally the preserve of the Damascene and Aleppan technocracy, Syrians from the provinces could, and did, obtain them in increasing numbers after the revolution. They did not displace technocrats from the core region of the state so much as supplement them.

Extremely heavy voluntary emigration of professionals from the state also facilitated changes in the national elite's composition.⁵⁸ Although such emigration has always existed, it quickened after the Ba'th came to power, for many highly skilled persons, particularly from major cities, believed they had more to lose than to gain from the so-called village revolution. Professionals with provincial backgrounds, a product of the postindependence expansion of education, were the principal beneficiaries of the departure of their more affluent colleagues. Because their services were needed in an expanding bureaucracy,

advancement was often rapid.

With the exception of purges, these developments enabled politically nonstrategic sectors of the national elite to absorb persons from the periphery and regional minorities without too much dislocation. Not only was the pie being cut differently because of a sympathetic political leadership, it was also much bigger.

Finally, there are certain areas, outside of the Regional Command, government cabinets, internal security agencies, and the leadership of the armed forces, in which persons from the periphery are well placed. Specifically, they occupy many of the key positions which serve to protect and consolidate Ba'thi rule, such as provincial governor,⁵⁹ newspaper editor,⁶⁰ and presidents of unions, professional associations, universities, and militias.⁶¹ This, perhaps, is a truer measure of the periphery's power than its representation in the elite as a whole. As long as these strategic posts are held by the periphery, the regime is relatively secure.

This chapter has shown, first, that political power has shifted dramatically from center to periphery since the Ba'thi revolution and second, that persons from al-Lādhiqīyah and from the 'Alawi community form a central group within the coalition of the periphery that now rules Syria. The existence of political differences within this coalition should not detract from its preeminently congruent objectives or from the overriding questions of how and why this revolution occurred.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. For a description of Ba'thi organization, see Kamel S. Abu Jaber, The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: History, Ideology and Organization (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), pp. 139-45 and Itamar Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, 1963-1966: The Army-Party Symbiosis (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1972), pp. 230-31.
2. In a typical cabinet formed in December 1972, for example, only sixteen of thirty-one ministers were Ba'this. Most of the others, however, were ex-Ba'this or socialists of one persuasion or another.
3. The predominance of Damascenes and Aleppans in cabinets between 1946 and 1958 is documented in pp. 42, 45, and 46.
4. Al-Hayāt, 1 March 1966. Ṭawīl was also Minister of Social and Labor Affairs from March 1966 to October 1968. He was a member of the Ba'thi Military Committee, a group of officers who managed to obtain most strategic command positions within the officer corps between 1963 and 1966. Most officers in the Military Committee were 'Alawis and Druzes (Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 18).
5. A judge from al-Lādhiqīyah alleged this relationship during an interview in December 1974.
6. Ibid. According to other sources, Asad was educated in Damascus. (L'Orient-Le Jour, 15 October 1970).
7. Rustum was also Director of Party Education (L'Orient-Le Jour, 22 March 1969 and 1 April 1969).
8. Originally a teacher, Ṣaddīqnī rose to prominence as the party's Director of Information and Propaganda (Interviews with an editor from al-Lādhiqīyah and the son of a Damascene ex-Prime Minister, June 1974).
9. Mīr, an officer from Maṣyāf who participated in the 'Alawi-led February 1966 coup, was a founding member of the Military Committee (Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 10 and Al-Hayāt, 1 March 1966).
10. Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," p. 406; interviews with a judge from al-Lādhiqīyah, December 1974, an academic from al-Lādhiqīyah, January 1975, and an American anthropologist, August 1975.

11. In some respects, the coup replaced one 'Alawi-al-Lādhiqīyah dominated Ba'thi faction with another more moderate one. As was noted at the time, "the expulsion of Ṣalāḥ Jadīd from the centers of power in Syria does not mean the end of the sectarian system (al-nizām al-ṭā'ifī), for Ṣalāḥ Jadīd was only one of the pillars of the system, not the whole system" (Al-Ḥawādith, 20 November 1970).
12. For background to this coup d'etat, see Malcolm H. Kerr, "Hafiz Asad and the Changing Patterns of Syrian Politics," International Journal 28 (1973):689-706. Antagonisms between Asad and Jadīd were fundamentally rooted in ambition, ideological differences, and conflicting interpretations about the role of the military in Syrian politics. While Asad built a solid following in the armed forces, Jadīd's strength was based largely on the support of a majority of Regional Command members and the party's civilian wing. In a series of showdowns between 1968 and 1969, many of Jadīd's associates were ousted and Asad was able to place his supporters in strategic positions. Asad attempted several coups d'etat before finally succeeding in November 1970. The complexity and uncertainty of the political situation in Syria between 1968 and 1970 was summed up by the London Economist in an article appropriately entitled "Yes, No, Yes--Yes It was a Coup" (27 November 1970). The dispute between Asad and Jadīd, it should be stressed, transcended ethnic and geographic divisions. Among Jadīd's associates ousted between 1968 and 1970, for example, were several members of the Isma'ili Jundī clan (Sāmī, Khālīd, 'Alī, Muḥammad, and 'Abd al-Karīm), who were scattered throughout the elite, as well as several members of the 'Alawi Nu'aysa clan, including three officers, a provincial governor, and a member of the Regional Command. Sunnis, like Ahmad Suwaydānī and Muḥammad 'Id 'Ashāwī suffered a similar fate. Among the many persons who were ousted after Asad's 1970 coup were several prominent 'Alawis (Ibrāhīm Mākhūs and two of Ṣalāḥ Jadīd's cousins, 'Izzat and Kāsir), non-'Alawis from al-Lādhiqīyah (Muḥammad Rabāḥ al-Ṭawīl, most notably), and Sunnis like Nūr al-Dīn al-Atāsī from Ḥimṣ and Yūsuf Zu'ayyīn from Dayr az-Zawr.
13. Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," p. 409; al-Hayāt, 29 October 1968 and 15 November 1970; interview with an American journalist, June 1974. Ibrāhīm was also once Commander of the important Maydān Division and Army Field Commander (Arab Report and Record, 16-30, November 1970, p. 644).
14. Interview with Israeli academic, February 1975.
15. Thirty-five year old Rif'at Asad, once a petty clerk in the town of al-Lādhiqīyah, has been a source of embarrassment to Ḥāfiẓ, for his "behaviour as an independent warlord at the head of a private army is increasingly scandalous. . . . Rifaat is a law to himself--his men call him 'the Leader,' and no Syrian official dares resist his illicit exactions. He is said to have free drawing rights on the Syrian Central Bank, his own prison, and intelligence operations in Lebanon as well as Syria. He had a reputation for immense corruption--'he must be worth 30 or 40 million Syrian pounds by now,' said one businessman. Friction with the regular army has developed

- to the point where he has had to set up his own military police" (The Guardian Weekly, 22 September 1973). Rif'at's privileged force is feared by ordinary Syrians (Interview with psychiatrist from al-Ladhiqiyah, December 1974). Ḥāfiẓ tolerates it for, as one Syrian official observed, "if there is a coup, you can be sure there will be a counter-coup within 24 hours. No one can touch the President as long as the defense force is commanded by his brother" (Cited in Ted Morgan, "The Wild Men Become a Nation," New York Times Magazine, 18 May 1975, p. 81). In April 1975, Rif'at was elected to the Regional Command of the Ba'th Party and appointed Commander of a so-called Special Defense Council (Arab Report and Record, 1-15 April 1975, p. 229).
16. Another of Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad's brothers, Jamīl, was elected recently to the National Assembly (Arab Report and Record, 10-31 May 1973, p. 237).
 17. Shihābī is a Sunni. Zāẓā, an 'Alawī born in Ṭarṭūs in 1932, was one of six members of a "Military Council" formed by Asad at the time of his so-called "white coup" of November 1968. As Director of Military Intelligence, he was one of Asad's main military supporters in his 1970 coup (Al-Ḥayāt, 29 November 1968; Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi: Structure, analyse et biographies (Damascus, 1974), p. 14). 'Alī al-Madanī was also one of Asad's principal military supporters in the 1970 coup (Al-Ḥayāt, 15 November 1970). Other members of "The Big Ten" are said to include Muṣṭafā Ṭlās, Muṣṭafā Sharba, Tawfiq al-Jih̄nī, and Maḥmūd 'Azām. Ṭlās, a Sunni, has been Minister of Defense since March 1972. Appointed Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in 1971, he is also conveniently the brother-in-law of the Deputy Commander of the Palestine Liberation Army (Arab Report and Record 16-31 May 1971, p. 264; Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 25 (December 1968):45; Los Angeles Times, 22 June 1976). Sharba participated in Asad's coups of 1968 and 1970. In 1968, he was appointed Commander of the Seventieth Brigade, the most important within Syria (Al-Ḥayāt, 28 October 1968). Jih̄nī is Commander of the Commando Forces, and 'Azām is a Palestinian (Interview with Israeli academic, February 1975). Muḥammad Khūlī, Director of Air Force Intelligence, is probably also a member of "The Big Ten".
 18. These statistics are compiled from Jūrj Fāris, ed., Man Hum fī al-'Ālam al-'Arabī (Damascus: Maktabat al-Dirāsāt al-Sūriyah wa al-'Arabīyah, 1957), the only "Who's Who" ever to be published in Syria.
 19. Because many ministers still hold portfolios, the boundaries of the period under analysis have been relaxed. For convenience, the formation of a new cabinet in September 1974 has been chosen as a cut-off point for length of service.
 20. Interview with an editor from al-Lādhiqīyah, June 1974.
 21. Winder, "Syrian Deputies and Cabinet Ministers," pp. 420, 421-22.

22. Macintyre, "Syrian Political Age Differentials," pp. 207-13. To some extent, this youthfulness is evident throughout the elite. Aḥmad Iskandār Aḥmad is an extreme example. Born in 1944, he is from a small village in Ḥimṣ. After a stint as political editor for the Syrian Arab New Agency (SANA), he was appointed, at the age of 27, Director General and Editor-in-Chief of the state publishing house (Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, p. 17).
23. Colombe, "Remarques sur le Ba'th," p. 59.
24. Thus, Nūr al-Dīn al-Atāsī, Ibrāhīm Mākhūs, and Yūsuf Zu'ayyīn all served as volunteer doctors during the Algerian war of independence (Kerr, "Hafiz Asad and Changing Patterns," p. 693). Zu'ayyīn is Atāsī's brother-in-law (Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 242).
25. Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Rapport 1967-1968 sur l'économie syrienne (Damascus, 1968), p. c.63; L'Orient-Le Jour, 27 October 1970.
26. Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, p. 13.
27. Among teachers on the Regional Command were Muḥammad al-Zu'bī, Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb, and Marwān Ḥabbāsh from Dar'ā, Ḥamūd al-Shūfī and Jamīl Shayyā from as-Suwaydā', Jūrj Ṣaddīqnī, 'Adnān Shumān, and Muḥammad Ḥaydar from al-Lādhiqīyah, and Adīb Milḥim from Dayr az-Zawr.
28. Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 26 (February 1969):49.
29. Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, p. 15. Other ministers who were professors included 'Abd al-Hashīm in medicine, Muḥammad al-'Imādī in economics, 'Adnān Muṣṭafā in physics, and 'Abdallāh Wafiq al-Shahīdī in nuclear physics.
30. This was Muṣṭafā Ḥaddād, a professor of botany (Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Structure du deuxième cabinet Atassi et biographies de ses membres (Damascus, 1969), p. 13).
31. They were: Nūr al-Dīn al-Atāsī, Ibrāhīm Mākhūs, Yūsuf Za'ayyīn, Ḥabīb Ḥaddād, and Dāwūd Riddāwī. Sāmī al-Jundī, who in fact is a dentist, served as a cabinet minister before February 1966.
32. They were the two Fayṣal brothers, Yūsuf and Wāṣil, from Ḥimṣ.
33. Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Structure du premier cabinet Khlefaoui et biographies de ses membres (Damascus, 1972), p. 13. Parenthetically, in 1972 Sa'dāh met a death that few other Syrians can claim: he was run over by a motorcycle in Penang, Malaysia (Arab Report and Record, 1-15 November, 1972, p. 540).
34. Five of fourteen ministers who were lawyers also served on the Regional Command: Muḥammad 'Id 'Ashāwī, Fā'iz al-Jasim, 'Abd al-Karīm 'Adī, 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, and Mashhūr Zaitūn. Regional Command lawyers who were not ministers included: Aḥmad Abū Ṣālīḥ, Fahmī Yūsufī, Muḥammad 'Alī Ḥalabī, and 'Iṣām Nā'ib.

35. Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Structure du premier cabinet Atassi et biographies de ses membres (Damascus, 1968), p. 7.
36. Ibid., p. 12.
37. Winder, "Syrian Deputies and Cabinet Ministers," pp. 52-53.
38. Michael H. Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism in Syria," Middle East Journal 26 (1972):134; Syria, Structure du premier cabinet Khlefaoui, p. 1; Van Dusen "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," p. 406; Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 25 (December 1968):45.
39. Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 235; Eliezer Be'eri, Army Officers in Arab Politics and Society (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 165.
40. Hāfiz was nevertheless from a poor family (Be'eri, Army Officers, p. 155). Khulayfāwī's family was of Moroccan origin (L'Orient-Le Jour, 2 April 1971).
41. Al-Jarīdah, 23 July 1966; L'Orient-Le Jour, 3 March 1969. Jundī was a cousin of Sāmī al-Jundī, another command member.
42. Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism," p. 134.
43. Bernard Vernier, "Le rôle politique de l'armée de Syrie," Politique étrangère 29 (1964):466.
44. Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, p. 10.
45. Syria, Structure du deuxième cabinet Atassi, p. 14.
46. Interview with a judge from al-Lādhiqīyah, December 1974. 'Adnān Khaddām, also a lawyer, was parliamentary deputy from Bāniyās from 1954 until 1957, for example.
47. Interview with an American anthropologist, August 1975.
48. This difference is confirmed by data on the type, level, and place of elite members' higher education. If command members advanced beyond secondary school at all, it was to the "poor man's university"--the Hims Military Academy--or to Syrian universities. Few ministers did not possess undergraduate degrees and, unlike command members, many had postgraduate degrees. Furthermore, a great many attended foreign universities: 'Umar al-Sibā'ī, Nājī al-Darāwishah, Muṣṭafā Haddād, Maḥmūd Sa'dāh, and Nūrallāh Nūrallāh in France, Aḥmad al-Ḥasan in Britain, Muḥammad al-'Imādī in the United States, and 'Abd al-Hashīm in the Soviet Union, to name a few. That they could afford this expense is a measure of their relatively privileged social position.

49. Damascenes who later became cabinet ministers, for example, previously held the posts of Director General of the Ministry of Education (Mahmūd al-Ayyūbī), Secretary General and Director of Budgets in the Ministry of Finance (Muwaffaq al-Shurbajī and Ahmad Murād respectively), Secretary General of the Ministry of Religious Endowments (Ghalīb 'Abdūn), Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('Abdallāh al-Khānī), and Director of Social and Economic Planning in the Ministry of Planning (Muhammad al-'Imādī) (Al-Hayāt, 25 December 1972, 4 January 1966, and 2 March 1966; Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 26 (February 1969):48; Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, pp. 14, 15).
50. Although purges started in the early 1960s, they reached their full force only after the 1966 coup d'etat. Three months after the coup, Jamīl Shayyā, the Druze Minister of Information, announced to an audience what had been apparent to many since February: "We are purifying the state machinery of reactionary elements." Within a few days, twenty diplomats were retired by decree, and another fifty-eight were transferred. One week later the activities of the National Union of Students were suspended and its president arrested. The dismissal of twenty-two magistrates and the transferral of ninety-seven judges through "administrative reorganization" followed. An additional sixteen judges were arrested for protesting these actions. Nor were the Ba'th party or the army unaffected by the spirit of the season: in May, twenty-two Ba'this were expelled from the Aleppo branch of the party, and in June, seventy officers were retired. By September, the Federation of Trade Unions, whose president at the time was a relation of the Isma'ili Director of State Security, announced its intention to purge public enterprises of "reactionary saboteurs and enemies of the revolution." Dismissals, which continued throughout the following year, even touched the state Syrian Insurance Company (Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 23 (October 1966):36-37 and (December 1966):28).
51. Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 8.
52. Sāmī al-Jundī, Al-Ba'th (Beirut: Dār Al-Nahār, 1969), p. 136. This "convoy" is not so unusual. Jimmy Carter's campaign manager, Hamilton Jordan, recently played on the Washington establishment's fears of a Georgian invasion when he joked that "we're going to set up our mobile homes on the south lawn of the White House." Another Georgian, Julian Bond, also noted the number of Georgians moving to Washington, D.C., after Carter's victory: "The loudest sound heard in Atlanta was the quiet clicks of thousands of suitcase locks closing for the Great Exodus." (Newsweek, 22 November 1976, p. 26).
53. Interview with a former editor of a Ba'th party newspaper, June 1974.
54. These data are compiled from several volumes of Syria's Statistical Abstract, 1962-1971.
55. Ṣalāḥ Wazzān, an officer from al-Lādhīqīyah, was, for example, made Director of the State Sugar Company (Al-Hayāt, 4 January 1966).

- Ba'this were appointed to such diverse posts as Director of the Agricultural Bank (Mut'ib Shinān from as-Suwaydā') and Director of the Consumer Goods Organization ('Abd al-Karīm 'Adī from Ḥamāh) (L'Orient—Le Jour, 27 October 1970; Arab Report and Record, 16-30 November 1970). There is also, of course, a political bandwagon effect, with skilled people becoming Ba'this in order to advance professionally.
56. Avraham Ben-Tzur, "The Neo-Ba'th Party of Syria," Journal of Contemporary History 3 (1968):172. Ben-Tzur's method of "data collection" was somewhat unconventional: he used Ba'thi documents seized by Israeli forces when they occupied al-Qunayṭirah.
 57. Such Damascenes as 'Abd al-Laṭīf Qutayṭ, Aḥmad Badr al-Dīn, and Maḥmūd al-Ayyūbī, to name only a few, were directors of such diverse concerns as the State Corporation for Public Industry and the Union of Textile Industries, the Hidjaz Railways Company, and Director of Administrative Affairs for the Euphrates Corporation respectively (L'Orient—Le Jour, 27 October 1970 and 2 January 1966; Al-Ḥayāt, 4 January 1966; Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, p. 9). Non-Ba'this from the periphery also fared well. Muṣṭafā Hallāj, for example, a Socialist Unionist from al-Lādhīqīyah, was appointed Director of the State Tobacco Monopoly in 1969 (L'Orient—Le Jour, 27 October 1970; Syria, Structure du premier cabinet Khlefaoui, p. 11).
 58. Between 1956 and 1969, an estimated 58 percent of all Syrian professionals left the country (Kerr, "Hafiz Asad and Changing Patterns," p. 692). Such emigration quickened in the 1960s as a result of booming economies and shortages of skilled persons in Arab oil-producing states. Countries like Kuwait and rival Iraq offered wages that were considerably higher than those paid within Syria.
 59. Since 1963, Ba'this from al-Lādhīqīyah were at various times governors of Damascus, Ḥamāh, and Dayr az-Zawr ('Abd al-Ḥalīm Khaddām, Muḥammad Ḥaydar, and As'ad Ṣaqr). Provinces which provided most members to the Regional Command generally also provided most governors, for the latter post was often a step to command membership. Dar'ā, for instance, sent governors to al-Ḥasakah, al-Lādhīqīyah, and Ḥamāh ('Abdallāh al-Fallāh and Muḥammad Ṭalīb Hilāl), while Ba'this from Dayr az-Zawr were variously governors to Dar'ā, Ḥamāh, al-Ḥasakah, and Ḥims (Muḥammad 'Id 'Ashāwī, Fā'iz al-Jasim, and Marwān Sabbāgh) (Middle East Record 1967, p. 493; Syria, Structure du deuxième cabinet Atassi, p. 13; Syria, Deuxième cabinet Mahmoud Ayoubi, p. 9; Syria, Structure du premier cabinet Khlefaoui, p. 14; Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 26 (February 1969):49 and 25 (December 1968):45).
 60. The only newspapers of any real importance, al-Ba'th and al-Thawrah, are party organs. They have more or less consistently been edited by party members from the provinces, such as Ismā'il 'Urfī, Nājī al-Darāwishah, and Aḥmad Iskandār Aḥmad from Dayr az-Zawr, Dar'ā, and Ḥims respectively. The state publishing house, Dār al-Waḥdah, has similarly had provincial Ba'thi directors, although recently

a Damascene, 'Adnān Baghajātī, held this position. While little is known about those who manage Syrian radio and television, for at least two years its director was As'ad Saqr, a Ba'thi from Jablah in al-Lādhiqīyah (Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 125, Al-Hayāt, 30 May 1969; L'Orient-Le Jour, 27 October 1970; Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 26 (February 1969):49).

61. Fā'iz Nāsir from Dar'ā was president of the Syrian Teachers Association before becoming a cabinet minister in 1970, for example, and Mut'ib Shinān from as-Suwaydā' was president of the Syrian Students Association between 1966 and 1969. Similarly, Khālīd al-Jundī, an Isma'ili from Ḥamāh, was president of the General Federation of Trade Unions before being ousted in the late 1960s, and Muḥammad Rabāḥ al-Tawīl, a Ba'thi officer from al-Lādhiqīyah, commanded the Popular Army, a militia of peasants and workers. Until assassinated in 1977, Muḥammad al-Fadl, a close 'Alawi friend of President Asad, was president of Damascus University (Syria, Structure du premier cabinet Khlefaoui, pp. 13, 16; Middle East Record, 1967, p. 490; Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 26 (February 1969):48; New York Times, 10 July 1977).

CHAPTER III

THE SYRIAN MILITARY: AN INSTRUMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL REVOLUTION

In a crowded bus, somewhere in the Middle East, a man turns to his neighbor:

"Excuse me sir, are you in the army?"

"No."

"Do you have a son or a brother in the army?"

"No."

"Are any of your in-laws in the army?"

"No."

"Then, curse your father, stop crushing my toes."

—A Middle Eastern joke

Military intervention has become a major means of effecting political change in Third World countries. Syria has been no exception: since 1949, the armed forces have wielded power directly or, from off center stage, written the words to dramas acted out by civilian politicians. Whereas military rule was at first precarious (there were three coups d'etat in 1949 alone), it has become an ever more permanent fixture on the national political landscape.

More to the point, the geographic periphery and regional minorities rose to national prominence in the mid-1960s through a military coup d'etat; they could not easily have done so in any other manner. How the army came to be the vanguard of a geographical revolution, as well as an instrument of political change, is the subject of this chapter.

The Geographical and Ethnic Composition
of the Armed Forces Before 1946

Foundations for the periphery's seizure of power in the 1960s were partly laid during the French mandate over Syria and Lebanon between World Wars I and II. During this period, France created a number of local armed forces that were strikingly unbalanced in their geographical and ethnic composition. These forces formed the nucleus of the modern Syrian military.

The nomenclature and organization of France's locally raised armed forces were somewhat confusing. Initially, it created a body known as La Légion Syrienne. This evolved into the so-called Troupes Auxiliaires, which in 1930 merged with another ephemeral force, the Troupes Supplémentives, to become the Troupes Spéciales du Levant. Control of this latter force passed to Syria only in 1946. Because data on the ethnic composition of these forces exist only for 1924-28, this section is concerned initially with the Troupes Auxiliaires. Like preceding and succeeding forces, the Troupes Auxiliaires were recruited from Syria and Lebanon. Although French data presentation makes each of these two countries' contribution to the Troupes Auxiliaires impossible to assess, a large majority of soldiers were Syrian.¹

Like most armies formed by colonial powers, the Troupes Auxiliaires included a disproportionate number of regional minority soldiers. 'Alawis in particular were overrepresented, accounting for slightly less than 20 percent on average of all soldiers. Moreover, the proportion of 'Alawis steadily increased from 17 percent in 1924 to 21 percent in 1928, a little less than double their share of the total population of Syria and Lebanon. Because there are very few 'Alawis in Lebanon and a minority of all soldiers were Lebanese, however, their share of the Syrian

contingent was probably greatly understated. The Druzes were notably underrepresented during this period partly because they were in revolt against colonial rule between 1925 and 1927. Few wished to enlist in a force used to suppress their kinsmen (see fig. 3.1).

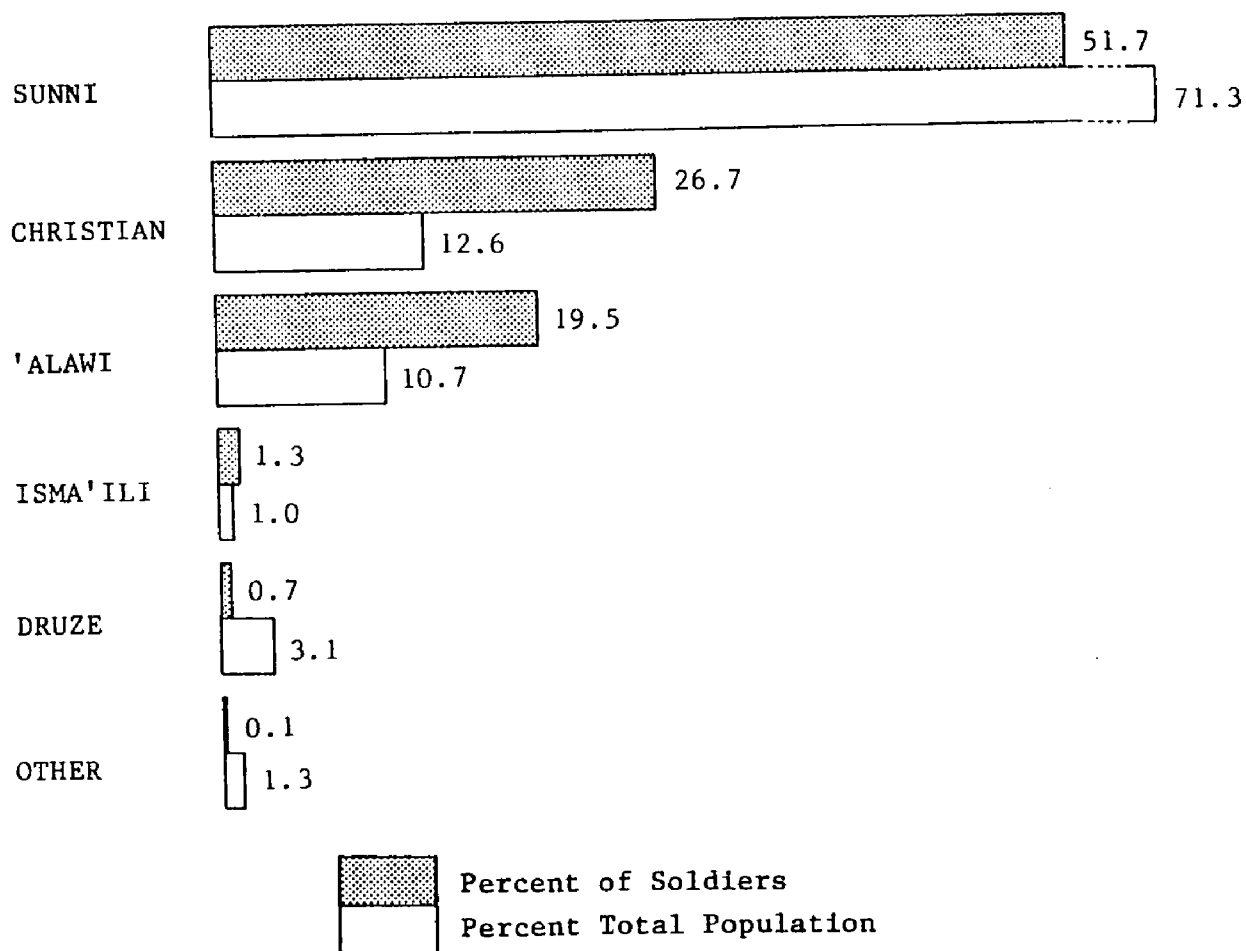


Fig. 3.1. Ethnic Composition of the Troupes Auxiliaires, 1924-1928 (Prepared from data in République Française, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Rapport sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1924-1928)

Overrepresentation of other minorities is partly masked by French subpopulation definitions. The Sunni category, for example, included non-Arabic speaking Kurds and Circassians, both of whom were extremely

overrepresented in the Troupes Auxiliaires, its adjuncts, and successors. Furthermore, Syrian Sunnis were more underrepresented and Syrian Christians more overrepresented than the data imply, because most soldiers came from Sunni-dominated Syria, rather than Lebanon, where Christians constitute 50 percent of the population.

Only a portion of all Syrians under arms during these years were in the Troupes Auxiliaires. In 1925, the French formed an additional force, the Troupes Supplétives, from the gardes ruraux, the gardes mobiles, and the gendarmerie to assist existing troops in quelling the Druze revolt and a concurrent nationalist uprising. The Troupes Supplétives included an even greater proportion of minority soldiers than the Troupes Auxiliaires, comprising seven companies of Lebanese artillerymen and six Druze, eight Circassian, three Kurd, four mixed, and several 'Alawi squadrons, among others.² The colonial power considered minority communities loyal in its hour of crisis. Thus, the 'Alawi community did not participate in the revolt; in fact, "it speedily furnished, through voluntary enlistment, the men necessary for the formation of squadrons of gardes mobiles."³ When the Troupes Supplétives were merged in 1930 with the Troupes Auxiliaires to form the Troupes Spéciales du Levant, the nucleus of the Syrian military thus contained an even greater percentage of minority soldiers than the tabulated data for 1924-28 imply.

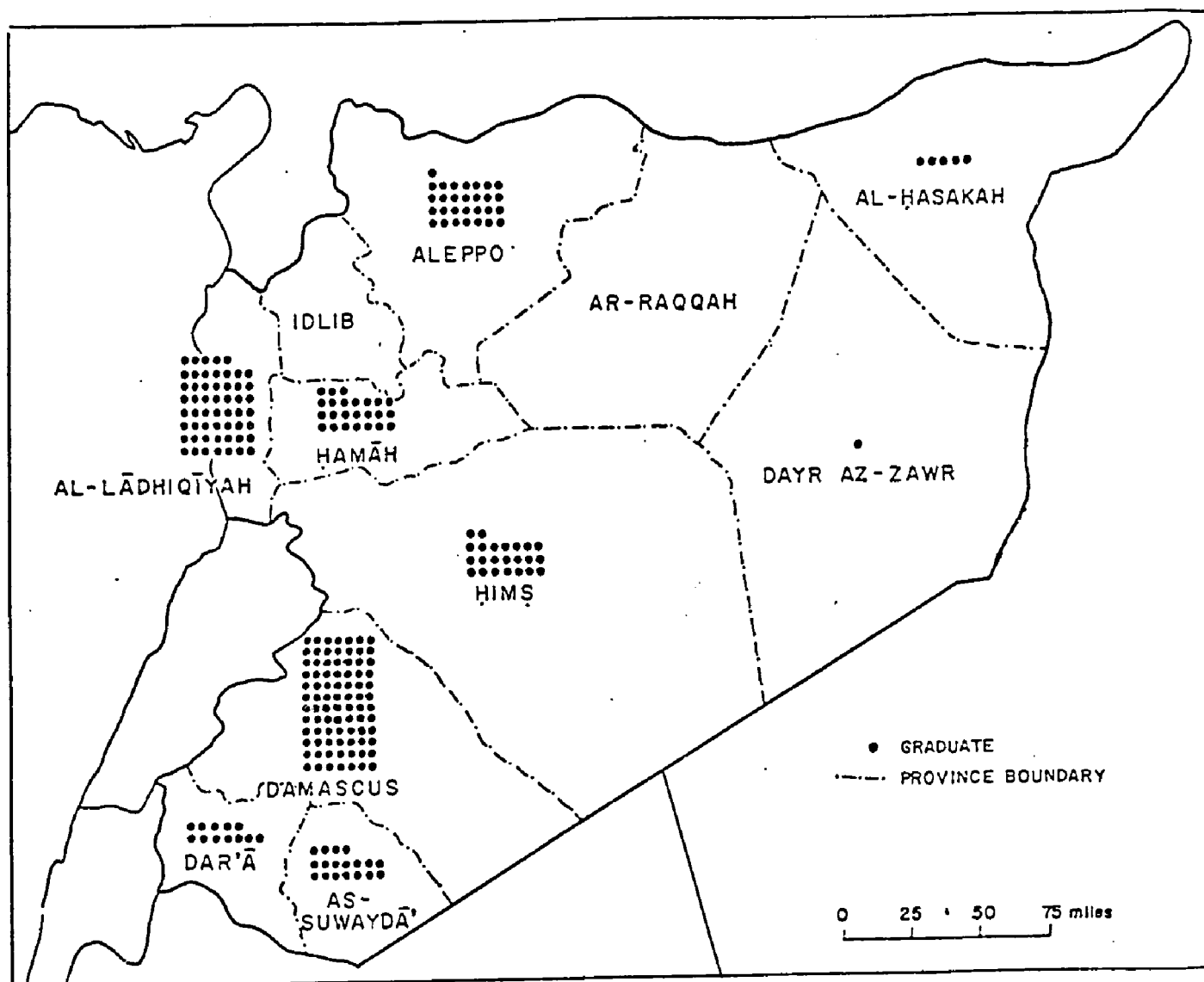
Conversely, after the 1925-27 revolt, the French tended to recruit fewer Sunni soldiers. Because Sunni Arabs were at the forefront of the nationalist movement, the colonial power viewed them as potentially disloyal irritants in a force designed to be a pliant and repressive instrument of its rule. Indeed, many Sunnis deserted the Troupes Auxiliaires during the revolt; this is reflected in the preceding data.

The revolt also confirmed French prejudices concerning the fighting abilities of different ethnic groups. The bearing of these stereotypes on colonial recruitment policy will be examined later. Suffice it to note here that the fierceness of Druze resistance to colonial pacification operations earned the community a begrudging respect among French officers. Ironically, after their defeat Druzes were encouraged to enlist in the Troupes Spéciales. By 1934, there were six Druze squadrons, and as a French observer noted:

It would not be difficult to increase this number, because many Druzes volunteer. At Souaida, we met one who awaited his turn to enlist: he was number 328 in line.⁴

Data on the Troupes Auxiliaires indicate little about the composition of particular ranks. As the French themselves admitted, initially nonofficer ranks "were almost exclusively made up of Muslims and 'Alawis (sic)" while "the majority of officers were Christian."⁵ Nor do these data specify soldiers' geographical origins. More detailed information on the officer corps compensate for these deficiencies and enable comparisons between pre- and postindependence recruitment patterns.

Some 250 officers graduated from the Syrian Military Academy before 1946, when control of the school passed out of French hands.⁶ Over 50 percent of these officers, however, came from Damascus and al-Lādhiqīyah. The former provided one-third of all officer cadets, the latter almost one-quarter. As-Suwaydā' was similarly overrepresented, sending over twice as many cadets to the academy as one would expect from the region's share of the total population. Only 11 percent of all officers, by contrast, came from Aleppo, which at that time contained 30 percent of all Syrians (see map 3.1 and fig. 3.2).



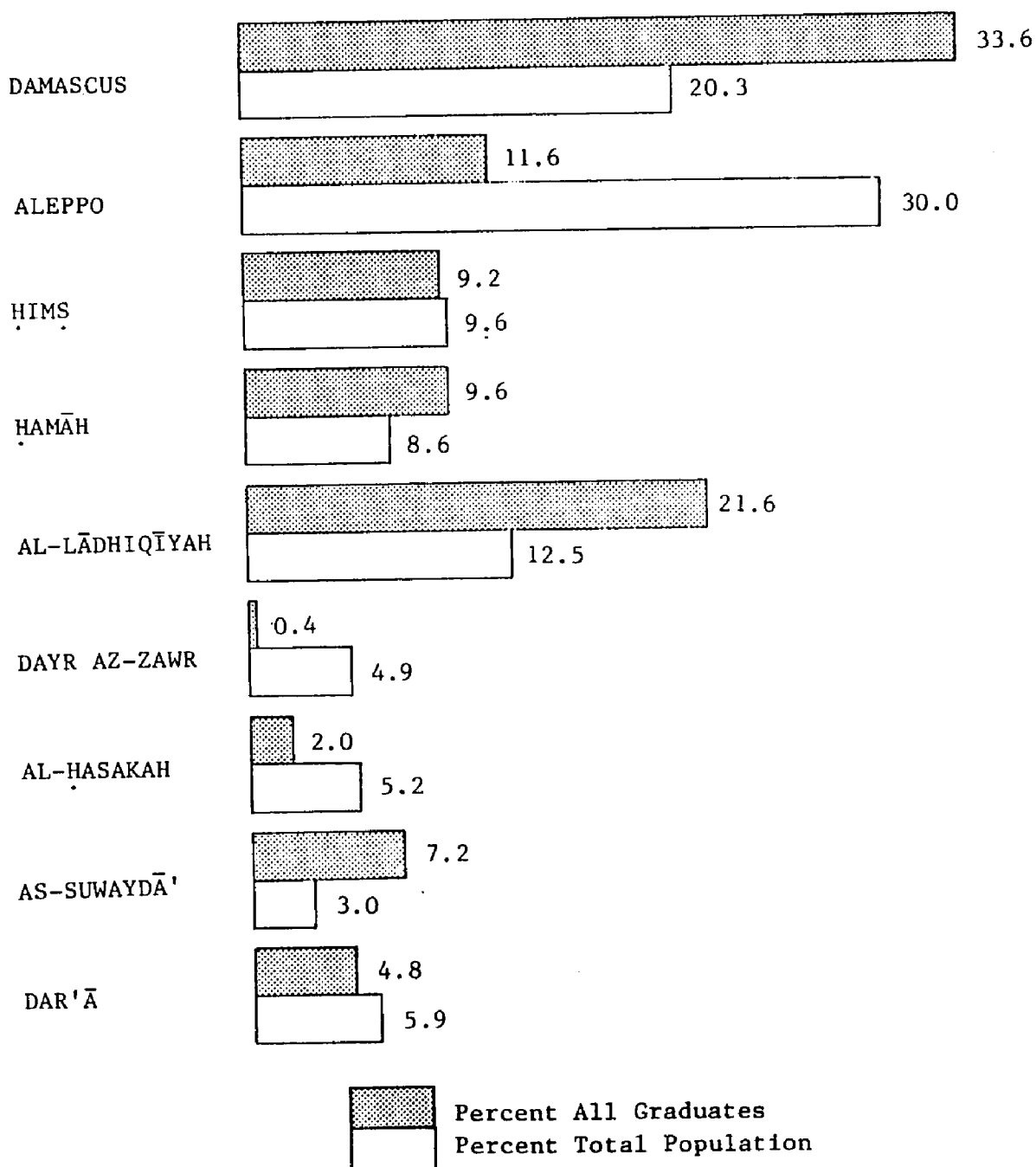


Fig. 3.2. Geographical Origins of Pre-1946 Military Academy Graduates (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendices 1-3, pp. 375-90)

Note: Not all of these provinces existed before 1946. Current provincial definitions are used to facilitate comparisons between pre- and postindependence periods. Pre-1946 data for Aleppo include Idlib and ar-Raqqah provinces.

Ethnic imbalances were even more striking, with Sunni Arabs accounting for less than one-half of all graduates. Most of these came from Damascus. By contrast, minorities--particularly Druzes, Circassians, and Armenians--were very overrepresented. This imbalance was evident even at the regional level: 62 percent of officers from the predominantly Sunni Arab province of Aleppo were from minority communities. Similarly, ten of the twelve officers from the overwhelmingly Sunni Arab Dar'ā region were Circassian. Significantly, 'Alawis were underrepresented in the officer corps, probably because they generally lacked the qualifications for admission to the academy, being an educationally disadvantaged community. Most officers from al-Lādhiqīyah were from the more privileged Christian community (see fig. 3.3 and table 3.1).

The proportion of officers from particular regions and ethnic groups varied in each graduating class. Significantly, the approach of independence coincided with an apparent French attempt to cram the officer corps with non-Sunnis and persons from al-Lādhiqīyah. In the 1945 class, for example, fourteen of the twenty-four graduates were from minority communities and in that of 1946, the last before independence, slightly under one-half of the nineteen graduates came from al-Lādhiqīyah.⁷

Military Recruitment and French Divide-and-Rule Policies

The armed forces' unbalanced composition during the mandate is best explained by France's general divide-and-rule strategy in the Levant. An unrepresentative military was both a reflection of this strategy and an instrument of it.

French policy in Syria was profoundly influenced by the methods and goals of Lyautey's administration of Morocco between 1912 and 1925.

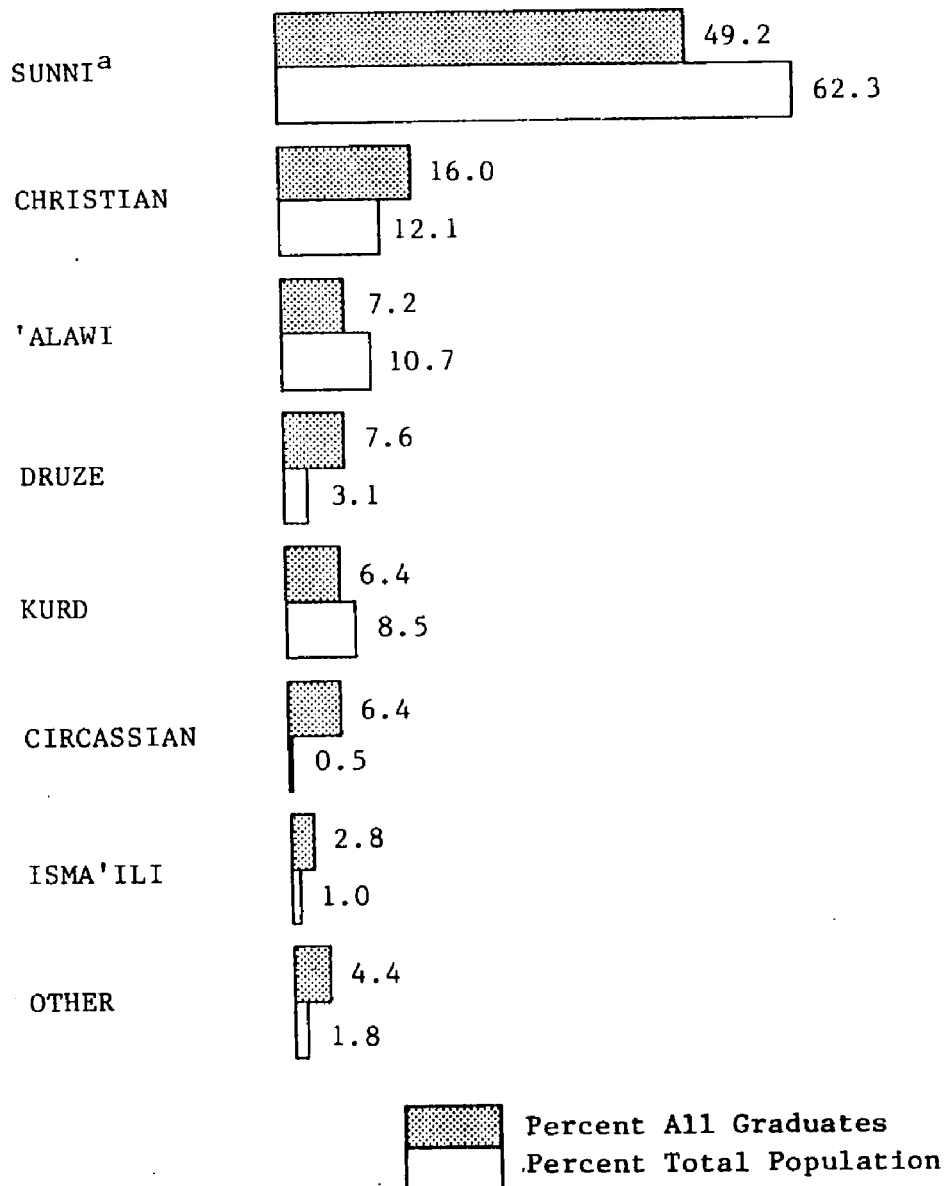


Fig. 3.3. Ethnic Origins of Pre-1946 Military Academy Graduates (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendices 1-3, pp. 375-90)

^aExcluding Kurds and Circassians

Table 3.1

Geographical and Ethnic Origins of Pre-1946 Military Academy Graduates

Province	Ethnic Group									
	Sunni ^a		Christian		'Alawi		Druze		Kurd	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Damascus	72	28.0	4	1.6	...	....	...	....	5	2.0
Aleppo	11	4.4	4	1.6	...	....	...	....	3	1.2
Hims	17	6.8	2	0.8	...	....	...	....	3	1.2
Hamāh	12	4.8	3	1.2	...	....	...	....	2	0.8
Al-Lādhiqīyah	7	2.8	27	10.8	18	7.2	...	....	1	0.4
Dayr az-Zawr	1	0.4	...	....	...	....	...	....	...	....
Al-Hasakah	2	0.8	...	....	...	....	...	....	2	0.8
As-Suwaydā'	...	....	...	....	...	....	18	7.2	...	....
Dar'ā	1	0.4	...	....	...	....	1	0.4	...	....
Total	123	49.2	40	16.0	18	7.2	19	7.6	16	6.4

Source: Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendix 4, pp. 391-413.

^aExcluding Kurds and Circassians.

Many of the first French officials in Syria were either a part of Lyautey's entourage or served in Morocco.⁸ Lyautey stressed three policies in particular: ruling through local traditional elites, exploiting ethnic differences, and favoring rural and peripheral populations against urban and central ones. These found simultaneous expression when the French created ethnically homogeneous micro-states in Syria, for this was considered to be a most effective means of perpetuating colonial rule.⁹

Initially, the French established four such states in 1920: the State of Grand Liban, the Government of Damascus, the Territory of the Alaouites, and the Government of Aleppo, within which the qadhā of Alexandretta became a largely autonomous sanjaq.¹⁰ The latter was subsequently ceded to Turkey in 1939, a flagrant violation of the mandate's terms.¹¹ In 1921, the French guaranteed Druze autonomy. This overall arrangement lasted until 1922, when the Territory of the Alaouites became a state precariously federated with Aleppo and Damascus.¹² In 1924, the so-called Federation of Syrian States was abolished, Aleppo and Damascus united to form the single state of Syria, and the State of the Alaouites reconstituted as an enlarged, autonomous entity. A 1930 organic law renamed the States of the Alaouites and the Druzes the Governments of Latakia and Jabal Druze respectively. They remained as such until they were reincorporated within Syria in 1936 as provinces (muhāfaẓāt) with a large degree of autonomy. By a 1939 decree, they reverted to their pre-1936 status in practice if not in theory. They finally and fully merged with the rest of Syria only during World War II. Furthermore, the colonial power encouraged autonomist aspirations in Ḥimş and Ḥawrān and instituted a special administrative regime in

the Jazīrah.¹³

If all this seems rather complicated, it is probably because it actually was.¹⁴ At times, the French appeared to be test-marketing brand names for new states or testing a hypothesis about the shape, size, and spatial efficiency of political units under the very best laboratory conditions. Colonial strategy, as manifested territorially, was ostensibly one of divide et misce, or "divide and confuse."

Apart from concretizing and encouraging ethnic differences, the creation of micro-states confirmed and extended the power of traditional elites, who developed a vested interest in perpetuating the status quo. By co-optation, the French hoped to compartmentalize and contain potential opposition to their rule as well as mobilize the periphery against the nationalists before the nationalists mobilized it against them.¹⁵ They considered peripheral minority groups best qualified for this task because:

peoples like the Druzes (and) Alawites . . . appeared to resemble the Berber tribes of Morocco and Algeria in their traditional opposition to the central authorities.¹⁶

That they could assist the French was recognized even before the mandate. In 1918, the future first French governor to the 'Alawi state wrote that the 'Alawis

could be extremely useful, perhaps even indispensable. They are all armed and possess weapons and if they wished they could put up a stiff resistance to us. . . . We have the greatest interest in gaining their good feelings . . . and even in favoring them.¹⁷

This strategy of weakening nationalist opposition by pitting the periphery against it and of dividing Syria by emphasizing ethnic differences led to a policy of encouraging minorities to enlist in the armed forces, for they were considered compliant, if not sympathetic, with French rule.¹⁸ The French intended the army to be an instrument of

their policies. This function was not always understood by non-Syrians. A member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, for example, observed that

the population of the central part of the country, and of Damascus in particular, devoted themselves to politics and relied on the inhabitants of outlying districts to defend them.¹⁹

At least Syrian nationalists were not under similar illusions about who was defending whom.

France's callous use of Armenian and Circassian troops to quell nationalist demonstrations, break strikes, and put down the Druze revolt provides the clearest example of its use of locally recruited forces to implement its divide-and-rule policies. In using Circassian troops against the Druzes, the French were well aware that they were following Ottoman precedent in exploiting traditional antagonisms between the two communities.²⁰ During the revolt 302 Circassian troops were killed and 600 wounded serving colonial interests; many more civilians were massacred in reprisals against Circassian villages.²¹ One out of every 39 Circassian males was killed during the events of 1925-27. Even more sorrowful was the community's plight after the revolt, for the guilt-ridden French felt obliged to plead on its behalf by way of reward for its loyalty:

If no guarantee is given when France leaves, (the Circassians) will find themselves in a precarious position, because the Arabs have not forgotten their attitude during the insurrection.²²

The lack of such a guarantee was, of course, used as a pretext for prolonging colonial rule.

Military Recruitment Policies and French Ethnic Stereotypes

The colonial power's subjective, artificial division of the population into martial and nonmartial ethnic groups provided a rationale

for imbalances in the armed forces. Stereotypes both explained recruitment patterns and reinforced them. There was an inverse relationship between distance from the center and the amount of information available to the French in Syria. This friction of distance distorted French perceptions of spatially peripheral ethnic groups in particular, who were most misrepresented in the colonial mind.²³

According to the French, "taken as a whole, the Syrians were not a warlike people."²⁴ But there were exceptions: de Jouvenel, High Commissioner to Syria and Lebanon during the mid-1920s, commented once that "there were two warlike peoples in Syria and the Lebanon, the Druzes and the Alaouites."²⁵ This view was widespread. The Druzes were characterized, typically, as "fanatic and bellicose mountaineers"²⁶ and as "born soldiers . . . fanatics in every sense of the term."²⁷ The 'Alawis were portrayed in wholly similar fashion as "savages and bandits."²⁸ So were Circassians, described as "soldiers by birth,"²⁹ "fierce like eagles, lithe and slender like spears," and "savage cavaliers."³⁰ They were, in short, "magnificently endowed for warfare."³¹ So presumably were the Isma'ilis, who were characterized as "cruel warriors."³² Indeed, one wonders who the French referred to when they observed that "the Syrians were not a warlike people," for like everybody else, the Kurds were also "born fighters."³³ Conspicuous by their absence, of course, were Sunni Arabs, whose particular war at the time--against the French--was not appreciated.

But martial skills were not enough, for the ideal soldier had also to be a "noble savage." Thus the Druze had a "taste for fighting" and "a sense of discipline and would give himself to the point of death to the leader of his choosing."³⁴ Although "dour, unfriendly to strangers

and inclined to savagery, (he) was capable also of great loyalty and tough endurance."³⁵ Honor and savagery seemed to be inexplicably and inextricably linked in the colonial mind. The 'Alawis, according to their first French governor,

practice to the highest degree the cult of the given word. . . . They have a good heart and an evil character--just like perfect musketeers, and like them they fight among themselves and . . . drink even better. . . . Even in their pillage and brigandage, one finds among them a well-tempered soul, a virile character, something dignified.³⁶

And again, "they are not lacking in gallantry, gentlemanliness, or grandeur of the soul."³⁷

If the 'Alawis were "perfect musketeers," they should have felt comfortable seated at a round table with the Circassians, who were "model(s) of the medieval knight."³⁸ The French found in them

the same gallantry, the same scorn for death, the same pride, in conjunction with an active sense of honor. . . . The Circassian is attracted instinctively to everything that is noble and generous.³⁹

"Even in adversity," it was said, they had "the appearance of good noblemen."⁴⁰ They practiced and exalted "warrior virtues and the cult of honor," for "from their mountain origins, they have kept simple and clean morals." Naturally, and for the French very conveniently, "death by fire is nothing to them."⁴¹

French racial and romantic stereotypes concerning mountain groups' fighting abilities were probably imported from Morocco, where Berbers were recruited into the armed forces in large numbers. Indeed, there are few instances where colonial powers did not habitually yield to such spurious stereotypes.⁴² As Luttwak has facetiously observed:

As soon as the officers of the colonial country landed in a new territory, they set about finding the hills and, once there, tried to recreate their semi-homosexualizing relationship with the "wily Pathan" or "le fier Kabyle" (Berber) by recruiting the supposedly "tough" hill men into the army.⁴³

Military Recruitment and Spatial Variations
in Economic Opportunity

French self-serving policy and myths about particular ethnic groups' martial skills served only as catalysts to the development of geographic and ethnic imbalances in the military, for no matter how much the colonial power encouraged regional minorities to enlist, ultimately they only did so because they themselves found military service attractive.

'Alawis had particularly good reason to view military service with favor, for the Jabal 'Alawi, with its poor soil, paltry per capita agricultural production, and overpopulation, is Syria's most underdeveloped region.⁴⁴ One typical 'Alawi mountain village was described thus during World War II:

The wretched inhabitants were in a state of misery, dejection and abandon; they were past hope, resigned, their spirit utterly broken. . . . For a small country (*sic*) that had been under European mandate for 22 years the conditions were unbelievably bad. . . . Not a week passes . . . without an Arab suffering unnecessarily from fever, disease, . . . hunger or poverty.⁴⁵

During the mandate an estimated 61 percent of all 'Alawis had trachoma, a disease afflicting only 37, 27, and 25 percent of Sunnis, Greek Orthodox, and Armenians respectively in the al-Lādhiqīyah region.⁴⁶ Nutrition levels, among the lowest in Syria, were reflected in tragic infant mortality rates: in many 'Alawi villages, two of every three children died before the age of one.⁴⁷

Educationally, 'Alawis were similarly disadvantaged. In 1936 only 27 percent of all students attending government schools in al-Lādhiqīyah were 'Alawi, although 'Alawis constituted over 60 percent of the province's population. Even this overstated their position, for few attended the far more numerous and important nongovernment schools in which

68 percent of all Syrian and Lebanese students were enrolled. Only 13 percent of 'Alawis who received some form of education went to private schools.⁴⁸

Like similarly impoverished, overpopulated mountain areas, the Jabal 'Alawi sustained a high rate of emigration during the mandate. In 1928, for example, 25 percent of emigrants from the French-ruled Levant came from the 'Alawi state.⁴⁹ Although some of these were affluent Christians who migrated to Latin America and West Africa, many were impoverished 'Alawi peasants who migrated to Lebanese cities particularly. There, they swelled the ranks of an urban lumpen-proletariat, taking the lowest paid jobs. In Tripoli after World War II, for instance, 'Alawi men monopolized shoe shining and refuse collecting, two despised occupations.⁵⁰ Others migrated seasonally to Cilicia, where they harvested cotton grown on German-financed plantations.⁵¹ 'Alawi women also moved to the cities, where they usually became maidservants. Indeed, the terms 'Alawi and maidservant almost became synonymous. As Weulersse noted, "there is hardly a Christian household in Latakia (town) which doesn't have its little 'Alawi maidservant."⁵² Many were sold as servants at the age of six or seven by their parents, either for life or a ten-year 'lease.'⁵³

During the first three decades of this century, economic conditions in al-Lādhiqīyah were especially bad. The attractions of military service must be seen in the context of a crisis in the 'Alawi heartland.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Levant experienced western capitalist penetration.⁵⁴ This resulted in the introduction or extension of three export cash crops in particular: silk, tobacco, and cotton. Significantly, the Jabal 'Alawi and its coastal

margins were among the principal areas of specialization in these crops.⁵⁵

The conversion of agriculture to commodity production brought poverty and hardship to the region rather than prosperity. Cash crop production requires large capital investments. Because 'Alawi peasants were often destitute, however, coastal merchants advanced such capital with the crop as collateral. Borrowing rates were so usurious that 'Alawi peasants were often unable to meet even interest payments. Many were forced to sell their crop for a pittance to city merchants. Hence, although tobacco was a major income source for many 'Alawis, "a minute part of this income (went) to the mountain peasant; most of the profits (went) to middlemen."⁵⁶ Cash crop production also contributed to changes in land ownership, for debt-ridden peasants, particularly around the fringes of the 'Alawi region, were often forced to cede their lands to urban money lenders and merchants.

Cash crop production deprived many 'Alawis of control over their means of livelihood. Agriculture, formerly subject only to nature's vagaries and the greed of tribal chiefs and tax collectors, was now also susceptible to the vicissitudes of the international market place.

The consequences of this transformation and the Jabal 'Alawi's precarious position at the bottom of an international system of credit and marketing soon became apparent. During World War I, sea routes between the Levant and France were virtually closed, silk houses of Lyon discontinued credit, prices fell, and growers uprooted mulberry trees to plant food necessary for survival. This disruption "was fatal to the Syrian sericulturist, who . . . lived from day to day."⁵⁷ Levantine cocoon production accordingly fell from 6.1 to 0.5 million kilograms between 1914 and 1919.⁵⁸

Production, which recovered temporarily after the war when credit lines reopened, declined even more dramatically during the world depression. Between 1923 and 1934, the price of raw silk fell from 100 to only 19 Syrian piastres per kilogram. Between 1930 and 1934, cocoon production dropped from 3.5 to 1.3 million kilograms, again because of the disappearance of credit.⁵⁹ Cotton and tobacco production were similarly affected.⁶⁰

'Alawi peasants suffered particularly acute hardships, for more than most parts of Syria, al-Lādhiqīyah specialized in export crop production. Many 'Alawis were thrown out of work, sank deeper in debt, or fled the region altogether. 'Alawis found themselves at the bottom of the Syrian heap during the French mandate. If emigration was one form of escape from such appalling poverty, military enlistment was another, and the wages 'Alawi soldiers earned "made an important contribution to the economic life of the region."⁶¹

The Post-1946 Geographical and Ethnic Composition of the Armed Forces

Although independence in 1946 ushered in major changes in the officer corps's composition, imbalances established during the mandate persisted long after the demise of colonial rule. Regions and ethnic groups which were overrepresented during the army's formative years tended to remain so. In part, this was due to the development of a loose regional and ethnic division of labor, whereby enlistment, particularly in nonofficer ranks, became a traditional source of employment. In part also, it was because of self-recruitment, whereby soldiers' sons followed their father's profession or continued family career traditions.⁶²

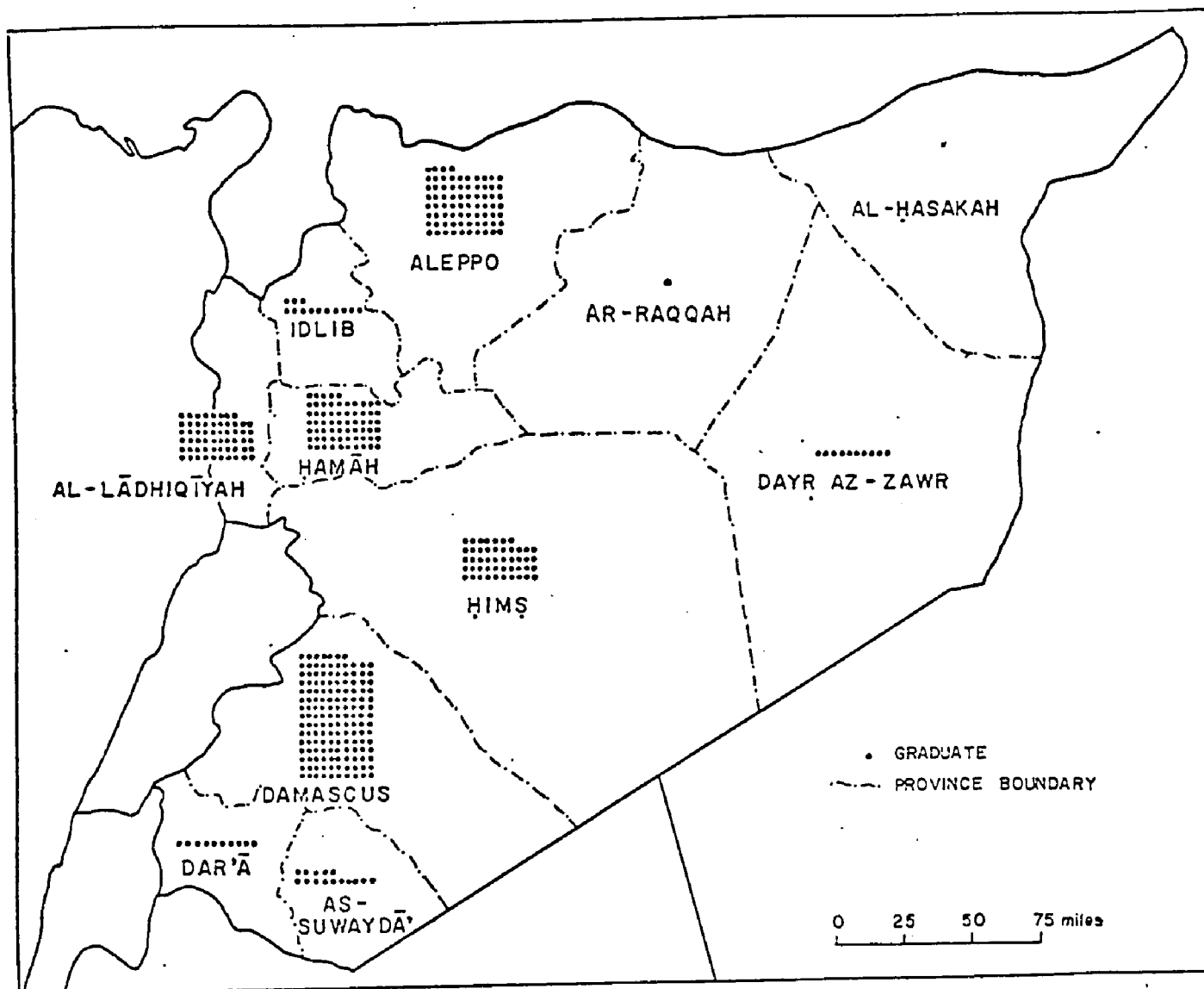
Nevertheless, Syrian control of the Military Academy brought abrupt changes in the number and composition of officer recruits.⁶³ This was intentional, for nationalists had been profoundly critical of France's use of the armed forces and were cognizant of the implications of an unrepresentative officer corps.

Whereas Sunni Arabs comprised 49.2 percent of all preindependence officer cadets, they accounted for 80 percent of all graduates in the first five postindependence classes. The percentage of Christians, 'Alawis, and Druzes fell correspondingly. Geographically, Damascus still provided most cadets, although proportionately it sent no more to the academy than in preindependence years. The most dramatic change was the increased representation of the largely Sunni provinces of Aleppo, Ḥims, and Ḥamāh and the sharp fall in the percentage of cadets from the predominantly minority provinces of al-Lādhiqīyah and as-Suwaydā' (see map 3.2, figs. 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, and table 3.2).

Postindependence changes in recruitment patterns, while not fully eliminating the legacy of an unrepresentative officer corps, at least ameliorated and reduced imbalances so assiduously cultivated by the French. By the mid-1950s, Sunnis occupied most High Command positions. Thus, of the seventeen most prominent commanding officers in 1958, only one was not a Sunni (see table 3.3).⁶⁴

One must be cautious, however, in making inferences about post-1952 recruitment patterns from earlier data. Generalizations about such patterns are tentative simply because they cannot be substantiated by publicly available data.

Sunnis, by all accounts, formed the Military Academy's largest group of incoming cadets until the early 1960s, even if 'Alawis in



Map. 3.2. Geographical Origins of Military Academy Graduates, 1947-1951 (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendix 4, pp. 391-413)

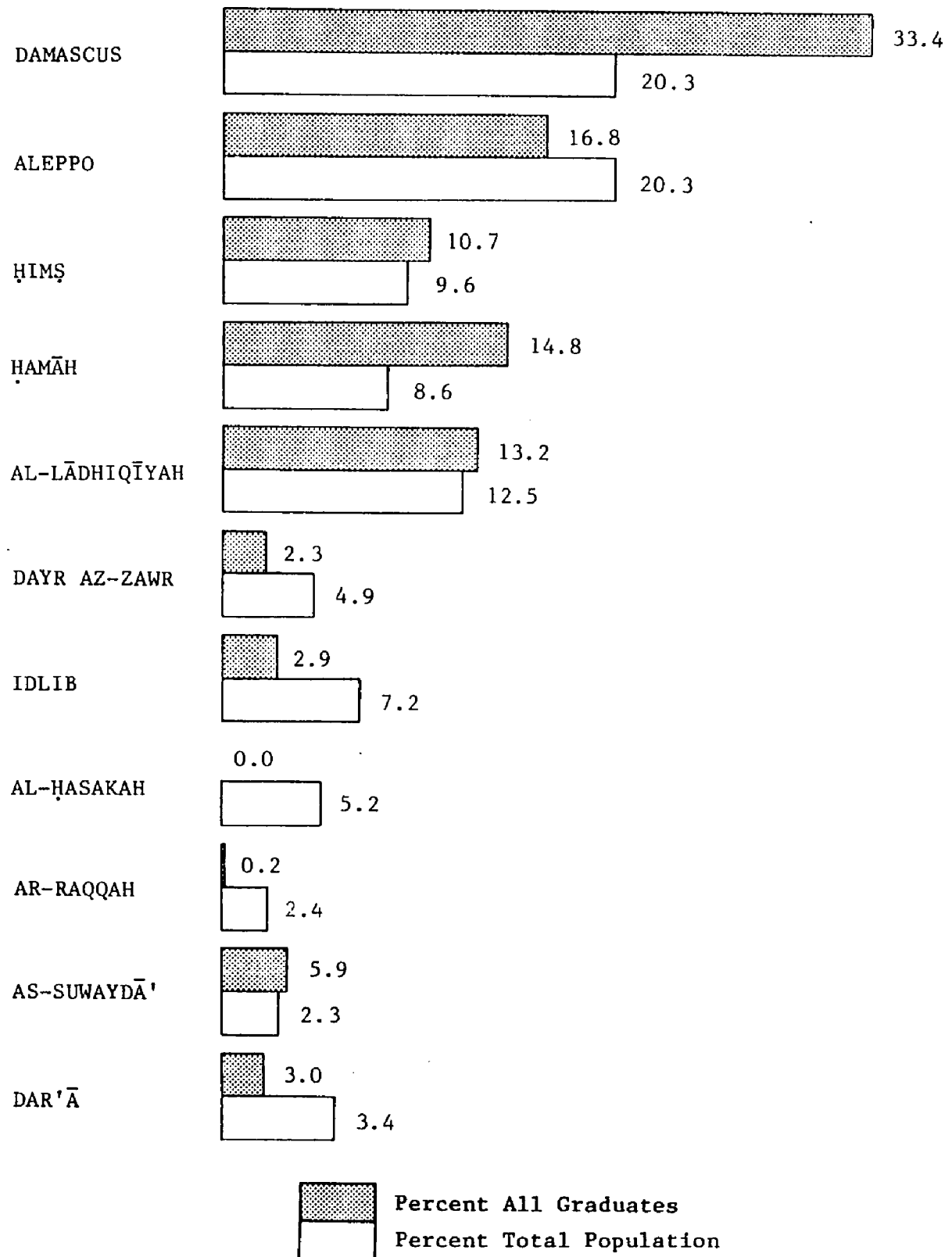


Fig. 3.4. Geographical Origins of Military Academy Graduates, 1947-1951 (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendix 4, pp. 391-413)

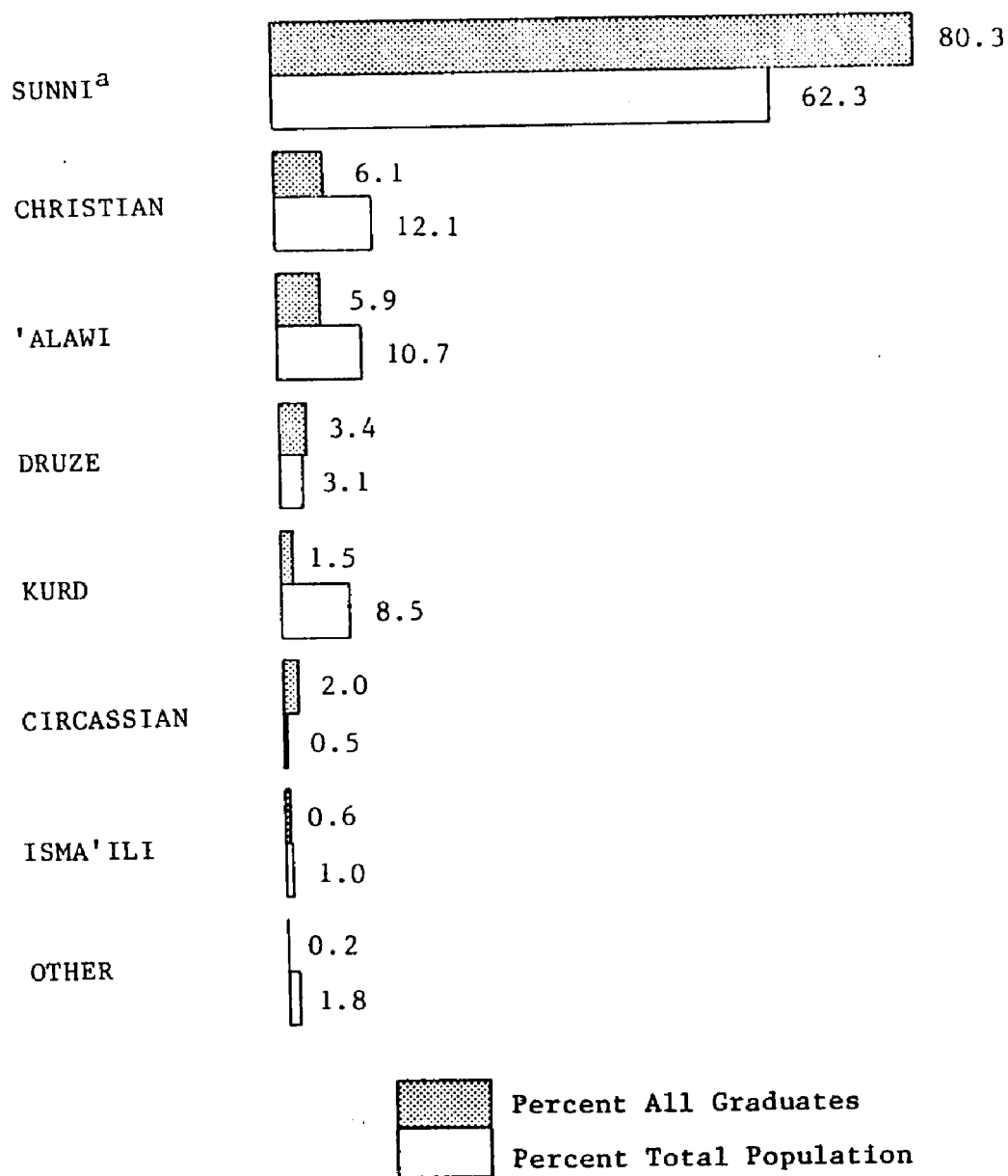


Fig. 3.5. Ethnic Origins of Military Academy Graduates, 1947-1951 (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendix 4, pp. 391-413)

^aExcluding Kurds and Circassians

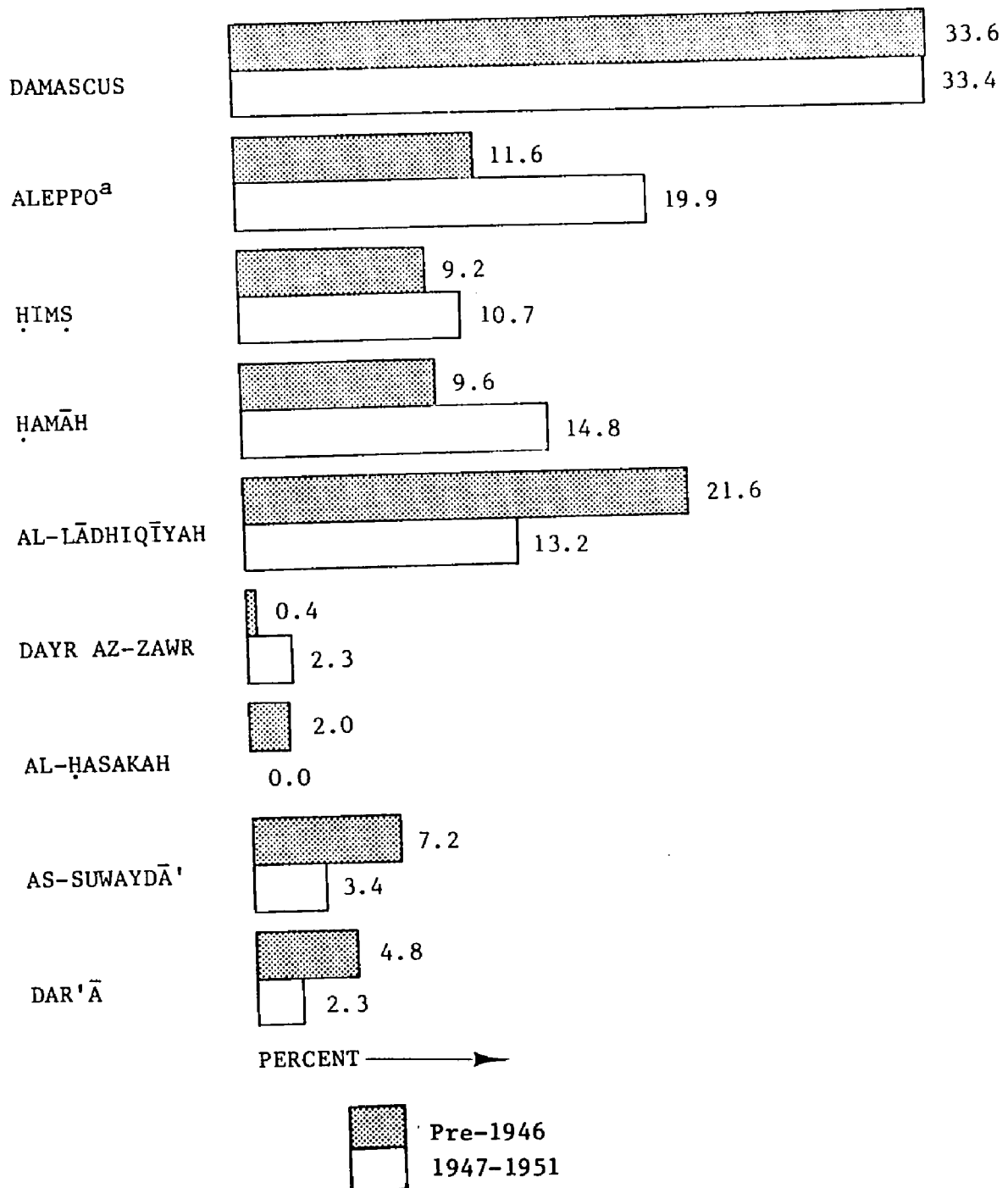


Fig. 3.6. Geographical Origins of Military Academy Graduates in Pre- and Postindependence Years (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendices 1-4, pp. 375-413)

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

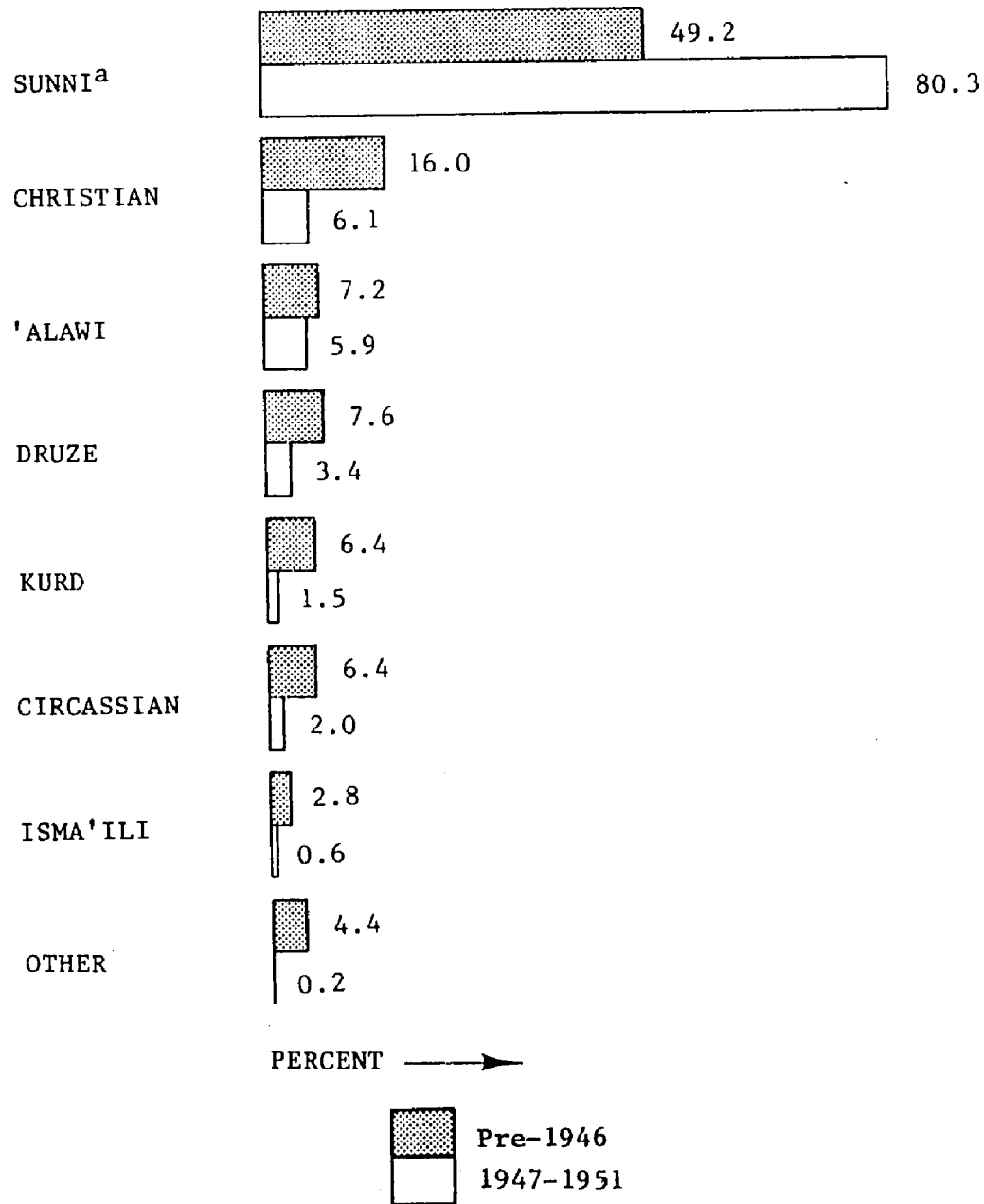


Fig. 3.7. Ethnic Origins of Military Graduates in Pre- and Postindependence Years (Prepared from data in Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendices 1-4, pp. 375-413)

^aExcluding Kurds and Circassians

Geographical and Ethnic Origins of Military Academy Graduates, 1947-1951

100^aExcluding Kurds and Circassians

Table 3.3

Geographical and Ethnic Origins of High Command Officers, 1958

Officer	Town	Community	Year of Graduation	Position
'Afīf Bizrī	Damascus	Sunni	1946?	Chief of Staff
Muṣṭafā Ḥamdūn	Ḥamāh	Sunni ^a	1948	Head of Military Personnel
Aḥmad 'Abd al-Karīm	Muṭḥin	Sunni	1947	Head of Military Operations
Aḥmad al-Hunaydī	Dayr az-Zawr	Sunni	1947	Commander of Armoured Unit
Ṭu'ma al-'Awdatallāh	Dar'ā	Sunni	1947	Commander of Armoured Unit
Husayn Hidda	Yabrūd	Sunni	1948	Commander of Armoured Unit
'Abd al-Ghanī Qannūt	Ḥamāh	Sunni	1948	Commander of Armoured Unit
Muḥammad al-Naṣr	Ḳafr Ḥarīb	Sunni	1948	Commander of Armoured Unit
Yasīn Farjānī	Tadmūr	Sunni	1948	Commander of Armoured Unit
'Abdallāh Jasūma	Al-Bāb	Sunni	1948	Commander of Armoured Unit
Jādū 'Izz al-Dīn	As-Suwaydā'	Druze	1947	Commander of Infantry Brigade
Muṣṭafā Rām Ḥamdānī	Ḥimṣ	Sunni	1948	Commander of Infantry Brigade
Akrām Dayrī	Damascus	Sunni	1947	Commander of Palestine Front
Jamāl al-Sūfī	Ḥimṣ	Sunni	1947	Commander of Navy
Amīn Nafūrī	Nabak	Sunni	from ranks	Deputy Chief of Staff
'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sarrāj	Ḥamāh	Sunni	1947	Chief of Intelligence
Jamāl Fayṣal	Ḥimṣ	Sunni	?	?

Sources: Prepared from data in Seale, The Struggle for Syria, p. 320, and Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," Appendices 3-4, pp. 382-396.

^aKurd

particular remained notably overrepresented in nonofficer ranks. Nevertheless, immediate foundations for the periphery's political ascendancy were laid by several developments in the postindependence era.

First, the officer corps's social composition changed dramatically after independence. The military's expansion, the lowering of Military Academy entrance requirements, and the spreading of educational opportunities all facilitated an influx of poorer Syrians into officer ranks:

Many secondary school graduates of modest means saw the Homs Military Academy as the portal through which they could pass to secure a higher education which would bring security and increased status. Thus during the war years and those immediately following, sons of merchants, peasant proprietors, and workmen entered the officer corps, changing its composition to a considerable extent.⁶⁵

Richer urban Syrians, conversely, tended to pursue nonmilitary careers, often evading compulsory military service or leaving the army immediately after such service had ended.⁶⁶ Sunni landed families, who dominated Syria's civilian elite until the Ba'thi revolution,

despised the army as a profession. . . . Homs to them was a place for the lazy, the rebellious, the academically backward, or the socially undistinguished. Few men of good family would consider entering the college unless they had failed at school or had been expelled.⁶⁷

This was one of the worst miscalculations they ever made, for the military's changing social composition gradually radicalized national politics and ultimately hastened the destruction of the traditional ruling class.

The postindependence geographical expansion and upgrading of educational facilities opened the Military Academy to groups whose inadequate qualifications formerly had effectively limited them to nonofficer ranks. 'Alawis in particular benefited from new educational opportunities. In 1950, al-Lādhiqīyah had only 2,798 students in its seven

intermediate and secondary government schools. By 1967, 15,477 students attended 57 such schools in the province.⁶⁸ Ironically, the officer corps was especially attractive to educated 'Alawis and other minorities because they considered it one of the few professions where their ethnic identities would not place them at a disadvantage. Data for the 1947-52 period understate the position of 'Alawis in the postindependence officer corps because they are too early to reflect the influx of 'Alawis brought about by educational expansion.⁶⁹

Furthermore, 1947-52 data are misleading because during the early postindependence era, recruitment patterns were overcompensatory to Sunnis, who had suffered most from French recruitment policies, and moderately punitive to minority groups, who had acquiesced to and benefited from colonial divide-and-rule policies. Although there was an influx of Damascene and Aleppan Sunni officers to the army after independence, it lost momentum. After the mid-1950s, traditional, more inveterate recruitment patterns partly reasserted themselves.

The proportional representation of regional minority groups also grew throughout the 1950s as frequent purges depleted the officer corps of many Sunnis who had enlisted in the immediate postindependence era. The latter both led and were the principal victims of the plethora of coups d'etat that plagued Syria in the 1950s and early 1960s. Minority officers, who played little part in coups after the minority-dominated Syrian Social Nationalist Party was banned, were the prime beneficiaries. They gradually advanced through the army's emasculated command structure and obtained increasing numbers of high positions within it.⁷⁰

After the 1963 Ba'thi revolution, purges of the officer corps were conducted on an unprecedented and ferocious scale. Specifically, the

Ba'th attempted to create an "ideological" army to serve its interests. There is general agreement that the armed forces' composition was substantially altered in the process, with a large influx of peripheral and minority Ba'this. Al-Razzāz, Secretary General of the Ba'th's National Command from 1965 to 1966, alleged that after the revolution Sunni officers were systematically retired or assigned to unimportant positions while strategic positions went to 'Alawis and other minorities. In addition, he claimed that preference was given to 'Alawis in admission to the Military Academy.⁷¹ Ṣafadī, a disillusioned Ba'thi, similarly charged that urban Sunni officers were pensioned off and excluded from entrance into the academy in favor of 'Alawis, who came to dominate the Fifth and Seventieth Brigades in particular.⁷²

Other sources confirm this dramatic shift in the armed forces' composition. According to an unnamed study cited by Seymour, the proportion of 'Alawis in individual brigades varied between 20 and 100 percent in 1964.⁷³ Hurewitz estimated, with reservations, that as many as 70 percent of all officers were 'Alawi.⁷⁴ Moreover, 'Alawis and Druzes were alleged to control virtually all top positions within the armed forces:

The posts in most divisions and brigades were divided among these two minorities. In case the commander would be an Alawi, his deputy would be a Druze, or the other way around.⁷⁵

Although these data must be interpreted with extreme caution, for many would question their accuracy,⁷⁶ it is indisputable that the armed forces' composition changed dramatically after 1963. 'Alawis were probably not so overrepresented as the above sources state, but overrepresented they certainly were. In some respects, the army of the latter half of the 1960s came to resemble that of the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁷ It was

the existence, or more accurately the manipulation, of these imbalances that enabled the periphery to emerge fully in national politics in 1966.

Regionalism and Ethnicity Within the Officer
Corps: Some Theoretical Perspectives

The armed forces' composition provides only a partial and static explanation of how and why minority officers led the Ba'thi revolution. For one, classification of soldiers by geographical and ethnic origins implies that these identities are subjectively important to political behavior, as well as an objective fact. This has not necessarily always been the case. With some notable exceptions, officers' communal affiliations were of little practical political importance until the early 1960s. Similarly, imbalances in the armed forces' composition were rather irrelevant until the eve of the Ba'thi revolution.⁷⁸ Throughout the 1950s, lines of cleavage within an acutely factioned officer corps were congruent with ideological, rather than primordial differences. Had they been otherwise, a minority-dominated regime might have come to power far earlier.

Furthermore, although the military contained a disproportionate number of 'Alawis and Druzes by 1963, its composition was not such that in any coup d'etat in that year minority officers would necessarily have played a dominant role by virtue of arithmetic probability. Only in 1966 was this the case.⁷⁹

Finally, the Ba'thi regime's makeup was initially shaped more by the origins of those politically active officers who led the revolution than by the composition of the military as a whole.

Fuller explanations of how the Ba'thi revolution came to be led by regional minority officers must therefore take into account the nature

of interregional and interethnic interactions within the military, the acute geographic and ethnic factionalization of the armed forces in the early 1960s, and the communal affiliations and conspiratorial activities of a group of officers known as the Military Committee. In order to understand how and why the primordial affiliations of politically active officers became especially relevant to their political behavior in the 1960s, however, it is necessary to survey a variety of sociological hypotheses concerning the role of regionalism and ethnicity within complex organizations.

Initially, views concerning the nature of interregional and interethnic relations within the armed forces of new states were profoundly influenced by the premise that the military is a universally modern organization.⁸⁰ A corollary assumption was that it created modern, rational men and, specifically, persons in whom traditional ties of kin, village, region, or ethnic group had been supplanted by a single professional identity and an unshakable faith in the nation's ideals.⁸¹

A second, less normative view, which has perhaps now gained more acceptance, starts with the antithetical premise that the armed forces of new states are essentially praetorian formations and are more likely to produce political decay than political development and instability rather than stability.⁸² Those subscribing to this view characterize the armies of new states as bodies which, far from being uniquely modern and possessing a high degree of professional integrity, are susceptible to the tensions which affect society as a whole and therefore "not able to act as an integrating force."⁸³ In this scheme, regional and ethnic factionalization within an officer corps is not only comprehensible, it is to be expected as an inevitable product of fragmented,

unstable, and institutionless societies and as a corollary of organizations which lack autonomy, a well-developed corporate identity, and maturity.⁸⁴

Neither paradigm can adequately explain the role of regionalism and ethnicity within the Syrian armed forces: the one because it effectively denies the existence of all but national and professional identities among members of modern organizations, the other because it fails to explain why ethnicity has not always been politically salient within the Syrian officer corps and why the latter experienced acute geographic and ethnic factionalization only in the 1960s. One credits the armed forces of new states with too distinct a corporate identity, the other with next to none. The Syrian experience suggests that these two antithetical perspectives may be synthesized and that a dialectical development of theory is in order.

Modernity does not in itself preclude the persistence of subnational identities and allegiances. The belief that it does is rooted in an insensitive and superficial view of geographic and ethnic identities as "somewhat unimportant and ephemeral nuisances" that unquestionably give way during the modernization process to a common identity linking all inhabitants of a multiethnic state.⁸⁵ While I would not, like several social scientists, go so far as to say that the modernization process actually exacerbates interregional and interethnic tensions,⁸⁶ it nevertheless remains true that many Syrians defined as most modern by ethnocentric western social science are acutely conscious of their geographic and ethnic identities, even if only negatively.

The belief that the modernization process undermines subnational allegiances stems in part from the assumption that communal and noncom-

munal identities are mutually exclusive and may not coexist within the same individual. This view suffers from an either-or dichotomy: one is either modern and hence national and universalistic in outlook or else traditional and hence bound by parochial ties and sentiments. It neglects the far more realistic possibility that these identities mix and interact. Both in Syria and elsewhere, communal and noncommunal identities clearly coexist within the same person, be he modern, traditional, or, far more likely, neither. This is not a contradiction, for the politically, socially, and culturally salient identities of individuals are both numerous and multidimensional. These identities, which may be ones of nationality, class, and profession or may derive from such ascriptive components of social background as ethnic, regional, or even village origins and kinship ties, may each form potential foci of social solidarity. Modernization supplements, rather than supplants, communal identities with noncommunal ones.

Furthermore, the relevance of each of these identities is situationally specific. One identity or a combination of identities may be more important in some contexts than in others.⁸⁷ The relative importance of any of these identities may vary within one person through time. This may be less a product of free choice than of the situation. Thus, officers' geographic and ethnic identities have been considerably more important in the 1960s and 1970s than in the 1950s. Many 'Alawi officers who were sensitive to the charge of sectarianism after the revolution, for example, scarcely gave their ethnic identities much thought in the 1950s.

Nevertheless, although communal and noncommunal identities are contextual and coexist within the same individual, military training

and professional socialization make strenuous efforts to eliminate identities which conflict with intraorganization operational efficiency. Why primacy is placed on professional integrity, national ethos, and identity of rank in particular is clear: the requirements of organization, esprit de corps, cohesion, and discipline dictate that patterns of authority be impersonal, regularized, hierarchical, and readily identifiable and, more important, that there be no ambiguity of roles. Interaction must be structured and free from uncertainty or fluidity. Action must be reflexive rather than reflective.

Some theorists argue that military training is wholly successful in extirpating the subnational allegiances of soldiers. Those portraying the armed forces of new states as praetorian suggest that it is rather unsuccessful and that communal loyalties persist in spite of it.

The Syrian experience suggests that professional socialization at most submerges officers' primordial identities. The depth of this submergence is critically affected by the degree to which assigned identities of rank define interaction and by levels of intraorganization stability, professional esprit, autonomy, and cohesion. If an army confines itself to its principal function, national defense, interaction within the body will be highly structured, roles well defined, and communal identities deeply submerged. Furthermore, a system of multiple professional constraints will discourage individuals from 'moving out of line.' Manifestations of primordialism by a soldier, for example, may earn him severe reproach from his professional peer group. Even if an army expands its goals by intervening in the political process, this system of interaction need not necessarily be eroded. What may destroy it however, and prompt soldiers to use previously submerged communal

identities is the introduction of uncertainty into an organization which, perhaps more than any other, depends on the absence of ambiguity for its effective operation.

Such uncertainty may result from repeated intervention in the political process, politicization and factionalization of an officer corps, extensive and frequent political purges, and rapid promotion or the appointment of politically dependable officers to upper echelon or strategic positions. All of these may contravene the professional code of conduct and, crucially, devalue or circumvent a system of interaction within which only rank can be permitted to define one's role and status. At worst, discipline may crumble and be replaced by extensive patron-client networks, parallel chains of command may emerge, and armies may develop within an army. If political factionalization is such that competing political groups are stalemated and none is able to impose its will over the entire armed forces, geographic and ethnic identities (and allegiances) may surface and be manipulated to bolster conspiratorial cohesion and give a faction a tactical advantage over competitors. Communal solidarity, it must be emphasized, may be an expedient, a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It is a weapon which may be seen as underhand even by those who use it. Once it has been introduced, however, it may take on a life of its own and define a new system of interaction as geographic and ethnic identities become politically relevant. Acute political factionalization rather than profound or real regional and ethnic tensions may be the actual harbinger of geographic and ethnic factionalization.

This is what happened in Syria. Regional and ethnic factionalization, which occurred on a massive scale in the early 1960s, was a conse-

quence and culmination of two decades in which the officer corps became increasingly politicized, divided, and subjected to acute intraorganization strains.

The political instability and vicissitudes of the three postindependence decades in Syria have been amply described elsewhere and do not bear repetition here.⁸⁸ Suffice it to note that from the late 1940s onwards, the Syrian army became what Seale termed "a jungle of intrigue."⁸⁹

This was particularly true in the 1960s, when rank came to mean very little and blatant political promotions and extensive purges variously catapulted captains to general or to Beirut's coffeehouses.⁹⁰ It was in this fluid, uncertain situation, when the army in some respects ceased being an army, its members ceased being governed by its rules, and mistrust among officers was pervasive, that geographic and ethnic ties were first activated on a major scale within the officer corps.

Specifically, a group of Ba'thi officers, the so-called Military Committee, recognized that absolute trust was a sine qua non to prolonged political survival and successful, coordinated political action.⁹¹ They became increasingly receptive to the idea that regional, ethnic, and even village and family solidarity would be an effective means of underpinning and cementing their ideologically based alliance. Of the Military Committee's five founding members, three--Ṣalāḥ Jadīd, Muḥammad 'Umrān, and Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad--were 'Alawī, and two--'Abd al-Karīm Jundī and Aḥmad al-Mīr--were Isma'īlī. Later it was expanded to include other officers from minority communities and the periphery.⁹² Of thirteen officers whose regional and ethnic origins have been identified, six were from al-Lādhiqīyah and five were 'Alawī. None were from Damascus, and only four were Sunni (see table 3.4).

Table 3.4

Geographical and Ethnic Composition of the
Ba'thi Military Committee

Officer	Province	Community
Muḥammad 'Umrān	Hamāh	'Alawi
Ṣalāḥ Jadīd	Āl-Lādhiqīyah	'Alawi
Ḥāfiz al-Asad	Al-Lādhiqīyah	'Alawi
'Abd al-Karīm Jundī	Hamāh	Isma'ili
Aḥmad al-Mīr	Āl-Lādhiqīyah	Isma'ili
Salīm Ḥātūm	As-Suwaydā'	Druze
Ḥamad 'Ubayd	As-Suwaydā'	Druze
Muḥammad Rabāḥ al-Ṭawīl	Al-Lādhiqīyah	Sunni
Husayn Milḥim	?	?
'Uthmān Kan'ān	Al-Lādhiqīyah	'Alawi
Sulaymān Haddād	Al-Lādhiqīyah?	'Alawi?
Mustafā al-Ḥājǵ 'Alī	?	?
Aḥmad Suwaydānī	Dar'ā	Sunni
Mūsā al-Zu'bī	Dar'ā	Sunni?
Amīn al-Ḥāfiz	Aleppo	Sunni

It should be emphasized that this group of officers was also internally divided. The most bitter and protracted power struggles within the elite from 1963 until 1970 were waged among its members. Nevertheless, regional and ethnic solidarity vis-a-vis rival political groups played a major role in the success of the Military Committee's climb to power.

Although Ba'this subsequently claimed credit for the March 1963 coup d'etat, in reality it was led largely by Nasserite and independent officers, who received the senior positions within the regime.⁹³ Ba'thi officers from the Military Committee, however, played a part in the coup either as planners and backers from outside the armed forces (Jadīd, 'Umrān, and Asad) or as active participants within it (Ḥātūm, Kan'ān, and Haddād).⁹⁴ More important, Ba'thi officers had a major role in determining the new regime's direction from the start. Within a few months,

they virtually controlled it.

Ṣalāḥ Jadīd, an 'Alawi who had not even been in the armed forces during the coup, was soon made Head of the Officers Affairs Bureau and Director of Personnel at General Headquarters (GHQ)--positions in which "he was admirably placed to orchestrate the cross-postings, nepotisms, and dismissals of officers by means of which . . . opposition could be hamstrung."⁹⁵ As a result, within months Military Committee members held most command positions within the officer corps.⁹⁶ Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad, who like Jadīd was not reinstated in the officer corps until March 1963, was appointed Commander of the air force. Muḥammad 'Umrān, another 'Alawi officer reinstated only in March 1963, was made Commander of the notorious Seventieth Armored Brigade, the strongest in the army and colloquially referred to as the "Brigade of Coups." Two Druze officers, Ḥamad 'Ubayd and Salīm Ḥāṭūm, commanded the Fifth Armored Brigade and an elite commando unit which guarded GHQ and the Damascus broadcasting station. Other Military Committee officers commanded an artillery brigade and Military Intelligence.⁹⁷ In addition, friends and relatives were promoted or placed in positions where they could assist the Ba'th in consolidating its position. Two of Ṣalāḥ Jadīd's cousins, for example, were given command over tank units.⁹⁸

Confronted with the tightly knit, well-placed minority officers of the Military Committee, non-Ba'this were impotent. In using primordial ties to their full advantage, the Military Committee had found a winning combination. By July 1963, it had ousted its principal and immediate non-Ba'thi opponents.⁹⁹

To the members of the Military Committee, regional and ethnic solidarity was a means to a particular end, Ba'thi rule. But once used and,

more important, seen to have been used to great effect, it could not be contained simply as an expedient device among a group of military conspirators. Rather, it gained a life of its own and soon infected the whole armed forces.

From 1963, officers' ethnic identities became more important politically than at any time in the past, for unsure of itself, the Military Committee constructed a network of supporters cemented by common ethnic affiliations, regional origins, and, in many instances, distant family and kinship ties. Later, the neo-Ba'th admitted a degree of guilt in its own oblique way during a bout of so-called revolutionary self-criticism:

The initial conditions following the coup (of March 1963) and the difficult phase induced the urgent calling of a large number of reserve officers and NCOs, party members and supporters to consolidate the party's position and its defence. This urgency made it impossible at the time to insist on objective standards in this operation, rather friendship, family relationships, and sometimes mere personal acquaintance were the basis (of admission), which led to the infiltration of elements alien and strange to the party's mentality.¹⁰⁰

In this Manichean world of revolutionaries and reactionaries, everything, it seems, was temporarily permissible.

At the most basic level, the acute factionalization of the officer corps since independence was both a symptom and cause of the political center's weakness. Had the center been strong and stable, Syria would not have been plagued by coups and the military might have transcended the divisions within the state rather than reflected them. The periphery was able to achieve power because, to paraphrase Yeats, things fell apart, the center would not hold. The question is: why could it not hold?

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. French data on the composition of the Troupes Auxiliaires were very poorly presented. Categories are left undefined and totals often do not match one another when they clearly should. Data are broken into two tables: one categorizes soldiers according to 'nationality' and the other by 'religion.' Figures used here are from the latter. From the breakdown by nationality, Lebanese troops appeared to have accounted for approximately 7 percent of all troops in the force. One cannot be absolutely certain, however, for in January 1924, for example, there were 399 'Alawi soldiers by 'nationality' and 923 by 'religion.' This huge discrepancy is unexplained.
2. Noël Maestracci, La Syrie contemporaine (Paris: Charles Lavanzelle et Cie., 1930), p. 162. The precise number of 'Alawi squadrons is unknown.
3. République Française, Rapport sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1926, pp. 30-31.
4. Louis Jalalbert, Syrie et Liban: Réussite française? (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1934), pp. 71-72.
5. République Française, Rapport sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1924, p. 15.
6. Several of these in fact graduated during Ottoman rule. The French established the Military Academy in Damascus in 1920; in the early 1930s, it was moved to Hims, where it has remained until this day. Competition for entrance during the mandate was stiff; the ratio of accepted cadets to applicants was 12:124 in 1924, 7:59 in 1925, 12:30 in 1926 (reflecting feeling during the Druze/Nationalist revolt), 22:100 in 1927, 26:147 in 1928, 17:225 in 1929, 13:191 in 1930, 15:171 in 1931, and up to 27:200 in 1936 (Ibid., 1924-36).
7. Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," pp. 388-90.
8. Gouraud, for example, the first High Commissioner to Syria and Lebanon, was one of Lyautey's closest collaborators, and Catroux, architect of French policy toward the Druzes, similarly served under him. See Edmund Burke, "A Comparative View of French Native Policy in Morocco and Syria, 1912-1925," Middle Eastern Studies 9 (1973): 175-76, for an excellent, if incomplete, analysis of links between French policy makers in Syria and Morocco.
9. Senior French officials admitted that Lyautey's strategy was relevant to Syria. Bremond, for example, who served in Morocco

and Syria, considered French policy in the latter to be "a new application of the principles of . . . Lyautey: giving each ethnic group its autonomy, or even its independence, under our control" ("L'Etat Druse en 1930 et 1931," L'Asie française, February 1932, p. 51).

10. See, "Les gouvernements autonomes de la Syrie," L'Asie française, March 1921, pp. 94-98.
11. Article 4 of the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, granted on July 24, 1922, stated that "the Mandatory (power) shall be responsible for seeing that no part of the territory of Syria and Lebanon is ceded or leased or in any way placed under the control of a foreign power." The mandate is reprinted in full in Albert Hourani, Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 308-14.
12. See, "La fédération des états syriens," L'Asie française, April 1923, pp. 107-8.
13. The special regime in the Jazīrah and French encouragement of separatist feelings in the region are briefly discussed in S. H. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 212, 248-51. A petition to the Permanent Mandates Commission alleged that the French urged the inhabitants of Hims to demand the creation of new state of Central Syria. Petitions also alleged that in 1920, General Delamotte, with the support of the army and police, made Aleppans sign requests for the formation of a distinct state, separate from Damascus (League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission, Extraordinary Eighth Session, Annex III). An autonomous movement in Hawrān is discussed in Eliyahou Epstein, "Le Hauran et ses habitants," L'Asie française, September-October 1936, p. 254.
14. The French at times succeeded in confusing themselves as well as everyone else. See the highly entertaining exchange in the Minutes of the Eighteenth Session of the League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission, thirtieth meeting, 27 June 1930, pp. 122-9.
15. As it turned out, of course, the periphery mobilized the nationalists against the French during the Druze revolt of 1925-27, rather than the other way around.
16. Burke, "Comparative View of French Native Policy," pp. 182-3.
17. J. de La Roche, "Notes sur les débuts de notre occupation du Territoire des Alaouites," L'Asie française, December 1931, p. 369.
18. Janowitz has noted similar recruitment policies in many colonies. European powers typically "developed a strong ethnic imbalance in order to fashion what they believed to be a politically reliable organization. . . . They recruited enlisted personnel and . . . officers from tribal groups remote from the central capital, from

minority groups, and especially groups with limited independence aspirations. Frequently these groups came from economically less developed areas and they were therefore attracted by the opportunities in the army" (Janowitz, The Military in the Political Development of New Nations, p. 52). First has also observed that in most colonial armies "men with an urban background were distrusted and kept out of the officer corps, for they were likely to be infected with nationalist sentiment" (First, Power in Africa, p. 77).

19. League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth Session, tenth meeting, 28 October 1938, p. 89. The French representative had just remarked that "the population among whom it was easiest to find recruits . . . made excellent soldiers. The Syrian army included . . . very many Alaouite mountaineers and other races from the more agricultural areas of the country."
20. See Commandant Hassler, "Les insurrections Druzes avant la guerre de 1914-1918," L'Asie française, March 1926, pp. 102-8, and April 1926, pp. 143-7. The Circassians were settled in Hawrān by the Turks to keep a watchful eye over the nearby Druzes. Given land expropriated from the indigenous inhabitants, they were, from the outset, unwelcome refugees. In the 1800s, the massacred 600 Druzes, an action not especially conducive to friendly interethnic relations in the region (Mlle. Proux, "Les Tcherkesses," La France méditerranéenne et africaine 1 (1938):57-59).
21. Proux, "Les Tcherkesses," p. 83.
22. "La situation actuelle des Tcherkesses en Syrie," L'Asie française, March 1933, p. 95.
23. Again, the French were not unique in this. Janowitz noted that generally "colonial powers believed that men recruited from more primitive areas made better fighters" (Janowitz, The Military in the Political Development of New Nations, p. 53).
24. League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the Eighth Session, fifteenth meeting, 26 February 1926, p. 123.
25. Idem, Minutes of the Ninth Session, sixteenth meeting, 17 June 1926, p. 112.
26. Hassler, "Les insurrections Druzes," p. 102.
27. "La répression des insurrections Druzes," L'Asie française, March 1929, p. 87.
28. J. de La Roche, "La religion des Ansariés," La Géographie 38 (1922): 287.
29. Joseph Kessel, En Syrie (Paris: Les Éditions Kra, 1927), p. 79.

30. J. Zimmerman, "Les escadrons tcherkesses en Syrie," L'Asie française, May 1937, p. 117 and Map 1937, p. 150.
31. Le livre d'or des troupes du Levant, 1918-1936 (Paris: Bureau Typographique des Troupes du Levant, 1937), p. 167.
32. Kessel, En Syrie, p. 83.
33. Maestracci, La Syrie contemporaine, p. 159.
34. Jalalbert, Syrie et Liban, p. 71.
35. Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, p. 9.
36. de La Roche, "Notes sur les débuts de notre occupation," p. 369.
37. Idem, "La religion des Ansariés," p. 287.
38. Proux, "Les Tcherkesses," p. 56.
39. Ibid.
40. Maestracci, La Syrie contemporaine, p. 158.
41. Le livre d'or, pp. 167, 168.
42. Gutteridge, for example, observed that to colonial powers in Africa, "the ideal soldier was supposed to be illiterate, uncontaminated by mission education, from a remote area" (Gutteridge, The Military in African Politics, p. 9).
43. Edward Luttwak, Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, 1968), p. 72. For a discussion of French ethnographic stereotypes and misconceptions in Morocco, see Edmund Burke, "The Image of the Moroccan State in French Ethnographic Literature: A New Look at the Origins of Lyautey's Berber Policy," in Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation, eds. Ernest Gellner and Charles Micaud (London: Duckworth, 1973), pp. 175-99. The legendary Gurkhas of Nepal, who provided 20,000 men to ten British regiments in World War II, were English officers' "noble savages" par excellence. The following story tells why: "Early in the war, the call went out to a Gurkha regiment for 100 volunteers for airborne training. The British officers explained that the jumps would be from a safe height of 1,000 feet or more, but were surprised to find only 40 men volunteering. A corporal, in explaining his mates' reluctance to press forward, muttered that 500 feet was quite high enough to jump from. The officer explained that the parachutes almost never failed to open. 'Oh, parachutes,' said the surprised corporal, 'that's different.' And every man in the regiment volunteered" ("Tradition of the Gurkhas Disappearing," (sic) Los Angeles Times, 9 September 1975).
44. al-Sharīf, Al-Muslimūn al-'Alawīyūn, pp. 66-69; Muḥammad Amin Ḡhalīb

- al-Ṭawīl, Tarīkh al-'Alawīyīn (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus lil-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1966), p. 345. Most national armies, of course, obtain a disproportionate number of their recruits from the most disadvantaged regions of the country and the poorest sections of the population. In the United States, for example, concern was voiced that the armed forces would contain a disproportionate number of blacks after the draft ended. Indeed, the percentage of black enlisted personnel increased from 14.3 percent in 1971 to 19.9 percent during the first half of 1974. In April 1974, 27 percent of all new enlisted volunteers in the army and 21 percent in all services were black (Morris Janowitz and Charles C. Moskos, Jr., "Racial Composition of the Volunteer Armed Forces," Society 12:4 (1975):38-9). More generally, the economic recession of 1974-75 resulted in a tremendous upsurge in the number of recruits, confirming former Defense Manpower Secretary Harold Wool's observation that "studies of enlisted trends have shown . . . that enlistment rates have been positively correlated with fluctuations of youth employment." Similarly, a Pentagon study found that "a given percentage change in the unemployment rate for male youth was associated with a similar percentage change in army enlistment rates. (David Cortwright, "Economic Conscription," Society 12:4 (1975): 43-45.
45. Richard Pearse, Three Years in the Levant (London: MacMillan, 1949), pp. 149-50.
 46. Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites, p. 78.
 47. Ibid., p. 77.
 48. République Française, Rapport sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1937, p. 237.
 49. Ibid., 1929, p. 94.
 50. Interview with a psychiatrist from al-Lādhiqīyah, December 1974.
 51. C. Favre and R. Mandrot, "Voyage en Cilicie, 1874," Bulletin de la Société de Géographie, seventh series (January 1878), p. 19 and C. Achard, "Le coton en Cilicie et en Syrie," supplement to L'Asie française, June 1922, p. 54.
 52. Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites, p. 326.
 53. Ibid.
 54. For good accounts, see Philip K. Hitti, "The Impact of the West on Syria and Lebanon in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of World History 2 (1955):608-33; I. M. Smilianskaya, "From Subsistence to Market Economy, 1850's," in The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914, ed. Charles Issawi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 226-47; and Moshe Ma'oz, "The Impact of Modernization on Syrian Politics and Society during the Early Tanzimat

Period," in Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century, eds. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 333-49.

55. Silk had been grown in the Levant since the seventeenth century. Production remained small until the nineteenth century, however, when sericulture was revived and invigorated by an infusion of French capital. The French needed to supply a growing textile industry and replace European silkworms, which had been devastated in an epidemic. Exports of silk through Beirut increased by 1000 percent between the 1840s and 1857 (Beriel, "La sériculture au Liban," supplement to L'Asie française, March 1935, pp. 78-82). Fine, fragrant 'Alawi tobacco had been exported in small quantities to Egypt since the 1700s. It similarly experienced rapid growth only during the nineteenth century as a result of the American civil war, which cut off Britain's supply of tobacco (Issawi, in the introduction to "The Expansion of Tobacco Growing in the Nineteenth Century," in idem, The Economic History of the Middle East, pp. 60-61, and Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites, pp. 324-5). In antiquity and the middle ages, Syria was one of the world's largest cotton producers. The revival of cotton production at the turn of this century in the Alexandretta region was stimulated by German capitalist interests, who were excluded from the British-monopolized Egyptian and Indian crops and were unable to obtain sufficient American cotton because of the American textile industry's increasing appetite for the crop (Achard, "Le coton en Cilicie," pp. 17-62).
56. Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites, p. 325.
57. Beriel, "La sériculture au Liban," p. 120.
58. André Latron, "La production et le commerce de la soie," L'Asie française, March 1935, p. 79.
59. Ibid., pp. 79-80.
60. The area under cotton in al-Lādhiqīyah fell from 9,000 to 2,000 hectares between 1929 and 1933. Between 1934 and 1935, the area under tobacco decreased from 5,000 to 3,240 hectares (Great Britain, Department of Overseas Trade, Economic Conditions in Syria (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), p. 19).
61. Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites, p. 326.
62. Although no data exist concerning the degree of self-recruitment in the Syrian armed forces specifically, it may be substantial if the armies of other countries are any guide. In the United States, for example, 25 percent of the 1960 West Point class were army officers' sons (Janowitz, The Professional Soldier, p. 196), as were 40 percent of all French cadets at Saint-Cyr between 1945 and 1958 (Le Monde, 4 June 1974).
63. Whereas the 1946 class had only nineteen cadets, that of 1947 had

- 63 (Van Dusen, "Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict," pp. 390-3). When Ḥusnī al-Za'im came to power in 1949 after a coup d'etat, he authorized an increase in the size of the armed forces from approximately 5,000 to 27,000 soldiers. In part, this was because of the crushing defeat of Arab armies in the Palestine war. Gordon H. Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1964), p. 129.
64. Changes in recruitment patterns were reflected in the origins of politically-active officers in postindependence years. Minority officers thus played a conspicuous role in each of the three Kurdish-led 1949 coups d'etat. Only two of the ten officers in the Supreme War Council which led the second coup, for example, were Sunni Arab and only one was from Damascus. These officers' affiliations were remarkably similar to those of officers in the Military Committee which brought the Ba'th to power. Unlike in 1963, however, minority officers were prominent among early conspirators simply because they occupied most upper echelon positions in the officer corps at the time. Throughout the 1950s, a vast majority of coup leaders--and victims--were Sunni, reflecting their influx after independence.
65. Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military, p. 45.
66. It usually cost about 500 Syrian pounds (approximately \$140) to buy one's way out of military service. Clearly this was far more than a Syrian peasant could afford (Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 16).
67. Seale, The Struggle for Syria, p. 37.
68. Data are compiled from Syria's Statistical Abstract, 1950-1968.
69. These data similarly understate the position of 'Alawis in the officer corps because they reveal little about officers who rose from the ranks, a category within which many 'Alawis fell.
70. Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 16.
71. Muḥīf al-Razzāz, Al-Tajribah al-Murrah (Beirut: Dār Ghandūr, 1967), pp. 158-60. Cited also in Ayad al-Qazzaz, "Political Order, Stability, and Officers: A Comparative Study of Iraq, Syria and Egypt from Independence till June 1967," Middle East Forum 45 (1969):39.
72. Muṭā' Safadī, Ḥizb al-Ba'th: Ma'sāt al-Mawlid, Ma'sāt al-Nihayah (Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 1964), pp. 338-40. Cited in al-Qazzaz, "Political Order, Stability, and Officers," p. 39. See also Tabitha Petran, Syria (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1972), p. 171.
73. Seymour, "The Dynamics of Power," p. 40.
74. J. C. Hurewitz, Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 153.
75. Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 17.

76. Munīf al-Razzāz and Muṭā' Safadī, as opponents of the neo-Ba'th, had axes to grind; Martin Seymour may be a pseudonym. Hurewitz's source was the U.S. ambassador to Syria at the time; he admits that the figure of 70 percent of all officers being 'Alawi is probably exaggerated (personal letter, February 1, 1974).

77. With the exception that in the 1960s, 'Alawis were overrepresented in the officer corps as well as in nonofficer ranks.

78. This is a relative, rather than categorical, statement. It would perhaps be more accurate to observe that the geographic and ethnic affiliations of officers were much less important in the 1950s than they were in the 1960s and 1970s. A good example of an exception to so broad a generalization was the important role played by regional ties in a coup d'etat in September 1961. This coup, which severed Syria's union with Egypt, was led by a group of Damascene Sunni officers, most of whom had close family connections with businessmen and merchants in that city. The prominence of officers from Ḥamāh during the 1950s was mostly a function of their numerical overrepresentation within the army and their close ties with the various new middle class parties which challenged the traditional elite. Perhaps the closest the army came to ethnic factionalization was in 1949, during the Kurdish Ḥusnī al-Za'im's brief, unpopular rule. Za'im relied increasingly on Kurdish and Circassian units to stay in power. He nevertheless also introduced many secularist reforms in Syria. The fact that Sunni Arabs continued to be the major source of Military Academy recruits during his rule is evidence that he had no grand designs for the Kurdish community.

79. Syria is not like Morocco in this respect. Waterbury noted that in an abortive coup d'etat in 1971 in the latter "the fact that the rebel officers were Berber is to some extent fortuitous. With the exception of four or five men, all (Moroccan) officers are Berber. For the army to act at all, Berbers would have to make a move (John Waterbury, "The Coup Manqué," in Arabs and Berbers, eds. Gellner and Micaud, p. 406. This conclusion is borne out by A. Coram, who observed that "had the uprising succeeded, Morocco would . . . have been ruled by Berbers. Yet it does not follow that it was a Berber plot. . . . The rebels were officers as well as Berbers, and it was in the former capacity that they acted" (A. Coram, "The Berbers and the Coup," in *ibid.*, p. 425).

80. By modern was meant that it closely approximated Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy, that it had a rational, formal, hierarchical and centralized structure, that advancement within it was based on achievement rather than according to ascriptive criteria, and that it was receptive to innovation and hence technologically oriented. Edward Shils, for example, argued that "military organization has little to do with the structure of traditional society, from which it is set off by its technology, most of its ethos, its organization and its training" (Edward Shils, "The Military in the Political Development of New States," in The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries, ed. John J. Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 31). Lucian W. Pye wrote that the armies of new

states "have been consistently among the most modernized institutions in their societies" (Lucian W. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in *ibid.*, p. 74). Other examples of this view are provided by Marion Levy, Modernization and the Structure of Society (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 70; by D. G. Lavroff, "Régimes militaires et développement politiques," Revue française de Science politique 22 (1972):988; and by Manfred Halpern, The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 271.

81. According to Janowitz, for example, the military is "a strong source of anti-communal sentiment" because of its "strong sense of nationalism and national identity" (Janowitz, The Military in the Political Development of New Nations, p. 63). Shils notes that because the military is "devoted to the national ideal" and is "national in its symbolism," it can "integrate diverse ethnic groups into a national community" (Shils, "The Military in the Political Development of New Nations," pp. 31-33). This ability is almost unique, for "within the army, a sense of national mission transcending parochial, regional or economic interests, or kinship ties seem(s) to be much more clearly defined than elsewhere in society" (Halpern, The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East, p. 258). It was but a short step away to cautious acceptance of military regimes: "Ways must be found to utilize the organizational strength of the national armies and the leadership potential of their officer corps as temporary kernels of national integration" (Guy Pauker, "South East Asia as a Problem Area in the Next Decade," World Politics 11 (1959):342). See also John J. Johnson, The Military and Society in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 261 and Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 262 for a similar acceptance of military regimes.
82. For good examples of this view, see Claude Welch, "The African Military and Political Development," in The Military and Modernization, ed. Henry Bienen (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), pp. 228-9 and the selections in *idem*, The Military Intervenes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968); Amos Perlmutter, "The Praetorian State and the Praetorian Army: Towards a Taxonomy of Civil-Military Relations in Developing Countries," Comparative Politics 1 (1969):382-404 and his "The Arab Military Elite," World Politics 22 (1970):269-300; and Eric A. Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule upon Economic and Social Change in the Non-Western States," American Political Science Review 64 (1970):1131-48.
83. Stepan, The Military in Politics, p. 10.
84. For a classic statement of this view, see Decalo, Coups and Army Rule in Africa, pp. 14-15.
85. Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" World Politics 24 (1972):319. This view is criticized in detail in this article.

86. The classic statement of this is in Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in New States," in Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: The Free Press, 1963). See also Harik, "The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East," pp. 303-23; and S. Bonzon, "Modernisation et conflits tribaux en Afrique noir," Revue française de Science politique 17 (1967):862-88.
87. This point has been made by Charles W. Anderson, Fred R. von der Mehden, and Crawford Young, Issues of Political Development (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967), p. 30; by Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," American Political Science Review 64 (1970):1112-30; by Clement Henry Moore, "The Consolidation and Dissipation of Power in Unincorporated Societies: Egypt and Tunisia," unpublished manuscript, Research Committee on Political Sociology, August 1974, pp. 1-2; and by Lawrence Rosen, "The Social and Conceptual Framework of Arab-Berber Relations in Central Morocco," in Arabs and Berbers, eds. Gellner and Micaud, pp. 166, 173.
88. See in particular, Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military; Seale, The Struggle for Syria; Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th; and Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power."
89. Seale, The Struggle for Syria, p. 244.
90. The sheer frequency of attempted coups d'etat between 1961 and 1963 prompted the witticism that officers had to wake up at the same time lest one of them lead a coup (A. R. Kelidar, "Religion and State in Syria," Asian Affairs 61 (1974):17). Political infighting among officers was so acute that one Syrian journalist likened it to "negroes fighting in a tunnel" (Cited in Edouard Saab, La Syrie ou la révolution dans la rancœur (Paris: Juillard, 1968), p. 110.
91. The Military Committee was established by a group of Ba'thi officers stationed in Egypt during the United Arab Republic. Although Ba'this, their aim was to fashion a new party by supplanting the aging bourgeois leadership of the old disbanded party, to oppose the union between Syria and Egypt, and ultimately to seize power. The Committee's formation marked the beginnings of the neo-Ba'th.
92. Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," pp. 10, 18.
93. Ziyād Ḥarīrī who led the coup became Chief of Staff, for example, and Muḥammad Sūfī and Rashīd Qutaynī were made Minister of Defense and Deputy Chief of Staff respectively. Lu'ay al-Atāsī, an independent officer who had been in jail on the day of the coup and who was promptly promoted from colonel to lieutenant-general, was made president of the newly-formed National Council for the Command of the Revolution (NCRC).
94. The tactical advantage which the Military Committee possessed was

potential rather than real until 1963, for after the coup d'etat in 1961 which dissolved Syria's union with Egypt, some sixty-three Ba'thi officers, including Jadīd, 'Umrān, and Asad, were dismissed from the armed forces in a precautionary purge. Until 1963, the Military Committee's priority was to get its cashiered officers back into the armed forces--clearly a prerequisite to staging a successful coup d'etat, even in Syria. Ba'thi officers were re-instated immediately after the 1963 coup.

95. Seymour, "The Dynamics of Power," p. 38.
96. Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 57 and Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 11.
97. They were 'Abd al-Karīm Jundī and Aḥmad Suwaydānī respectively (Petrans, Syria, p. 171.)
98. Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 15.
99. From the outset, the alliance between Nasserites, independents, and Ba'this was precarious. Disagreements over the representation of each in government cabinets and in the more important NCRC, diverging if not irreconcilable views concerning union with Egypt, and a host of other issues made confrontation inevitable. Such a confrontation took place within days of the signing of a tripartite agreement to unite Syria, Egypt, and Iraq in a federation. The Ba'th, which opposed the new merger, engineered the dismissal of forty-seven Nasserite officers, including Muhammad Sūfī and Rashīd Quṭaynī. This action, which forestalled the possibility of Syro-Egyptian union, was followed by the Ba'thi-inspired dismissal in early July of Ziyād Ḥarīrī, who had led the original coup (Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 59-72; Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," pp. 11-12).
100. Cited in Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 76.

CHAPTER IV

SYRIAN NATION-BUILDING: THE ROLES OF THE TRADITIONAL ELITE AND THE BA'TH

Although the Ba'thi revolution was manifestly geographical, characterizing it solely as such underestimates the nature and extent of changes which accompanied it. Unlike those who held power before them, the Ba'this had a design, albeit ill-defined, for Syria. The changes which resulted from the revolution were symbolized in far-reaching land reform and nationalization measures, which had the twofold effect of undercutting traditional landowning and mercantile families' power and vastly increasing the scope of government.

It would be more accurate to depict the revolution as a modest political, social, and economic one. To the political geographer, the question becomes: why was this nation-building revolution engineered by the geographical and, arguably, social periphery? This is the broad question to which this chapter's five sections are addressed. The first two examine the traditional elite which presided over Syria's political center until the Ba'thi revolution. Particular attention is paid to this elite's nation-building capacities and limitations, for it is in the context of its impotence and immobilisme that the Ba'th's genesis and growth may best be understood. The next two sections briefly describe the Ba'th party's origins, organization, constituency, and ideology. Particular emphasis is placed on examining the nexus between the Ba'th and the heterodox geographic periphery. The Ba'th itself experienced

transformation in the early 1960s. Prior to this, it was led largely by middle class Sunnis from Syria's urban centers. The final section examines how and why younger and markedly more radical aparatchiki, many of whom came from the periphery, supplanted these old guard Ba'this in the party's upper levels.

The Traditional Elite: Syria's Weak Political Center

The core of Syria's traditional elite was comprised of the legendary "fifty families." Although these families had interests in every sector of the economy and were prominent in every elite profession, the basis for their wealth and power was the vast tracts of land they held throughout the country.¹

This is evident from the Syrian parliament's composition between 1919 and 1954. Rural landlords formed the largest occupational group, accounting for 31 percent of all deputies. This was twice the proportion of the next largest group, tribal notables, who were invariably also landowners and an integral component of the traditional elite. Together, both groups comprised almost one-half of all parliamentary deputies.² Even this understates the traditional elite's political power, for many deputies with modern professions came from landowning families. Dabbagh estimates that in the 1948 parliament, 85 percent of all deputies were from such families.³

Despite, or perhaps because of, this traditional elite's political power, it never created an authentic, modern political party with a national constituency, explicit ideology, or organization to facilitate elite recruitment and mobilize popular support. This is not to say that no political parties existed to represent its interests. In the

postindependence era, its principal instruments were the loose National (NP) and People's (PP) parties, formed in 1947 and 1948 respectively after the mainstream nationalist movement's bifurcation. But both remained small and together never had a majority in a parliament comprised largely of sympathetic landlords, leaders of ethnic communities, or tribal shaykhs. In the 1954 parliament, for example, 64 of the 142 deputies were independents, whereas only 33 were affiliated with the PP.⁴ The actual power of both parties, in contradistinction to that of the traditional elite as a whole, was therefore limited and their rule always precarious. When in office, they necessarily shared power with independents, the army, or from 1954 on, the Ba'th and like-minded groups.

The NP's and PP's support derived less from any ideological principles than from their wealthy leaders' ability to distribute patronage and other favors. Both parties aggregated elaborate, phoenixlike patron-client networks rather than real constituencies. The size of the NP's following in Damascus, for example, was largely attributable to the fact that most of its leaders happened to come from there.⁵ The PP's support was even more regionally based: in the comparatively free 1954 election, 22 of its 30 seats were won in Aleppo and Hims provinces.⁶

Both parties' ideologies were implicit rather than explicit. Election-eve manifestoes calling for social justice, reform, and Arab unity can largely be discounted as so many hollow words. If the NP and PP had a principled belief in anything, it was in laissez-faire capitalism. As would befit the social composition of their leadership, they were reactionary and paternalistic. For them, political power was not something to be used to transform society, but a means of protecting the position of an oligarchy whose interests they embodied and represented.

Power was something to be enjoyed, for to the victor went also the spoils of office. Like their predecessor, the National Bloc, which after independence "immediately set out to loot the public treasury,"⁷ they were notably corrupt. Whereas an authentic political party links ruler with ruled, they served primarily to link ruler with ruler.

Several reasons can be advanced for the weakness of political parties among the traditional elite. First, as Huntington observed:

Conservatives oppose political parties because they see them, quite appropriately, as a challenge to the existing social structure. In the absence of parties, political leadership derives from position in the traditional hierarchy of government and society. Parties are an innovation inherently threatening to the political power of an elite based on heredity, social status, or land ownership.⁸

The traditional elite had no need to mobilize and channel mass support while it monopolized political power. Indeed, it was only under the impetus of a challenge to its position, particularly by a rising middle class, that it felt compelled to establish parties at all. Then, "political parties became important and support of the 'people' or 'masses' was sought, but both were symbols for manipulation rather than vehicles for widened participation."⁹

In part also, organizational deficiency and weakness stemmed from the fact that

the traditional concept of politics in Syria and the premises on which the traditional elite exercised power and sought support involved political loyalty based largely, if not solely, on ascriptive ties of family, economic dependence, and proximity of religious persuasion.¹⁰

Thus, an intricate network of kinship ties and lateral bonds, while by no means eliminating factional dispute among traditional elite families, to some extent consolidated their position and created an informal, diffuse political matrix of interdependence, mutual obligation, and reci-

rocity. One cannot dignify the traditional elite with a cohesion and degree of purposive organization which it did not possess, but to some extent such traditional networks and forms of interest aggregation obviated the need for more modern modes of political organization, such as the political party.

Lack of mass support for, and weak leadership by, the traditional elite was partly inherited from the colonial era. Myths of Syrian historiography notwithstanding, French colonial rule between World Wars I and II was relatively superficial, tentative, and poorly conceived. The French had no grand design for Syria, as they had for Algeria, and no especially stubborn commitment to perpetuating the colonial relationship there, as in Indochina. The encounter between colonizer and colonized was, as everywhere, a bitter one, and on occasion produced violent confrontation. But it did not give birth to a radical, mass nationalist organization capable of coordinating and directing sustained opposition to French rule. The nationalist movement was a loose, ad hoc formation.¹¹ It did not and could not serve as the nucleus for a strong postindependence party with a reservoir of organized mass support, popular legitimacy, and authority. Once the French departed, it lost its narrow raison d'être, for "at no time did . . . Syrian nationalists work out in detail what to do after securing complete independence."¹² Had French rule been more profound and the colonial dialectic more fully developed, a new generation of more radical, middle class nationalists, cognizant of the need for mass mobilization and organization, might well have supplanted representatives of the old order.¹³

Whatever the sources of its power and, paradoxically, weakness, the traditional elite constituted Syria's political center in the

immediate postindependence era. To it, almost by default, went the primary responsibility for confronting and attempting to solve the multifarious nation-building problems which beset Syria.

Postindependence Nation-Building Problems: The Response
and Performance of the Traditional Elite

One of Syria's most persistent nation-building problems has been its uncertain identity. In large part, this disability stems from its origin as a by-product of Franco-British machinations after World War I. Syria owes its existence solely to a unilateral act of imperialism, to a political geographic fait accompli. Most Syrians have never fully accepted the post-World War I Balkanization of the Fertile Crescent or considered Syria's birthright as anything but illegitimate. From the outset, they viewed the state as a temporary entity without a raison d'être.¹⁴ Witness the self-immolation of an iconoclastic communiqué issued after one of Syria's many coups d'état:

Arab Syria and its people have never recognized the boundaries of its country and only acknowledge the frontiers of the greater Arab homeland. Even Syria's national anthem does not contain the word Syria, but glorifies Arabism and the heroic war of all the Arabs.¹⁵

The gradual process of identification with the state has been consciously hindered by generations of leaders berating its very existence. To do otherwise would be to acquiesce to the designs of imperialism.

The influence which this problem of national identity has had on the course of Syrian politics cannot be gainsaid. Reflecting popular sentiment and no doubt the prerequisites of political survival, virtually every political party has voiced a commitment to Arab unity. But few actively sought it. Although the PP was ostensibly sympathetic to union with Iraq because of Aleppo's traditional trading ties with Mosul

and Baghdad, ultimately it relegated Arab unity to a distant, secondary goal. The NP, which oriented itself to Egypt and Saudi Arabia if only to counteract the PP's ties to the east, similarly had little real interest in upsetting the status quo. Both parties felt duty-bound to deny Syria's existence, but they never offered the hope of a viable alternative.¹⁶ Arab nationalist in name, they were parochial in spirit, practice, and constituency. Syrians increasingly saw them as obstacles rather than means to achieving Arab unity.

If the traditional elite was seen as a hindrance to Arab unity, it was all the more virulently criticized for its inactivity over Palestine. Insofar as Syrians can and do conceive of an ill-defined political space called Syria, it is an entity which encompasses Palestine no less than Damascus and Aleppo. When Israel was carved out of Palestine in 1948, the injustice felt by all Arabs was especially keen among Syrians, who a decade earlier had helplessly witnessed Alexandretta's annexation by Turkey.

Bitterness against the traditional elite was inevitable, for it had presided over this humiliating territorial dismemberment. Much of it was also justified, for the resounding defeat of Arab armies in the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli war was partly attributable to the corruption and incompetence of civilian rulers.¹⁷ The debacle brought their ineffective leadership into sharp focus. Significantly, the armed forces first came to power in a coup d'etat within months of the defeat. The discredited ancien régime never fully regained its composure, with the result that Syria's political center remained weak and unstable for many years thereafter. Any kudos which might have accrued to it for guiding Syria to independence was rapidly dissipated by the events of 1948-49.

Furthermore, the leadership crisis catalyzed by the first Arab-Israeli war worked to the advantage of those who offered alternative leadership.

The related problems of a rejected national identity and Israel's presence would have been sufficient to destabilize Syrian politics and tax any elite. But they supplemented and compounded other more conventional nation-building difficulties, even while providing temporary distraction from them.

Syria suffered all the attributes of underdevelopment at the time of the Ba'th's genesis in the late 1940s and early 1950s: a deficient health care infrastructure, high infant mortality, and low life expectancy rates;¹⁸ rapid population growth;¹⁹ inadequate educational facilities and high illiteracy rates;²⁰ a circumscribed economic base;²¹ low per capita incomes;²² and extreme inequities in the spatial distribution of wealth, opportunity, and power.²³ But the traditional elite was incapable of, and relatively uninterested in, tackling the root problems of underdevelopment and reducing geographical inequalities.

For one, planning agencies were nonexistent at least until 1960, and the public sector's minute size and paltry government revenues gave rulers little opportunity to allocate investments according to their greatest social and geographical need. In the early 1950s, gross annual public investment was estimated to be a diminutive \$8.7 millions, or about one-sixth of gross annual private investment.²⁴ Investment is perhaps the wrong word, for most public monies were devoted to the war effort against Israel, siphoned off through corruption, or remained unspent as one government replaced another in rapid succession.²⁵ Private investment was no more helpful to the solution of Syria's problems. Capitalists sank their riches not into industry and other productive

enterprises but into relatively risk-free, speculative real estate and building construction. Some 70 percent of gross private investment during the early 1950s was in the latter alone.²⁶

Most pressing of all, perhaps, was the need for land reform, for an estimated 0.6 percent of the rural population owned 35 percent of all agricultural land in the late 1950s.²⁷ Two-thirds of these large land-owners were absentee. Some 70 percent of the rural population owned no land (see tables 4.1 and 4.2).²⁸

While such inequitable distribution gave a few great wealth and power, it forced most of the rural population into a miserable, impoverished existence that became increasingly less tolerable to peasants and middle class reformers alike. Weulersse, writing eloquently about the hardships of rural existence around Ḥamāh in the 1930s--but it could

Table 4.1

Ownership of Irrigated Agricultural Lands, 1958

Province	Number of Owners				
	1-49 ha	50-99 ha	100-499 ha	500-999 ha	1,000+ ha
Damascus	3,060	87	8	...	..
Aleppo ^a	3,520	240	150	94	59
Ḥimṣ	1,960	40	...	...	..
Ḥamāh	7,789	147	57	16	1
Al-Lādhiqīyah	1,700	12	4	...	..
Dayr az-Zawr	21,800	174	288	70	22
Al-Ḥasakah	2,226	61	37	25	13
As-Suwaydā'	10	...	...	...	..
Dar'ā	687	19	8	4	..
Total	42,752	780	552	209	95

Source: Dabbagh, "Agrarian Reform in Syria," p. 3.

^aIncludes Idlib and Ar-Raqqah.

Table 4.2

Ownership of Rain-fed Agricultural Lands, 1958

Province	Number of Owners				
	1-49 ha	50-99 ha	100-499 ha	500-999 ha	1,000+ ha
Damascus	2,924	350	100	.....	...
Aleppo ^a	119,000	9,300	3,120	1,000	193
Hims	13,500	1,200	225	60	15
Hamāh	7,108	695	468	99	1
Al-Lādhiqīyah	32,540	112	18	1	1
Dayr az-Zawr	11,741	1,120	629	203	53
Al-Ḥasakah	14,445	1,040	488	208	24
As-Suwaydā'	12,000	900	100	4	...
Dar'ā	12,267	472	149	6	6
Total	225,525	15,189	5,297	1,581	293

Source: Dabbagh, "Agrarian Reform in Syria," p. 3.

^aIncludes Idlib and Ar-Raqqah.

equally have been the 1950s--described a situation that to some extent also obtained in other regions:

Whatever their origin--usury, clientelism or violence--the extension of latifundia everywhere produced the same results. First, a class of large landowners who embodied all the vices inherent in large holdings: absenteeism, because the aghās are before all else city-folk having nothing but contempt for rural life; they ignore their lands and only come to their villages at the end of harvest time to supervise the distribution of produce. . . . In the face of this all-powerful class, which owns the land and money and uses at will the formidable apparatus of government, the sharecroppers form a veritable rural proletariat. Owning nothing, not their fields, houses or livestock, without money or education, they live completely dependent on their masters. They are not even attached to the land, for the landowner can expel them at the end of each season at will. . . . The sharecropper is but an anonymous instrument of work; he is worth no more than a herd of cattle. . . . To change such a state of affairs it would be necessary to resort to a veritable social revolution.²⁹

Those with the power to implement land reform also stood to lose most from such an action: their wealth, or at least part of it, and the very basis for their political power, their stranglehold over a subservient,

exploited peasantry. In no small measure, it was the traditional elite's unwillingness to redistribute land that made certain its eventual downfall. Significantly, its power was first effectively challenged in the Ḥamāh region, where the rural crisis suffered by most of the countryside was particularly acute.

Deep regional and ethnic cleavages impeded national integration at the time of the Ba'th's genesis. These had been considerably widened by French policies during the mandate. Antagonisms between center and periphery, Aleppo and Damascus, city and countryside, and Sunni majority and Christian and heterodox Muslim minorities were bringing a state to which few Syrians owed their final allegiance anyway to the verge of disintegration in the immediate postindependence era.³⁰ Moreover, these divisions were reflected within, and hence accentuated by, the traditional elite, for the state's illegitimacy paradoxically made subnational and supra-national political loyalties preferable to national ones. Thus, the Aleppan PP and Damascene NP could survive as essentially regional parties because they were publicly committed to Arab unity, while the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), which favored a Greater Syrian state and had branches throughout the country, was suppressed and eventually outlawed because of its heresy in opposing Arab unity.

The influence of political regionalism was most prominently displayed in the traditional elite's excessive preoccupation with parochial concerns.³¹ This was evident both in the existence of essentially subnational parties and in the preponderance of independent parliamentary deputies with followings that did not extend beyond the districts they represented. When these groups acted in concert, it was usually as an ephemeral coalition of regional factions. This was vividly illustrated

by a remark reputedly make by President Shishaklī before his 1954 overthrow:

My enemies are like a serpent: the head is the Jabal Druze, the stomach Homs and the tail Aleppo. If I crush the head, the serpent will die.³²

Until the early 1950s, a confessional system of electoral representation reinforced ethnic cleavages.³³ In politically institutionalizing ethnic differences, this system contributed toward the maintenance of parochial loyalties, the power of traditional local elites, and the weakness of parties. Even after its abolition, ethnic voting and representation were too inveterate to disappear overnight.

The ill-defined philosophies, limited objectives, and geographically narrow organizations of the PP and NP precluded their gaining a truly national constituency. They did not, and could not, bridge the state's profound regional cleavages and act as vehicles for national integration. Nor, as essentially sectarian parties, could they enlist the lasting support of minorities, who were represented primarily by politically independent community leaders.

The NP, PP and like-minded instruments of the traditional elite held little attraction for the growing body of officers, doctors, lawyers, educators, and technocrats who perceived the need for far-reaching structural changes in society. Quite correctly, they saw the traditional elite as an obstacle to national development. Correctly also, they saw the need for a modern, mass organized political party to coordinate opposition to this elite and ultimately effect the changes they felt to be so necessary. Although several parties were established after independence to answer this need and to propose various solutions to the many problems which the traditional elite was disinclined or

unable to confront, none had the dynamism or widespread support of the Ba'th.

The Ba'th

There has been some disagreement concerning the Ba'th party's origins.³⁴ According to the most widely held view, it was first organized in the early 1940s by two French-educated Damascene teachers, Michel 'Aflaq and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Biṭār.³⁵ Confusion results from the existence of a second Ba'thi group in the early 1940s. This group was an outgrowth of the League of National Action, perhaps the most active, radical, and best prepared nationalist organization during the mandate despite its diminutive size. Its 'Alawi founder, Zakī al-Arsūzī, led opposition to Turkey's annexation of Alexandretta in the 1930s.³⁶ Since the 1960s, many Syrian Ba'this have claimed that Arsūzī and not 'Aflaq was the party's spiritual father.³⁷ If Arsūzī played a pivotal role in the Ba'th's genesis, he was a grey eminence, for his name does not appear in many of the standard works on the party published before 1966.³⁸ Because he brought a large 'Alawi following with him when both groups merged, however, his influence on the Ba'th's evolution cannot be dismissed. Whichever version one chooses to accept, 'Aflaq and Biṭār were clearly the party's leading figures throughout the 1950s.³⁹

Ba'thi doctrine and ideology are succinctly described in the party's slogan: "Unity, Freedom, Socialism."⁴⁰ The order in this trinity is telling, for before all else the Ba'th party is Arab nationalist and, at least in theory, deeply committed to the achievement of Arab unity.⁴¹ This is unequivocally stated as the party's "first principle" in the preamble to its constitution:

The Arabs form one nation. This nation has the natural right to live in a single state. . . . The Party of the Arab Ba'th therefore believes that . . . the Arab fatherland constitutes an indivisible political and economic unity. No Arab country can live apart from the others. . . . The Arab nation constitutes a cultural entity. Any differences existing among its sons are accidental and unimportant. They will all disappear with the awakening of the Arab consciousness.⁴²

But Arab unity, while an end in itself, was also seen by the party's principal theoretician, Michel 'Aflaq, as a prerequisite to the introduction of a socialist society. Socialism and Arab nationalism are viewed as inseparable, if not almost synonymous, for "socialism is a necessity which emanates from the depth of Arab nationalism itself" (article 4). Arab unity and socialism are in turn indispensable to the spiritual renaissance and moral regeneration of Arab society and to the restoration of past glories and greatness. This mystical, almost fascist, theme of renewal is central to Ba'thi ideology:

Socialism constitutes . . . the ideal social order which will allow the Arab people to realize its possibilities and to enable its genius to flourish, and which will ensure for the nation constant progress in its material and moral output (article 4).

The Arab nation is characterized by virtues which are the results of its successive rebirths. These virtues are characterized by vitality and creativeness and by an ability for transformation and renewal (second principle).

Immodestly, the Ba'th, or Renaissance Party, sees itself as a vanguard of this rejuvenation, which can only come about through revolution (article 6).

In its early years, the Ba'th could justifiably claim to articulate Arab unionist aspirations more cogently than any other party in Syria. This, more than anything else, guaranteed it a large constituency. The NP and PP paled in comparison; the Communist party was insensitive to the strength of Arab nationalist sentiment, and in any case rejected it out of hand as bourgeois and reactionary, as something that

detracted from the class struggle; and the SSNP, in its goal of a Greater Syria, similarly failed to satisfy Arab nationalist aspirations. Significantly, it was the Ba'th which engineered Syria's unification with Egypt in 1958, a little over ten years after the party's formal birth.

If the Ba'th's manifest Arab nationalist credentials earned the party at least passive support from a large segment of the population and hastened the downfall of the traditional elite by underlining the superficiality of its unionist plans, so also did its socialist ideals and commitment to reform have great appeal. Many of the party's objectives, while often no more radical than those of social democratic European parties, were revolutionary in the Syrian context. For one, the party sought "the overthrow of the present faulty structure--an overthrow which will include all the sectors of intellectual, economic, social and political life" (article 6). Specifically, it envisaged a "just redistribution (of wealth)" (article 27). It would forbid "the exploitation of the work of others" (article 28). The state would manage "public utilities, extensive natural resources, big industry and the means of transportation" (article 29). Workers were to participate in factory management and receive a share of all profits (article 32). Their wages, holidays, and working conditions would be fixed and regulated (article 40). The state would provide free medical care (article 39). Education, a right of every citizen, would be both free and compulsory (article 46).

The Ba'th, in short, stood for everything that the traditional elite was against. To those cognizant of the need for structural reform, the Ba'th's economic and social policies offered hope for directed development. In the words of Abu Jaber, the party "epitomize(d) the

agonies and hopes of a large number of Arabs who (were) intent on achieving change and modernization."⁴³

It was the Ba'th's commitment to land reform and rural improvement, however, which enabled it to achieve its first local electoral successes. The party's constitution specified that "ownership of agricultural land will be so limited as to be in proportion to the means of the proprietor to exploit all his lands without exploitation of the efforts of others" (article 30). This hardly endeared it to the traditional elite.

In the first few years of its existence, the Ba'th remained small and urban-based. In 1953, however, it merged with Akram al-Ḥawrānī's peasant- and Ḥamāh-based Arab Socialist party. This immediately gave it a badly needed base in the countryside, for Ḥawrānī had championed peasant causes for many years and had a large reservoir of rural support. Ḥawrānī was to the Ba'th what Lenin was to Marxism. Largely under his aegis, a Ba'thi slate of candidates won complete victory in Ḥamāh in the 1954 elections. Five of the Ba'th's twenty-two seats were won in this region. Moreover, it was here, where the party had campaigned largely on the issue of land reform, that the Ba'th first successfully challenged the traditional landowning elite's power.⁴⁴

The Ba'th, as advocate and adversary, perceived the need for preparation and the generation of popular support. Thus, in addition to leading demonstrations and actively and persistently propagandizing against the traditional elite, it provided for a highly structured party organization when it drew up its internal rules in 1954. Whereas the NP and PP were, in Duverger's terms, "caucus parties," the Ba'th, a "mass party," bore more resemblance to communist and fascist parties in its pyramid spatial structure.⁴⁵ Although party organization in practice

seldom functioned, it was designed in part to permit upward mobility within the party and facilitate recruitment of members from all regions. The Ba'th thus provided a framework for transcending the regionalism and geographical parochialism that characterized the parties of the ancien régime. Its spatial organization helped it gain a national following.

The Ba'th and the Periphery

The Ba'th found its main constituency among a rising middle class that was at once intensely nationalist, conscious of the need for modernization and development, and frustrated by the traditional elite's impotent leadership and bankrupt policies. For a number of reasons, however, it also attracted strong support among minority communities in general and at the heterodox periphery in particular.

Although the Ba'th stressed Islam's invaluable cultural contribution to the strength and vitality of Arabism, it was passionately secularist and intolerant of any subnational allegiances which might impede national integration:

The national tie is the only tie that may exist in the Arab state. It ensures harmony among all the citizens by melting them in the crucible of a single nation and counteracts all religious, communal, tribal, racial, or regional factions. (article 15).

To 'Aflaq, the ills of Arab society were "feudalism, regionalism, sectarianism and intellectual reaction."⁴⁶ Syria's minorities had good reason to concur with at least part of this diagnosis, for it was they, rather than the Sunni Muslim majority, who suffered most from sectarianism.

Historically, Christians were tolerated by Orthodox Islam as "People of the Book" (ahl al-Kitāb).⁴⁷ Toleration, however, did not imply

equality. Christians were obliged to pay a discriminatory poll tax until the nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms and were for long excluded from the most prestigious careers in the bureaucracy and military.⁴⁸ As a result, many turned to commerce, especially after Western capitalist penetration commenced in the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Increased mercantile contacts with the West combined with new educational opportunities provided by European protector powers to make Levantine Christian communities the bridgepoint for new ideas. Among these ideas were nationalism, socialism, and secularism:

As European Jews from the Enlightenment onward actively helped formulate secular ideologies which could give them secure and equal positions before their Christian compatriots, so the progressive elements of the Syrian Christian minorities scoured Europe in search of new ideas to replace the religious foundations of Middle Eastern civilization. The nationalism, socialism and free enterprise of the West were all possibilities. . . . Ironically, the same drive for equality and full citizenship which led some Syrian Christians to laissez-faire led others to its ideological opposite, socialism.⁵⁰

Christians were thus conspicuous not only among early Levantine socialists but also in the secular Arab nationalist movement which gathered momentum from the last quarter of the nineteenth century onwards.⁵¹ It was the desire for equality within a secular state--something that Syria most certainly was not at the time of the Ba'th's genesis--that led many Christians to support the Ba'th, as well as other lay parties.⁵² Michel 'Aflaq, it should be noted, was himself a Greek Orthodox Christian.

Whereas Christians were suffered in traditional Islamic society, 'Alawis, and to a lesser extent Druzes, were stigmatized. Because Orthodox Islam was theocratic, heterodox communities were historically viewed as political enemies as well as religious dissidents. They were not, as a result, accorded the same rights and privileges granted to

Christians and Jews.⁵³ Indeed, 'Alawi doctrine was, and to some extent still is, considered heretical by many Sunni Muslims.⁵⁴ A landmark fatwā, or legal pronouncement, issued by a fourteenth-century Islamic jurist stated that 'Alawis were

more infidel than the Jews or the Christians. . . more infidel than most idolators. The harm that they have done to the religion of Muḥammad is greater than that done by belligerent infidels, Turks, Franks and others.⁵⁵

The fatwā further proclaimed that the animals 'Alawis slaughtered and the cheese they produced were impure and not to be consumed by orthodox Muslims. Sunnis were prohibited from taking 'Alawi wives, saying prayers over the 'Alawi dead, or burying them in their cemeteries. They were further urged not to employ 'Alawis.⁵⁶ Officially sanctioned discrimination helped shape attitudes towards 'Alawis that were peculiarly resistant to change.

Historically, the 'Alawi community was deemed unworthy of even moderately civil treatment. Geographically isolated in the Jabal 'Alawi, it exhibited a fierce independence from central administrations and resisted external control for centuries. When this autonomy was eroded after the Ottoman Tanzimat administrative and military reforms, the 'Alawi community suffered oppression and discrimination anew.⁵⁷ In 1870, a Russian representative wrote in a report to his consul general in Beirut that

the situation in the 'Alawi districts is among the most miserable and sad (in Syria). They have no justice. . . . 'Alawi villages have been devastated by pillage and fire. Tax collectors (and) Turkish officials . . . perpetrate unprecedented injustices and seize all their means of existence.⁵⁸

'Alawis were treated with contempt--in fact, as a near-pariah group. Mythical tales about their debauchery and moral turpitude, similar to

those told of virtually any group considered by a majority to be heretic, abounded, reinforced in part by the secrecy which necessarily surrounded 'Alawi religious practices.⁵⁹ Specialization in undesirable occupations was seen as confirmation of their worthlessness and as a justification for discrimination rather than its consequence. As recently as the late nineteenth century, it was said of the 'Alawis that

they are in no sense an important people to modern commerce and civilization, and when they are exterminated from Syria, as they probably will be before the century closes, the world will suffer no great loss. They are but one degree in social value above the Indians of North America, and are destined, doubtless, to the same fate.⁶⁰

Significantly, 'Alawi doctrine permits religious dissimulation, or the denial of one's faith, in order to escape persecution.

During the mandate, when the colonial power protected 'Alawi rights and autonomy, the community divided over its future position within the Levant. Many 'Alawis, including the community's traditional elite, accepted sectarian divisions as an unalterable fact. To them, geographical separation and isolation were a means of avoiding discrimination. However, to a younger generation of educated, socially mobilized 'Alawis, confessionalism confirmed, perpetuated, and generated inequality and discrimination. They were attracted to secularist solutions and to lay political parties that proposed them.

Al-Lādhīqīyah has, since independence, been a major stronghold of Syria's two principal secularist political parties, the SSNP and the Ba'th.⁶¹ Initially, minorities in the region preferred the Syrian nationalist SSNP to the Arab nationalist Ba'th because of their chronic fear of being engulfed within a pan-Arab state.⁶² Ultimately, however, the Ba'th won greater support than the fascist SSNP among 'Alawis because

it also advocated socialism. This had obvious and direct appeals in Syria's poorest and most underdeveloped region. Indeed, it was partly at the insistence of one of the 'Alawi founding members of the Ba'th, Wahīb al-Ghānim, that it espoused socialism at all.⁶³

The strength of Ba'thi support in the al-Lādhiqīyah region also has roots in several developments during the colonial period. Between the two world wars, the traditional elite's authority and legitimacy remained relatively intact. This was not the case in the al-Lādhiqīyah region, for French divide-and-rule policies discredited and undermined the power of collaborationist 'Alawi community leaders. Leadership of local nationalist opposition to the French, freed from domination by the traditional power structure, thus passed to a younger and more radical generation. Such persons were not attracted to the ineffective mainstream nationalist movement. Rather, they turned to the League of National Action, whose brand of more radical nationalism was in keeping with their own.

'Alawi support for the League of National Action grew after France's unilateral cession of Alexandretta to Turkey. This action, which underlined the impotence and bankruptcy of Syria's veteran national leadership, was particularly offensive to 'Alawis, who constituted a sizable minority in Alexandretta. Many 'Alawi refugees were attracted to the League because it, almost alone, actively challenged annexation. Subsequently, many turned to the Ba'th which, in some ways, was an outgrowth of the League in the al-Lādhiqīyah region. As already noted, Zakī al-Arsūzī, who led League resistance in Alexandretta, went on to become one of the Ba'th's founding members. The early prominence of ex-League 'Alawis within the Ba'th was in turn instrumental in

winning support for the party in the al-Lādhiqīyah region. The political beliefs of Ṣalāḥ Jadīd and Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad, for example, are said to have been profoundly influenced by such persons as Arsūzī and Ghānim.⁶⁴

Despite its sizable constituency among ethnic minorities, the Ba'th was emphatically not minority-dominated in its formative years. Even if much of its support came from the rural hinterland, its middle class leadership was from the urban core.

The Ascendancy of the Periphery within the Ba'th

From the late 1940s when the Ba'th entered politics until the early 1960s when it achieved power, national politics revolved around "a struggle between two . . . elites--the political brokers of the older, more wealthy families and those new politically ambitious (middle class) elements with specific programs seeking to undermine the exclusive power of the older brokers."⁶⁵ As a result of this struggle and the participation of new groups in the political process, the traditional elite's power was gradually eroded. Although challenged at every turn by the Ba'th, other middle class groups, and the armed forces, it was not destroyed, however, until after 1963.

The Ba'thi revolution was, in many ways, twofold. In addition to destroying the traditional elite, it marked the emergence of a new dialectic between the largely urban middle class Ba'thi activists who challenged the traditional power structure throughout the 1950s and predominantly rural or provincial lower middle class Ba'this intent on further radicalizing Syrian politics. It was the latter group, and specifically officers of the Military Committee, who led the Ba'thi revolution.

Ironically, the 1963 coup d'etat surprised veteran Ba'this who had

nurtured the party in its early years. Ultimately they were among the victims, rather than the beneficiaries, of the new regime. Moreover, after 1963 the Ba'th came to resemble something very different from the original party. In some senses, it became a new party altogether, not only in leadership, but also in constituency and orientation.

Despite the Ba'th's dynamism and broad appeal, there was an increasing discrepancy in the 1950s between what it originally set out to become and what it was actually becoming. Quite simply, it gradually degenerated as a political party, its other successes notwithstanding.⁶⁶

In principle, the Ba'th was committed to the achievement of power through democratic means. This was not the most realistic strategy in Syria. For one, when democratic machinery functioned, it served primarily to confirm the traditional elite's power. The Ba'th could not, and never did, achieve major national electoral successes. Second, it was apparent that the Ba'th would be unable to implement its policies, and particularly those such as land reform which would have profoundly altered the power structure, without something more than the partial power to which it would have to resign itself if it abided by constitutional rules.

In these circumstances, the Ba'th became increasingly receptive to shortcuts to power through the armed forces. Real power within the Ba'th thus gradually shifted from its veteran civilian leadership to sympathetic officers. This had important consequences. First, because Ba'thi officers tended to be more radical--a reflection of their more humble, rural origins--they increasingly resented and ignored the largely urban civilian leadership. Second, party organization, although nominally intact, became increasingly irrelevant.

This rift paralleled tension between the civilian leadership and the rank and file. As founders of the Ba'th, 'Aflaq, Biṭār, and Ḥawrānī inevitably left their imprint on the party. That the Ba'th came to be almost synonymous with its leaders, however, reflected the party's degeneration. Ba'thi leaders acted unilaterally, seldom consulting the membership. Decisions and policy recommendations moved neither up nor down through the party hierarchy. When party rules were ignored even by the leadership, there were ample opportunities for the development of schisms and for independent action by party branches. This was especially so because Ba'thi ideology is somewhat vague and invites factionalism.⁶⁷ By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Ba'th appeared not as one political party but as several.

Rural party militants were also increasingly frustrated, for the countryside's problems remained unsolved. In part, this was because the Ba'th was not in a position to introduce reforms. In part also, it was because the largely urban leadership devoted far more attention to bringing about Arab unity than to the miseries of rural Syria. Because of the degeneration of Ba'thi organization, the rank and file's radicalism, particularly in the countryside and at the periphery, went largely unrepresented in the party's upper echelons. This ideological rift to some extent coincided with and was reinforced by class and generation cleavages which emerged within the party in the late 1950s.

The Ba'th always had a particular appeal to the upwardly mobile sons of the peasantry. It was this group especially that grew in size after independence because of a tremendous expansion of educational facilities. In 1943 there were approximately 46,000 pupils in 249 elementary and secondary schools in Syria; by 1960 there were 424,000 in over

3,200 such schools.⁶⁸ This expansion, perhaps one of the traditional ruling class's few real achievements, occurred primarily in the countryside and in the provinces, where the need was greatest. It was here also that Ba'thi membership swelled in the 1950s. Both in relative and absolute terms, the Ba'th's constituency gradually became less urban middle class and more rural and provincial petit bourgeois, even if its leadership did not reflect these changes until the early 1960s.

Generational cleavage was a product of the party's age. By the late 1950s, the Ba'th had not experienced a change of leadership for well over a decade. The credentials of the party's founding members had been tarnished somewhat by the rough and tumble of politics, and many younger party members no longer held the veteran leadership in awe. Had the Ba'thi organization functioned as intended, new blood could have been recruited into upper party levels with little disruption and generational tensions might have been smoothed. But with channels of upward mobility almost defunct, the invigoration and renewal of party leadership necessitated something more drastic--an internal revolution.

The divergence of views within the party was considerably widened by Syria's union with Egypt in 1958, paradoxically a move unreservedly supported by most Ba'this. The Ba'thi-engineered union should have been the party's apotheosis. Instead, it almost ruined it, for the union was a fiasco and discredited the Ba'th's veteran leadership within three short years. The failure of the United Arab Republic (UAR) marked a turning point for both Syria and the Ba'th.

President Nasser of Egypt specified the Ba'th's dissolution as a precondition to union. The leadership, with some reluctance, complied with his request and unilaterally disbanded the party. Naively, it

still hoped to play a major role in the union and win glory for being its architects. The provincial branch membership, which had not been consulted, did not approve of the decision and defied the party leadership's poorly transmitted directives. As a result, provincial branches, and especially those distant from the capital which could more easily evade party and Egyptian authority, maintained a semblance of organization throughout the union.⁶⁹ More important, freed from the watchful eye of the Ba'thi leadership, radical provincial and peripheral branches were able to construct foundations for their eventual ascendance within the party as a whole. These branches were also largely in regions from which most Ba'thi officers in the Military Committee came: al-Lādhiqīyah, Dar'ā, as-Suwaydā', and Dayr az-Zawr.⁷⁰

The Ba'th suffered a precipitous loss of influence during the UAR and was, as a result, not altogether displeased by the severing of ties between Syria and Egypt after the September 1961 coup d'etat.⁷¹ The weak rump of the original Ba'th, led by Biṭār and 'Aflaq, convened a National (i.e., international) Congress in 1962 to formulate the party's future. Among its decisions was one to reestablish the still officially dissolved Syrian Ba'th under the supervision of a commission comprised largely of Iraqi Ba'this. In addition, a provisional Syrian Regional Command of four members--three of whom were Iraqi--was formed.⁷²

Syrian provincial party militants, who had remained organized and active throughout the UAR, were not invited to the National Congress, which they regarded as illegal. They were, however, in an excellent position to assume control over the party. In open defiance of the disorganized and decimated party leadership which controlled the international National Command, they announced the formation of their own

Syrian Regional Command--in effect a new Ba'th party. It was comprised of young, radical, provincial and especially peripheral Ba'this who became known as the Qutriyyūn. With the Military Committee, they formed the core of the so-called neo-Ba'th.⁷³

When Ba'thi officers, in conjunction with Nasserites, led a coup d'etat in March 1963--the Ba'thi revolution--civilian members of the ancien Ba'th were caught unawares. Nevertheless, neo-Ba'this needed their support and authority while consolidating their position. Many veteran Ba'this did, as a result, receive high positions within the regime. Biṭār, for example, was appointed Prime Minister of the first cabinet formed after the coup. Once non-Ba'this had been effectively removed by the autumn of 1963, however, neo-Ba'this turned their attention to eliminating the relatively conservative Ba'this who had controlled the party since its formation.

The intra-Ba'th power struggle which lasted from then until February 1966 was greatly complicated by the fact that the two very broad and often internally divided contending factions generally occupied niches within the party's hierarchically ordered organization.⁷⁴ The neo-Ba'th was the most powerful of the two wings, having maintained a degree of organization throughout the union and having played a role in the March 1963 coup d'etat. After Ṣalāḥ Jadīd pressured veteran Ba'this to permit the readmission of the dissident Qutriyyūn faction into the party, it virtually controlled the Syrian Regional Command as well as party organization within the armed forces. But the Regional Command was in theory subordinate to the international National Command which the old leadership controlled. The authority of the latter within Syria was increasingly nominal, but it could not easily be totally ignored by the former

while its position was precarious.

More important, the struggle between the two factions, in addition to being between classes, generations, and ideologies, also appeared to be between a heterodox-dominated, but also Sunni, rural periphery and a largely orthodox Sunni urban center. There is thus a direct parallel between the manipulation of regional and ethnic ties in the military when discipline crumbled and in the Ba'th when party organization degenerated. Although regional and ethnic identities did not always determine the nature of political commitments within the Ba'th between 1963 and 1966, sectarianism deeply infected political life during these years. In part this was because the Syrian Ba'th party was small and, despite its advent to power, very weak. Several estimates put its total membership at the time of the 1963 coup at 500--hardly enough to control the country let alone allow the luxury of an internecine dispute.⁷⁵ The neo-Ba'th, anxious to consolidate its position with the least possible delay, thus made a concerted and hasty effort to expand its ranks with loyal supporters. As previously noted, because of the urgency of this task, standards of admission into the party were greatly relaxed and large numbers of friends, kinsmen, and persons from peripheral provinces and minority communities were encouraged to enter it in 1963 and 1964.⁷⁶

These and similar developments did not go unnoticed by Syrians, many of whom perceived a conspiracy by regional minorities and peripheral Sunnis to take over the state. In addition, the neo-Ba'th's radicalism, reflected in the issuance of sweeping land reform and nationalization decrees, provoked strong opposition in the traditionally conservative cities. Many equated socialism with atheism, or considered it to be the ultimate heresy of groups whose Islamic identity they doubted

anyway. As a result, strong undercurrents of antiheterodox sentiment were expressed during large-scale riots throughout urban Syria in 1964. This disorder was inspired both by the puritanical revivalist Muslim Brotherhood and by the traditional ruling class.⁷⁷

The eventual victory in 1966 of the neo-Ba'th over the old Ba'th, and of the periphery over the center, was the culmination of a protracted power struggle between two Ba'thi officers, Ṣalāḥ Jadīd and Amīn al-Ḥāfiẓ.⁷⁸ During this struggle, the armed forces became deeply divided along geographic and ethnic lines. While initially not all heterodox officers supported Jadīd, Ḥāfiẓ's accusations that his opponent was spreading sectarianism within the military became a self-fulfilling prophecy.⁷⁹ Regional minority officers were virtually forced to commit themselves to Jadīd's success. At the same time, many urban Sunnis came to view Ḥāfiẓ as their champion against the heterodox periphery's growing power. Furthermore, Jadīd and 'Umrān made temporary common cause, linking their separate 'Alawi followings within the armed forces. By the end of 1965, it was estimated that Sunni officers supporting Amīn al-Ḥāfiẓ controlled only 25 to 30 percent of all army units.⁸⁰ Faced with this situation and intimidated by Jadīd's control of the Regional Command, Ḥāfiẓ had little alternative but to join the moderate wing of the Ba'th, an action which finally precipitated his downfall.

Although 'Alawi and Druze supporters of Jadīd controlled most army units and with the assistance of peripheral Sunnis dominated the Regional Command, Ḥāfiẓ's followers commanded a crucial tank brigade in Ḥims. In December 1965, Jadīd persuaded 'Ubayd, the Druze Minister of Defense, to issue a decree transferring them, thus preparing the way for Ḥāfiẓ's downfall. Ḥāfiẓ's supporters refused to obey the decree, which the

National Command rescinded. Jadīd promptly ordered them arrested. This in turn provoked the National Command to dissolve the Regional Command, assume all civilian and military powers, and dismiss several neo-Ba'thi officers, including one of Jadīd's cousins. Two days later, on February 23, 1966, neo-Ba'thi officers led a coup d'etat which destroyed the final vestiges of the National Command's authority over the peripheral and minority-dominated Regional Command.

One of the Ba'th's main misfortunes was that the means it used to achieve power detracted from its ultimate objectives. With good reason, few Syrians were willing to accept that a regime apparently based on ethnic and regional solidarity paradoxically wished to create a united, secular, socialist society. The early years of Ba'thi rule thus divided Syrians rather than united them. In the long term, however, the revolution was a nation-building one, and must be seen in the context of the traditional elite's inability to create a strong, stable political center and attack the many problems which confronted the state after independence.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. The riches and political clout of the Kaylānī, Tayfūr, 'Aẓm, and Barāzī families, for example, rested on their ownership of 108 of the 114 villages in the Hamāh region ("Notes sur la propriété foncière dans la Syrie centrale, L'Asie française, April 1933, pp. 130-7). Members of these families were returned virtually unopposed to parliament until first challenged by the Ba'th and Akram al-Hawrānī's Arab Socialist party in the early 1950s. Other families similarly constituted an all-powerful landowning or mercantile local elite in other regions: the Atāsī and Raslān in Ḥimṣ; the 'Abbās, Dindashlī, and Bashshūr in al-Lādhiqīyah; the Arsalān and Atrash in as-Suwaydā'; the Harīrī, Zu'bī, and Miqdād in Hawrān; the Sāyyid in Dayr az-Zawr; the Nizām al-Dīn in al-Ḥasakah; the Mardam, Quwatlī, Ibish, Ghazzī, and 'Aẓmah in Damascus; and the Kayyālī and Kikhyā in Aleppo, to name only a few.
2. Winder, "Syrian Deputies and Cabinet Ministers," p. 50.
3. Salah M. Dabbagh, "Agrarian Reform in Syria," Middle East Economic Papers (1962):5.
4. Seale, The Struggle for Syria, p. 182.
5. Ibid., pp. 28, 174.
6. Ibid., p. 184.
7. Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military, pp. 76-77.
8. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 403.
9. Van Dusen, "Syria: Downfall of a Traditional Elite," p. 130.
10. Ibid.
11. Thus, Nicole A. Ziadeh writes in Syria and Lebanon (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 196, that the various nationalist groups "were not parties in the full sense of the word. They appeared to meet a situation . . . they lacked party organizations, programmes and ideologies. . . . Their solutions to problems were improvised. . . . They centred around persons, and so they disappeared with the men." Van Dusen, in "Syria: Downfall of a Traditional Elite," p. 127, argues that "no cohesive . . . nationalist movement emerged."
12. Abd al-Latif Tibawī, A Modern History of Syria, Including Lebanon and Palestine (London: MacMillan and Co., 1969), p. 379.

13. This happened in Tunisia and, to a lesser extent, in Algeria. In Syria it did not occur until after independence. For an excellent discussion of the role of the colonial encounter in political center formation and subsequent nation-building processes, see Clement Henry Moore, Politics in North Africa: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), pp. 34-90.
14. See Moshe Ma'oz, "Attempts at Creating a Political Community in Modern Syria," Middle East Journal 26 (1972):389-404 and his "Society and State in Modern Syria."
15. Cited in Be'eri, Army Officers, p. 151.
16. In part, hesitation to merge Syria with any other state stemmed from a recognition of the difficulties of integrating disparate political systems. Few were willing, for example, to sacrifice Syria's republicanism to an Iraqi monarchy that was an instrument of British interests until it was overthrown in 1958. But neither did the PP or NP envisage engineering its overthrow as a means to facilitating union between the two countries. Similarly, the traditional elite was not enthusiastic about Syria's union with Egypt between 1958 and 1961. In addition to prompting Syria's secession from the United Arab Republic, it reversed the nationalization and land reform measures introduced by Nāṣir. See Seale's classic, The Struggle for Syria, and Malcolm H. Kerr's The Arab Cold War, 1958-1967, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) for accounts of the destabilizing influence of Arab unity schemes and aspirations on Syrian politics.
17. One of the prime minister's nephews, for example, was charged with gross negligence in permitting arms destined for Syria to be sent to an Israeli port (Torrey, Syrian Politics and the Military, p. 112). Several government leaders were also implicated in the theft of funds collected for the war effort (Petran, Syria, p. 95).
18. In 1952, there were only 1.23 hospital beds for every 1,000 Syrians and only 880 doctors in the entire country. Only 4.2 percent of the national budget was allocated to public health. Between 1951 and 1953, 36 percent of all deaths were among children under five. Of these, one-third died from chronic diarrhoea and gastroenteritis (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), The Economic Development of Syria (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 158, 160). A Syrian born in the 1950s could, on average, hope to live only 40 years (United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB), "Development planning and social objectives in Syria," in Studies on Selected Development Problems in Various Countries in the Middle East, 1971 (New York: United Nations, 1971), p. 21).
19. Syria can expect to double its population within twenty years. One result of this exponential growth has been a disproportionately youthful population: in 1960, slightly less than one-half of all Syrians were under fourteen (UNESOB, "Note on some demographic characteristics of selected countries in the Middle East," in

Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1969, pp. 53, 56). On current demographic problems, see Mouna Liliane Samman, "La situation démographique de la Syrie," Population 31 (1976):1256-88.

20. In 1960, only 45 percent of all school age children were enrolled in primary and secondary schools. In the late 1950s, 65 percent of all Syrians over fifteen and 83 percent of all females were illiterate. Government planners estimated that Syria had a deficit of 5,000 primary school teachers in the mid-1960s (UNESOB, "Note on some demographic characteristics," p. 61 and idem, "Some aspects of the development of human resources in various countries of the Middle East," in Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1968, p. 38).
21. In the immediate postindependence era, between 65 and 75 percent of all Syrians derived their living directly from agriculture, which, with animal husbandry, accounted for 45 to 50 percent of national income. Typically, agricultural products represented more than 75 percent of total export earnings and manufactured goods well over one-half of all imports (IBRD, The Economic Development of Syria, pp. 9, 10-14).
22. In 1952, each Syrian earned an average \$123 per annum (UNESOB, "Development planning and social objectives," p. 2).
23. To take one example: in 1952, there were 2.88 hospital beds for every 1,000 Damascenes, over ten times as many as for every 1,000 inhabitants of al-Ḥasakah (IBRD, The Economic Development of Syria, p. 160).
24. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
25. Torrey, in Syrian Politics and the Military, p. 77, noted that during the early postindependence years "the regime used its control of the government for the purpose of personal aggrandizement, nepotism, and corruption on a wholesale scale." The director general of one ministry, for example, put his son on the government payroll while he was at school in Beirut. The Director General of Finance, no less, was accused of collusion in cashing embezzlers' checks.
26. IBRD, The Economic Development of Syria, pp. 21-22.
27. Ahmad Mourad, "La propriété agricole en Syrie," in Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Étude documentaire sur l'agriculture syrienne: Étude analytique, descriptive et statistique (Damascus, 1969), p. 26. On the land problem, see also Doreen Warriner, Land Reform and Development in the Middle East: A Study of Egypt, Syria and Iraq (London: Oxford University Press, 1957); "Notes sur la propriété foncière dans la Syrie centrale," p. 130-7; Jacques Weulersse, Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient (Paris: Gallimard, 1946); and André Latron, La vie rurale en Syrie et au Liban (Beirut: L'Institut Français de Damas, 1936).

28. Eva Garzouzi, "Land Reform in Syria," Middle East Journal 17 (1963): 83.
29. Weulersse, Le pays des Alaouites, pp. 363-4.
30. The Druzes and 'Alawis in particular were slow to accept central government authority, weak though it was. Not until 1954, after a Druze revolt had been brutally suppressed and an 'Alawi millenarian movement squashed, were their centrifugal tendencies held in check.
31. See Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism," for a relevant discussion.
32. Cited in Seale, The Struggle for Syria, p. 132.
33. This arrangement was elaborate, specifying how many deputies from each ethnic group would be elected in each province. For details of the 1947 parliament's composition, for example, see George M. Haddad, Fifty Years of Modern Syria and Lebanon (Beirut: Dar al-Hayat, 1950), pp. 111-2.
34. There is now a voluminous literature on the Ba'th. In addition to works already cited, see John Devlin, The Ba'th Party: A History from its Origins to 1966 (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1976); Bashīr Da'ūq, ed., Niḍāl al Ba'th, 7 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1963-1965); Sylvia Haim, "The Ba'th in Syria," in People and Politics in the Middle East, ed. Michael P. Curtis (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1971), pp. 132-41; Ibrāhīm Salāmah, Al-Ba'th min al-Madāris ilā al-Thakanāt (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1969); Jalāl al-Sayyid, Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1973); and Muḥammad 'Umrān, Tajribatī fī al-Thawrah (Beirut: n.p., 1970).
35. They called their party al-Iḥyā al-'Arabī or, alternatively, al-Ba'th al-'Arabī. Initially, it was comprised almost exclusively of students from the Tajhīz secondary school in Damascus where they taught. It served as the nucleus for the Ḥizb al-Ba'th al-'Arabī, or Arab Renaissance party, which was officially founded in 1946. The party held its first convention and adopted a constitution in 1947.
36. On the Ba'th's formation, see Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, pp. 6-8; Devlin, The Ba'th Party, pp. 7-15; and Abu Jaber, The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, pp. 23-26.
37. Ṣafadī, in Ḥizb al-Ba'th, p. 66, claims that 'Aflaq never had an original thought and stole Arsūzī's ideas. Eric Rouleau also stresses Arsūzī's role at the expense of 'Aflaq's in "The Syrian Enigma: What is the Baath?" New Left Review, no. 45 (1967): 53-65. Arsūzī, who disliked 'Aflaq intensely, is reputed to have believed that 'Aflaq and Biṭār actually stole the name of the party from his own group (al-Jundī, Al-Ba'th, pp. 30-31). After Arsūzī died in 1969, the Ba'th established a scholarship in his name (Devlin, The Ba'th Party, p. 21). For a sample of Arsūzī's writings, see his

Ba'th al-Ummah al-'Arabīyah wa Rasālatuha ila al-'Ālam (Damascus: Maṭba'at al-Taraqqī, 1964).

38. Abu Jaber, for example, makes no mention whatsoever of Arsūzī in his The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party.
39. For a sample of their writings, see Michel 'Aflaq, Fī Sabīl al-Ba'th (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1959) and Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Biṭār, Al-Siyāsah al-'Arabīyah bayn al-Mabda' wa al-Taṭbīq (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, 1960).
40. For succinct descriptions of Ba'thi ideology, see Devlin, The Ba'th Party, pp. 23-42; Abu Jaber, The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, pp. 97-138; and Gordon H. Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," Middle East Journal 23 (1969):445-70.
41. The Ba'th's philosophical preoccupation with unity was reflected in its organization. From the start, founders conceived of the Ba'th as an all-Arab, and not Syrian, party. Article 1 of the party's constitution states that: "The party of the Arab Ba'th is a universal Arab party. It has branches in all the Arab countries. It does not concern itself with regional politics except in relation to the higher interests of the Arab cause." As if to prove the point, article 2 specified that the party's headquarters was to be located in Damascus "for the time being," but that it could be moved to any Arab city if "the national interest should require it." It is, of course, highly significant that the Ba'th was born in Syria, where the pan-Arab state-idea has traditionally been strongest.
42. The party constitution is reprinted in full in Abu Jaber, The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, pp. 167-74; in Devlin, The Ba'th Party, pp. 345-52; in the Middle East Journal 23 (1959):445-70; and in Sylvia Haim, ed., Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), pp. 233-41. The Arabic version is in Da'ūq, Niḍāl al-Ba'th, vol. 1, pp. 172-81.
43. Abu Jaber, The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, p. 10.
44. See Nabil M. Kaylani, "The Rise of the Syrian Ba'th, 1940-1958: Political Success, Party Failure," International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 3 (1972):7-11; Seale, The Struggle for Syria, pp. 182-3; and Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism," pp. 130-2.
45. See Maurice Duverger's classic, Political Parties: Their Organization in the Modern State, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen and Co., 1959).
46. Torrey, "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice," p. 448.
47. Because Islam made no distinction between religion and state, however, they could not by definition be citizens of the Islamic community. Rather, they were permitted considerable autonomy in the

administration of community affairs and in matters of personal status. Autonomy was formalized during the Ottoman Empire in the millet system, which effectively permitted each Christian sect, as well as Jews, to enjoy quasi-independence within the Islamic state. The religious unit thus also became a social and political one. This system was bolstered by Great Power protection of individual communities (Baer, Population and Society, pp. 71-73).

48. Moshe Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-61: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 189-95.
49. Donald M. Reid, "The Syrian Christians and Early Socialism in the Arab World," International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 5 (1974):177.
50. Ibid., pp. 177-8.
51. See Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 273-9.
52. The predominance of Levantine minorities generally in the various secular parties of the Middle East has been widely noted. See, for example, Michael W. Suleiman, "The Lebanese Communist Party," Middle Eastern Studies 3 (1967):146 and Walter Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East (New York: Praeger, 1956).
53. Baer, Population and Society, p. 72.
54. John Gulick, in The Middle East: An Anthropological Perspective (Pacific Palisades, Ca.: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1976), p. 169, notes that "there is some doubt as to whether the Druzes and the Alawites should be considered Muslims at all." It should be stressed that the 'Alawis and Druzes themselves have no doubts about their Islamic identities.
55. Cited in Dussaud, Histoire et religion des Nosairis, p. 30.
56. Ibid., pp. 28-30.
57. See Ma'oz, Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, pp. 109-11. Walpole, who travelled through the Jabal 'Alawi in the nineteenth century, encountered several ruined and deserted villages, their inhabitants having fled the extortion of officials (Frederick Walpole, The Ansayrii (or Assassins), with Travels in the Further East, in 1850-1851, vol. 3 (London: Richard Bentley, 1850), pp. 121-2). Emmanuel Rey describes a similar experience in "Reconnaissance de la montagne des Ansariés," Bulletin de la Société de Géographie 11 (1866):461. See also Henri Lammens, "Au pays des Nosairis," Revue de l'Orient chrétien 5 (1900):433n.
58. Cited in Dussaud, Histoire et religion des Nosairis, p. 38.
59. See, for example, Walpole, The Ansayrii, pp.40-41; La Roche, "La

- religion des Ansariés," p. 283; and M. C. F. Volney, Travels through Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784 and 1785, vol. 2 (London: G. Robinson, 1805), p. 5. Weulersse in Le pays des Alaouites and Dussaud in Histoire et religion des Nosairis treated these stories for what they manifestly were: spurious stereotypes held by neighboring Sunnis. It must be emphasized, however, that such stereotypes die very slowly. Parenthetically, Norman Cohn has noted similar tales told of Christian heretics in Europe during the Middle Ages in The Pursuit of the Millenium: Revoltionary Mille-narians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 39, 49.
60. Anonymous review of Samuel Lyde's The Asian Mystery, Illustrated in the History and Present State of the Ansaireeh or Nusairis of Syria, in North American Review 93 (1861):348.
 61. Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism," pp. 132-3.
 62. For this reason, the SSNP won almost all its support among Levantine minorities--particularly Christians. See Labib Zuwiyya Yamak, The Syrian Social Nationalist Party: An Ideological Analysis (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 142-3.
 63. Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism," p. 133. According to one version, Ghānim and Arsūzī would not bring their 'Alawi-al-Lādhiqīyah followings into the Ba'th at its first congress unless it espoused socialist principles (Devlin, The Ba'th Party, p. 133). The radicalism of the region was also reflected in the fact that five of the Communist party's seven candidates in the 1954 election stood in al-Lādhiqīyah province (Cahiers de l'Orient contemporain 11 (February 1954):183).
 64. Rouleau, "The Syrian Enigma," p. 56 and Van Dusen, "Political Integration and Regionalism," p. 133.
 65. Van Dusen, "Syria: Downfall of a Traditional Elite," p. 129. Seale's The Struggle for Syria remains the best and most complete account of this conflict.
 66. This is reflected in the titles of several articles on the Ba'th: Kaylani's "The Rise of the Syrian Ba'th, 1940-1958: Political Success, Party Failure;" Torrey's "The Ba'th: Ideology and Practice;" Jean-Pierre Viennot's "Le Ba'th entre la théorie et la pratique," Orient, no. 30 (1964):13-27; and, significantly, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Biṭār's "The Rise and Decline of the Baath," Middle East International, June 1971, pp. 12-15 and July 1971, pp. 13-16.
 67. Kaylani notes in "The Rise of the Syrian Ba'th," p. 22, that the party "preaches rebellion against socio-political decadence, but does not analyze the nature of the rejected decadent society. It advocates socialism without setting up a real program of social action. It promises a kind of freedom that is elevating to the spirit, but fanciful beyond attainment. And the unity it calls for is wrapped in a thick mantle of romanticism. Ba'thism, therefore,

is readily susceptible to individual interpretations."

68. Torrey, "Aspects of the Political Elite in Syria," p. 153. The Ba'th recruited extensively in secondary schools. Van Dusen interviewed one officer who claimed that over three-quarters of his high school class in Aleppo were already Ba'this ("Intra- and Inter-generational Conflict," p. 320).
69. Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, pp. 22, 39.
70. Significantly, many Ba'thi officers were friendly with, if not actually related to, civilian Ba'this in these branches (Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 11).
71. Nevertheless, secession provoked a threefold split within the old party leadership. Akram al-Hawrānī became staunchly antiunionist and left the party altogether. Another group of Ba'this under Sāmī Sūfān, who felt the party had betrayed its unionist principles by endorsing secession, also exited to form the Socialist Unionist party.
72. Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 11.
73. Foremost among the Qutriyyūn were Sulaymān al-Khash, Ibrāhīm Mākhūs, and Munīr 'Abdallāh from al-Lādhiqīyah, Fā'iz al-Jasim, Muslih Salim and Yūsuf Zu'ayyīn from Dayr az-Zawr, and Khālīd al-Jundī from Hamāh (Ibid.; Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, pp. 39-40; and Petran, Syria, pp. 171-4). See also Chapters 12 and 13, appropriately entitled "The New Party" and "Changes in Ideology," in Devlin, The Ba'th Party, pp. 187-227, and Ben-Tzur, "The Neo-Ba'th."
74. This is simplifying matters greatly. There was considerable mobility between the two factions and between the National and Regional Commands. Furthermore, the two main wings of the party were not consistently at loggerheads; they cooperated, for example, in ousting an extreme leftist faction from the party altogether.
75. Petran, Syria, p. 167.
76. The Regional Command prevented the National Command from operating freely within Syria, despite the latter's nominally greater authority. It was therefore able to purge party members who supported 'Aflaq and Biṭār. In 1964, for example, the Dayr az-Zawr branch of the party had 93 members, most of them loyal to 'Aflaq and Biṭār. A member of the Military Committee therefore went to Dayr az-Zawr to persuade supporters of the neo-Ba'th to petition to join the party. Over one hundred requests for membership were approved immediately. On the same day, a new branch leadership was elected. It proceeded to purge almost all the original 93 members. The al-Lādhiqīyah branch was similarly stacked with supporters of the neo-Ba'th and its size grossly inflated by many friends and relatives of the new elite (Van Dam, "The Struggle for Power," p. 13). According to al-Razzāz, party membership increased by 500 percent during the Ba'th's first year in power (Al-Tajribah al-Murrah, p. 110).

77. Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, pp. 109-26.
78. Ḥāfiz, a Sunni from Aleppo, was a military attaché in, of all places, Argentina during the 1963 coup. Summoned home, he proceeded to accumulate considerable power. He was variously President of the National Council of the Revolutionary Command and of its Praesidium, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of the Interior. He appointed to the position of Chief of Staff, however, Jadīd, an equally ambitious 'Alawi officer who was Head of the Officers Affairs Bureau, Director of Personnel at GHQ, and Assistant Secretary General of the Regional Command. After ousting their common enemy, Muḥammad 'Umrān, a confrontation between the two was inevitable.
79. Many 'Alawi officers preferred the popular, charismatic 'Umrān, and Druze officers initially favored Ḥāfiz.
80. Al-Hayāt, 5 February 1966.

CHAPTER V

CENTER AND PERIPHERY: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE BA'TH

If the Ba'thi revolution was led largely by the geographic periphery, so also was it followed by a deluge of statements and ideological tracts that betrayed both the new elite's regional composition and its concern over the plight of the rural hinterland:

Millions and millions of pounds are spent in the cities to make bread cheap, while most (of the) peasants do not eat flour throughout the year. . . . Another form of exploitation is the attention given to some regions but not to others, so that the country is divided into two parts: the spoiled and the neglected. This is another form of exploitation suffered by some regions that we will call backward and remote.¹

The development of "neglected" regions has been an explicit, if vaguely defined, objective of the Ba'thi regime. Thus, in the state's second five-year economic and social development plan for the 1966-70 period, two of the "general targets" were "developing the rural community and raising its standard by means of an increase in social services and opportunities for work, and the abolition of illiteracy," and "improving the regional distribution of factors of production."² The third plan, for the 1971-75 period, was even more forthright, stating that one of its fourteen "general objectives" was

to pay great concern to the countryside, especially in remote muhafazat (provinces), for the improvement of the standard of living and productive potentialities through the provision of fundamental public services, the introduction of a wider scale of rural industries to increase the opportunities of employment and to lessen the immigration of villages to city (sic).³

This chapter examines whether the periphery's assumption of political power has indeed reduced center-periphery economic and social inequalities. It also examines whether regions from which a disproportionate number of new elite members hail, and specifically al-Lādhiqīyah, have been particularly favored in the allocation of public investments. If the regime is a nation-building one, clearly such favoritism should be minimal.

Instruments of Geographic Change: New Possibilities
and Persistent Constraints

The post-1963 elite is, theoretically, far better equipped to reduce geographical inequalities than preceding regimes for two fundamental reasons. First, as a result of large-scale nationalization of banks, industry, and trade in 1964 and 1965, the government monopolizes most major economic location decisions.⁴ Liberalization since 1970 notwithstanding, socialist transformation of the economy has centralized locational decision-making so that the Ba'th can, within limits, say what is to go where. Not only has government distributive ability increased, there is also more for government to distribute. Thus, budgetary expenditures, which totaled only L.Sy. 990,675 in fiscal 1961/62, amounted to L.Sy. 3,414,000 in 1973.⁵

Many Syrians realized the potential geographical implications of the public sector's proliferation. This is illustrated by a probably apocryphal remark attributed to a minority soldier:

Don't expect us to eliminate socialism in Syria, for the real meaning of such steps would be the transfer of all the political, financial, industrial and commercial advantages to the towns, i.e. the members of the Sunni community. We, the Alawis and the Druzes, will then again be the poor and the servants. We shall not abandon socialism because it enables us to impoverish the townspeople and to equalize their standard of life to that of the villagers.⁶

Whether this remark is authentic or, more likely, was made by an opponent of the regime is hardly relevant. The point is that socialism did indeed present the Ba'thi regime with an opportunity to reduce geographical inequities.

The regime is also in a better position to reduce regional imbalances as a result of the increasing scope and sophistication of national planning during the 1960s and 1970s.⁷ Thus, projected investment amounted to L.Sy. 2.7 billion in the first five-year plan but totaled L.Sy. 4.9 billion and L.Sy. 8.0 billion in the second and third plans respectively. The expanding purview of national planning, a corollary of a growing public sector, has been reflected in a burgeoning bureaucracy. Specifically, in 1968 a general reorganization of agencies resulted in the creation of a Supreme Planning Council, a State Planning Organization, and a Central Bureau of Statistics. These institutions, which superseded a variety of weaker organs, centralized and rationalized plan decision-making.⁸

Nevertheless, the regime's ability to effect geographical change has been constrained in a variety of ways. For one, nationalization initially brought not government control of the economy, but economic chaos. Socialist transformation encouraged a quickening of the "brain drain" and massive capital flight--by the end of 1965, Syrian capitalists had smuggled an estimated \$US 200 millions out of the country.⁹ It was also accompanied by purges within the bureaucracy and by the recruitment of politically reliable but often technically incompetent persons into state agencies. For at least three years after the revolution, the proliferating public sector was disorganized, undermanned, ineptly run, and undercapitalized. The Arab-Israeli war of 1967 made matters worse.

In the mid-1960s, the neo-Ba'th was largely preoccupied with staying in power and eliminating its opponents. Thus, while quick to expropriate land and destroy the traditional elite, it was tardy about redistributing this land. A recent government publication noted that

it is really astonishing that (land) expropriation and redistribution operations have not been completed ten years after the law on agrarian reform was promulgated.¹⁰

Only in 1969, when 60 percent of total expropriated and state domain lands were finally allocated to farmers, did the Ba'th finish what it had set out to do six years earlier.¹¹

The Ba'th was also hamstrung by the dependence of the first two development plans in particular on substantial private investment. In the first plan, drawn up before the Ba'th came to power, private investment was to have accounted for 36.7 percent of all investments. In the second, the private sector's projected share of investment increased to 43.4 percent. Clearly this was optimistic in view of the regime's attitude to private enterprise at that time. It was also singularly unrealistic, since the private sector had, with the exception of agriculture and small-scale industry, been virtually destroyed by those who hoped for its cooperation. Not surprisingly, few plan targets were met.¹²

The regime's ability to reduce geographical inequalities was also severely limited by the virtual absence of any regional planning agencies prior to 1968. As a result, there is no evidence of explicit regional planning in any of Syria's first three plans, despite the vague concern over "remote provinces." The absence of such planning does not of course preclude regional development. It merely suggests that the latter is ad hoc and piecemeal at best and incidental at worst.

Given the national elite's geographical composition and the

concomitant politicization of public sector allocations, political considerations have been especially instrumental in inhibiting regional planning. To some extent, political factors have retarded such planning throughout the Arab world. Thus, a 1969 United Nations survey of the state of regional planning in Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia noted that

since area planning is sometimes identified with "regionalism" or parochial chauvinism, the very concept of regional planning is not uncontroversial.¹³

Already acutely sensitive to charges of regionalism and narrow geographic appeal, the post-1963 elite has been more wary than most of introducing regional planning, which would be viewed by many as a bureaucratization of a system of geographical spoils. Ironically, if anyone cannot take the political risk of formulating development programs to reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth in such provinces as al-Lādhiqīyah, it is the Ba'th. Political expedience dictates that the spoils of office appear not to be disproportionately distributed to certain provinces.

Notwithstanding political reservations, the Ba'th created a so-called Central Directorate for Regional Planning in 1968. According to the then Minister of Planning, it was charged with studying "the development of underdeveloped regions and the optimum exploitation of their resources."¹⁴ In addition, as part of the preparatory work for the third five-year plan, ad hoc regional commissions were constituted in each province to assist plan formulation. These comprised provincial governors, directors of provincial ministries, and local Ba'this.¹⁵

Although regional planning may eventually facilitate the development of underdeveloped regions, it is primarily a means of increasing the general effectiveness of national planning, ideally by

interposing a stage between planning at the national level and planning for specific projects; i.e. a stage at which policies, sectoral allocations and specific investments can be coordinated and harmonized.¹⁶

Regional planning is also a political mobilization strategy, a means of ostensibly democratizing the planning process while simultaneously spatially diffusing the reach of government. It

provides an opportunity for encouraging and sustaining local initiative, creativity and participation, for giving cultural or ethnic groupings a means of expression or for leading communities away from traditional apathy.¹⁷

This feature undoubtedly entered into Ba'thi considerations.

Nevertheless, there is little evidence that regional planning is much more than an empty phrase. It is too recent an innovation to have had any impact on the third five-year plan. At present, it cannot serve to channel public investment to underdeveloped regions. Rather, its main purpose is to coordinate large infrastructural projects, such as the construction of the Euphrates dam.

National Plans: Pragmatism Prevails

When the ideological garments which envelop five-year plans are stripped away and their basic aims and priorities laid bare, it is evident that Ba'thi development policies are thoroughly pragmatic, owing their inspiration less to party theoreticians than to a hard-nosed appraisal of what needs to be done, what can be done, and where it can most profitably be done. National plans bear the imprint of technocrats, rather than neophyte social engineers from the provinces.

Rhetoric notwithstanding, the advent to power of a Ba'thi regime did not appreciably alter the orientation of national planning or significantly modify its general objectives. Rather, the revolution vastly widened its scale and scope and increased its efficiency and boldness.

To this day, planning priorities and goals are strikingly consistent with those recommended by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in the early 1950s,¹⁸ save that recent discoveries of oil and phosphates have encouraged a more broad-based industrialization. A high proportion of all investments have been in projects under way when the Ba'th came to power or advocated long before 1963. Furthermore, most major investment has been in infrastructural projects which are national in scope or whose local geographical benefits are incidental. Given the economy's fundamental structural deficiencies and planners' limited financial resources, plan priorities have emphasized national growth before geographical equalization.

The pragmatism, continuity, and national infrastructural emphasis of plans are most prominently revealed in transportation development, which received 20, 22, and 11 percent respectively of all allocations in the three plans. Most investment went to port and railroad construction.

Al-Lādhiqīyah, the only province with a coastline, has naturally been the immediate beneficiary of port development. The region's central places, al-Lādhiqīyah and Ṭarṭūs, have therefore enjoyed economic boom conditions and boast among the highest rates of urban population growth in Syria.¹⁹ Ṭarṭūs, which although smaller than al-Lādhiqīyah is home to many more 'Alawis, will eventually be "one of the most important (ports) in the Mediterranean," according to a Syrian government publication.²⁰ Its potential handling capacity will be greater than Beirut and al-Lādhiqīyah combined.²¹ Since Ṭarṭūs was until recently what was charitably described as "a small Mediterranean town" with 15,000 inhabitants,²² highly visible port construction and urban expansion have aroused some suspicion of geographical favoritism.²³ However, any port

would obviously have to be built in a largely 'Alawi area; the IBRD strongly recommended port development;²⁴ the expansion of al-Lādhīqīyah was well under way before the Ba'th came to power;²⁵ and, most important, Syria desperately needed these ports.

When Turkey annexed Alexandretta in 1939, Syria lost its only significant port. This severely hampered the economic development of northeastern Syria, where potential expansion of export-oriented agriculture has been greatest and where oil was discovered in the late 1950s. In addition, Aleppo, the country's second largest city and northern Syria's central place, lost much of its traditional entrepôt and transit trade, since it was linked by railway to Alexandretta, but not to the remaining Syrian coast.

Syria's southern portions were more adversely affected by Lebanon's creation in the 1920s and by the concomitant interposing of a political boundary between Damascus and its traditional port outlet, Beirut. Although the creation of a Syro-Lebanese customs union lessened the impact of this effective landlocking, increasing political differences between the two countries in the 1950s, a result of Syria's radicalization, made dependence on Beirut a serious liability. In addition, Syria, as a major arms purchaser, was justifiably concerned that the unimpeded delivery of its military supplies was contingent upon Lebanese cooperation. After 1955, the Soviet Union, its supplier, was similarly reluctant to ship weapons through a Lebanon that was sufficiently aligned with the United States to ask it to intervene in its 1958 civil war. Even the ancien régime advocated port development at al-Lādhīqīyah for strategic reasons.

That Ṭarṭūs has recently been developed at the expense of al-Lādhīqīyah can also be explained in geographic rather than political terms.

Because al-Lādhiqīyah's site conditions limit expansion, it cannot cope efficiently with all Syria's trade. Already it is overcrowded.²⁶ Ṭarṭūs will substantially reduce pressure on its northern neighbor's handling facilities. More important, a modern port at Ṭarṭūs will reduce the distance between Syria's central and southern regions and their point of export and import by an average ninety kilometers, so that producers and consumers using it will realize a 30 percent reduction in transport costs. It therefore has a decisive locational advantage (see map 1.1).²⁷ From a strategic point of view also, Syria has good reason to deconcentrate its port facilities. This was underlined during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war when both al-Lādhiqīyah and Ṭarṭūs ports were bombed, but neither completely closed.

Port construction and expansion are central to the al-Lādhiqīyah region's economic development, for ports, as break-in-bulk points, offer locational advantages to a variety of enterprises, attracting ancillary and auxilliary industries and frequently forming growth poles around which assorted industries can enjoy the advantages of agglomeration. Most industries locating on Syria's coastal plain since the early 1960s owe their existence to such multiplier effects and not to geographic favoritism in public sector investments.

The general development of Syria's coastline would have occurred had persons from al-Lādhiqīyah not achieved political prominence. At most, only the pace of development has quickened.²⁸ The substantial benefits accruing to the region from port construction are incidental, for al-Lādhiqīyah and Ṭarṭūs are designed to serve a national hinterland, thus contributing towards the development of Syria as a whole.

Railway construction, a second component of communications, is

viewed by Syrian planners as "second only in importance to the Euphrates dam as an infrastructural project."²⁹ Specifically, the construction of three lines between al-Qāmishlī and al-Lādhiqīyah, 'Akkarī and Ṭarṭūs, and Damascus and Ḥims will create an integrated national railway network with extensive port-hinterland and interregional linkages (see map 1.1).³⁰

Such a system was recommended in part by the IBRD in the 1950s,³¹ for with the post-World War I reorganization of political space in the Levant, Syria, in addition to losing its principal port, was effectively deprived of a major part of its railroads.³² The Syrian-Turkish boundary was delimited in such a way that the railway line between Aleppo and the agriculturally productive northeast passed just within Turkey. In political geographic and transportation terms, the most rapidly expanding agricultural region of the state became a quasi-exclave.

The Levant's Balkanization similarly disrupted railway communication between Aleppo and Damascus. In delimiting the boundary between Syria and Lebanon, the French could not have ignored the fact that the standard gauge line connecting Ḥims with the narrow gauge Beirut-to-Damascus line passed through Lebanon.

Current projects will reestablish and extend railway linkages within Syria. When the network is complete, Aleppo and Damascus will be linked with one another by way of Ḥims, with Syria's two ports, and with the expanding, agriculturally productive, and oil-rich northeast. Although al-Lādhiqīyah and Ṭarṭūs will benefit especially as termini of these lines, the regime is clearly more concerned with the grid's nation-building role.

Pragmatic considerations have similarly led Ba'ṭhi planners to give high priority to irrigation development.³³ Syria's dependence on

rain-fed agriculture has been one of its most persistent and debilitating economic problems, for the acute variability of annual precipitation has resulted in cyclical crop failure and excessive fluctuations in annual production and yield.³⁴ Because agriculture employs two-thirds of all Syrians, provides between 30 and 40 percent of all national income, and accounts for between 80 and 85 percent of all exports, overdependence on rain-fed agriculture has been nationally dysfunctional.³⁵ The extension of irrigation can do much to alleviate this problem by regulating and stabilizing water supply. Already, the 8 percent of Syria's cultivated land which is irrigated produces 40 percent of the net value added to agriculture.³⁶

For these reasons, great emphasis has been placed on construction of the Euphrates dam in particular, and on lesser irrigation projects, such as the Ghāb and Khābūr schemes, in general.

The Euphrates project alone accounted for 13 and 20 percent of all investments in the second and third plans respectively. In the words of two government publications, it "constitutes one of the most important factors in the future economic transformation of Syria,"³⁷ and is "the foundation for (its) future agricultural development."³⁸ Construction of the dam commenced in 1966 at al-Tabqah. When completed, it will increase irrigated agricultural land from 500,000 to 1,350,000 hectares. Furthermore, it will generate 800,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per annum at one-fifth of current unit cost. This will quadruple present supplies and should be sufficient for Syria's projected future needs. In addition to supplying industry with a cheap source of power, the dam will permit the provision of electricity to all villages by 1980.³⁹

Clearly irrigation development is of such national significance

that geographical investment imbalances in this sector are inconsequential and reflect only environmental parameters. Ar-Raqqah received 76.8 percent of all public sector investment in irrigation during the second plan because the Euphrates dam, which accounted for over two-thirds of investment in the sector, is in this province. Furthermore, there are few provinces which will not benefit from the project. Dayr az-Zawr, for example, which received only 0.4 percent of all irrigation investment, will increase its irrigated area by 300,000 hectares as a result of the dam's construction.

Because the regime believes that "the challenge of socio-economic development in Syria (is) in essence the challenge of problems in the rural (agricultural) sector,"⁴⁰ it has substantially increased investment in the rural economy. Apart from extending irrigation, it has made a massive effort to provide villages with clean drinking water, sewage systems, schools, and medical and recreational facilities. It has also sought to balance geographical patterns of energy consumption by extending electricity to the countryside. In the early 1960s, the cities of Damascus and Aleppo together consumed 81 percent of all electricity and the middle-sized towns of Hims and Hamāh another 13 percent.⁴¹ The second plan therefore aimed to provide electricity to 170 rural settlements (see table 5.1).

The Ba'th has also made it easier for peasants to obtain low interest loans.⁴² The effects of this influx of capital into the countryside should not be exaggerated, however. Between 1965 and 1967, Agricultural and Cooperative Bank loans went to farmers who cropped only 9 percent of Syria's cultivated area.⁴³ Eighty percent of the loans it granted in

Table 5.1

Rural Electrification Projects in the
Second Five-Year Plan

Province	Number of Villages	Percentage
Damascus	23	13.5
Aleppo	21	12.3
Hims	24	14.1
Hamāh	15	8.8
Al-Lādhiqīyah	14	8.2
Dayr az-Zawr	16	9.4
Idlib	9	5.3
Al-Ḥasakah	3	1.8
Ar-Raqqah	8	4.7
As-Suwaydā'	8	4.7
Dar'ā	29	17.0
Total	170	100.0

Source: Syria, Rapport 1966-1967 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A89.

1969 went to cotton growers. The geographical distribution of agricultural credit has as a result been inequitable.⁴⁴

Land reform and the extension of agricultural cooperatives, however, represent the Ba'th's major contribution to the improvement of rural living conditions. By 1970, one-fifth of Syria's cultivated area had been redistributed to over 100,000 peasant families.⁴⁵ In addition, by 1973 there were 1,725 agricultural cooperatives in Syria (see table 5.2). Eventually over 4,000 are planned.⁴⁶ Together with irrigation development, the extension of low interest loans, the improvement of rural welfare facilities, the establishment of various state marketing organizations, and the construction of several new agricultural processing plants, land reform and agricultural cooperatives are designed to reduce urban-rural income differences.

Nevertheless, to the extent that planning priorities have shifted

Table 5.2

Distribution of Agricultural Cooperatives, 1973

	Number	Percentage	Members	Percentage
Damascus	129	7.5	10,975	8.1
Aleppo	367	21.3	18,903	14.0
Ḥims	216	12.5	15,070	11.2
Ḥamāh	244	14.1	26,256	19.5
Al-Lādhiqīyah	270	15.6	19,628	14.6
Dayr az-Zawr	75	4.3	13,810	10.3
Idlib	182	10.5	13,933	10.3
Al-Ḥasakah	78	4.5	3,539	2.6
Ar-Raqqah	70	4.0	5,290	3.9
As-Suwaydā'	40	2.3	3,099	2.3
Dar'ā	54	3.1	4,059	3.0
Total	1,725	100.0	134,562	100.0

Source: Syria, Rapport 1973-1974 sur l'économie syrienne, p. B141.

since 1963, they have moved in a direction which would question the validity of the hypothesis that changes in the elite's geographical composition have resulted in the adoption of economic policies which significantly favor the rural hinterland over the urban center. Allocations to rural-based sectors of the economy--irrigation, land reclamation, and agriculture--have declined proportionately, although not absolutely, from 40.4 percent of all investment in the pre-Ba'thi five-year plan to only 28.1 and 31.5 percent in the second and third plans.

This does not imply that rural Syria is being neglected. On the contrary, agriculture is, in the words of the Minister of Planning, reserved "a particular importance" in Syria's economic development.⁴⁷ Agricultural development is being encouraged, however, "in order to permit the development of other economic sectors."⁴⁸

Emphasis on industrialization, particularly in the third plan,

suggests that the regime, despite its geographical composition, favors a conventional approach to economic development, one which will eventually result in deemphasizing the economy's rural base. Thus, investments in manufacturing, mining, and energy leapt from 18.7 percent of all allocations in the first plan to 29.2 percent in the third.

Expansion of the oil industry has been a particular priority.⁴⁹ At present, oil production is limited to three fields in the northeastern corner of the country. In 1970, these yielded only 79,000 barrels per day (one-tenth of daily production in the United Arab Emirates). Although Syria was projected to produce almost four times this amount by 1980 (290,000 barrels per day),⁵⁰ production was only 10 percent higher in 1975 than in 1970. Nevertheless, partly because of oil price increases in 1973, crude petroleum exports increased from L.Sy. 128.7 million in 1970 to L.Sy. 2.586 billion in 1976, a twentyfold increase. During the same period, oil's share of total exports leapt from 16.6 percent to 62.4 percent.⁵¹ It has superseded textiles as the country's most valuable foreign currency earner and substantially reduced a chronic and hitherto ever-increasing balance of payments deficit. Oil will also serve as the nucleus for future industrial expansion, providing both fuel and raw materials for synthetic fibre and petrochemical manufacturing. One can see why plan investments in oil extraction and pipeline and refinery construction have been large, accounting for 14 percent of all allocations in the third plan.

Phosphate mining and processing have similarly accounted for a high proportion of all plan investments in the industrial sector in recent years. Syria's phosphate fields, which are in the Ḥims-Tadmur region, have been systematically exploited only since the late 1960s. They will

eventually yield three million tons annually. While most phosphates will be exported through ȚarȚūs, much will also be used for fertilizer, further reducing Syria's import bill.⁵²

Oil and phosphates will play a major role in the transformation of industry. Under the third plan, the share of traditional industries--such as food processing, textiles, and tobacco--in total industrial production was projected to decline from 64 to 50 percent, while the share of new industries--oil, chemicals, and fertilizers, among others--was to increase from 36 to 50 percent.⁵³

The location of post-1963 industrial projects suggests that under the Ba'th, industry may actually become more rather than less concentrated:

The geographical distribution of existing industries and industrial projects under implementation, and the planned location of new industries, point towards a concentration of industrial activity in . . . the major urban agglomerations. . . . The heaviest concentrations are those, first, in Damascus and, second, in Aleppo. . . . Industry is concentrating in urban areas . . . (and) the trend towards further concentration will grow.⁵⁴

While the Ba'thi regime is concerned about regional inequalities, considerations of economic viability and profitability, coupled with an overriding concern with the optimum use of limited financial resources to achieve national economic growth, lead it for the most part to make locational decisions that would do credit to a private entrepreneur. Even a socialist regime cannot easily ignore the advantages of establishing new industries in economically optimum locations or in existing developed regions.

To the extent that new industry has been established outside of Damascus and Aleppo, this has primarily benefited Hims, which offers decisive locational advantages to a complex of modern industries (see map

1.1). Hims sits astride the entrance to one of the few corridors through the Levantine coastal mountain range. For this reason, it has historically been a transportation hub. More recently, oil pipelines to the Mediterranean coast have passed through this corridor. One, from Iraq, bifurcates at Hims, with branches going to the large refinery in Tripoli, Lebanon, and to Bāniyās, south of the town of al-Lādhiqīyah. A second pipeline, which connects the northeast oilfields with Ṭarṭūs, was completed in 1968. Hims is also equidistant between Damascus and Aleppo. It is therefore in every respect an optimum location for the oil refinery which has supplied Syria with much of its domestic petroleum needs since 1959. Syrian oil exploitation has necessitated a major expansion of this refinery. The enlarged facility and nearby phosphate deposits constitute the nucleus for the petrochemical and fertilizer industry which has grown up around Hims in recent years.⁵⁵

The Ba'th's economic development strategy is wholly orthodox and seems to be predicated on the assumption that growth at the center will spill over and diffuse geographically to the periphery. This was hinted at in a report issued after a joint Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese workshop on regional planning:

Developed areas had many advantages deriving from the accumulation of capital resources, the availability of more skilled and diverse labour, the presence of growth-oriented technocrats, the usually favourable location of the developed areas and their infrastructure which enabled them to provide the necessary services. Additionally, economies of scale were possible both in the provision of social services . . . and for large industries which would benefit also from certain economies of agglomeration in consequence of the more easily available technical information, the linkage of certain industries, the sharing of repair services, etc. Further, and this was particularly important in countries of the Middle East, the presence of appropriate government institutions with their decision-making powers facilitated the processing of requests from industries in matters of building, production, labour relations and other issues. . . . Investment in

developed areas could increase the demand for raw materials and other products in the hinterland. . . . Initially, . . . underdeveloped areas had too low an absorptive capacity to exploit successfully large-scale capital investment, and . . . in any event, the fruits of development could always be distributed throughout the less developed areas. (emphasis added)⁵⁶

This passage is worth quoting at length, not so much because what is said--it is after all elementary capitalist location theory--but because of who said it. Presumably it reflects in some degree the views of Syrian planners who participated in the workshop.⁵⁷

This workshop also admitted that

investment (is) sometimes politically motivated and executed, without reference to economic justifications. . . . If . . . major economic or social structural change (is) deemed essential in a less developed region, then investment (will) be made regardless of cost in order to achieve it.⁵⁸

While such investments have been made in Syria since the Ba'th came to power, they are diminutive and account for a small minority of all investments. To the extent that there has been favoritism in the geographic distribution of public economic investment, it has been limited to establishing a few footloose enterprises in regions with disproportionate political power. In themselves, they are unlikely to result in a radical spatial redistribution of wealth.

Searching for evidence of geographical spoils in Syria's development plans trivializes the massive efforts made to develop the state as a whole. If "neglected" provinces have benefited from public economic investment, it is because the Ba'thi regime has viewed Syria as an integral and interdependent economic whole to be developed. Far more than its predecessors, it has sought to tap the hitherto relatively unexploited resources and assets of disadvantaged regions, whether they be a coastline in al-Lādhiqīyah, an oilfield in al-Ḥasakah, phosphate deposits

in Hims, or the Euphrates River in ar-Raqqah. Merely by attacking some of the root problems of underdevelopment and by capitalizing on any major resource, wherever it may be, the Ba'th is laying foundations for geographical equalization. Almost by definition, national planning and development imply regional convergence, for they require recognition of

the nature and location of material and human resources . . .
(and) the existence of depressed but potentially valuable areas. (emphasis added)⁵⁹

In sum, the Ba'th's concern with the problems of underdeveloped provinces need have nothing to do with geographical parochialism and regional favoritism. On the contrary, it may underline the nation-building credentials of the new elite, for

national concern with regional problems can prevent the development of a regional consciousness by drawing attention to the problems of a particular region and helping to bring it into line with other regions. Regional planning can . . . become a unifying and not divisive force in national unity.⁶⁰

The Distribution of Social Services under the Ba'th

If regional convergence has occurred since 1963, it will be manifested most clearly in a more balanced geographical provision of government social services, which, because of their locational flexibility, are more susceptible to social engineering. Three types of service are examined in turn here: primary education, secondary education, and health care.

The Ba'thi regime has made considerable progress in extending educational facilities and opportunities throughout Syria. Primary school enrollment increased from 563,000 in 1963 to 925,000 in 1971 and secondary school enrollment from 126,000 to 316,000 during the same period.⁶¹ This expansion was reflected in enrollment ratios, which improved from

0.67 in 1964 to 0.85 in 1971 at the primary level and from 0.20 to 0.36 at the secondary level.⁶² Investment in education boosted the number of primary and secondary school teachers from 15,607 and 3,973 respectively in 1963 to 25,134 and 13,483 respectively in 1971. In the same period, 1,682 new primary and 454 new secondary schools were opened. The question is: was this expansion of educational facilities in the eight years after the Ba'th came to power greater than that which occurred in the eight years before 1963? More particularly, did it benefit all regions equally?

The proportional distribution of primary schools changed substantially between 1955 and 1971. Eight years before the revolution, 19.1 percent of all primary schools were in Damascus province. By 1971, its share was only 11.9 percent. Nevertheless, this decrease was not counterbalanced by an increased share of primary schools in the Ba'thi stronghold provinces of al-Lādhiqīyah, Dar'ā, Dayr az-Zawr, and as-Suwaydā'. On the contrary, they all had proportionately fewer in 1971 than in 1955. To the extent that there has been a geographical redistribution of elementary schools, this has benefited Aleppo and, to a lesser extent, al-Ḥasakah and Ḥamāh. There has been no appreciable change in the proportional distribution of primary school teachers and students. In both 1955 and 1971, Damascus and Aleppo together had over one-half of both (see table 5.3).

The provincial distribution of primary schools is an unsatisfactory measure of educational opportunity, for the category "primary school" obviously encompasses a broad size range, from the solitary village classroom to the large urban facility. That a particular province has a high proportion of all schools may therefore reveal only that its population

Table 5.3

Distribution of Primary Schools, Teachers, and Students, 1955-1971

Province	Pop. (%)	Schools (%)			Teachers (%)			Students (%)		
		1955	1963	1971	1955	1963	1971	1955	1963	1971
Damascus	20.3	19.1	16.5	11.9	27.6	28.3	26.5	29.3	26.1	27.1
Aleppo ^a	29.9	22.7	24.8	30.2	27.5	27.0	25.6	24.8	26.7	26.0
Hims	9.6	9.0	9.4	8.8	8.6	8.8	9.5	9.9	9.9	9.7
Hamāh	8.6	7.1	8.3	10.3	7.5	7.8	8.4	8.0	8.5	8.4
Al-Lādhiqīyah	12.5	17.5	15.0	13.5	10.2	10.2	10.8	11.3	12.0	12.9
Dayr az-Zawr	4.9	4.3	3.9	3.8	4.2	3.9	4.3	3.5	4.2	3.4
Al-Hasakah	5.2	9.0	13.6	13.2	5.5	6.6	5.7	4.1	5.8	5.0
As-Suwaydā'	3.0	6.0	4.3	3.6	4.5	3.2	3.4	4.4	2.9	2.5
Dar'ā	5.9	5.3	4.6	4.7	4.3	4.2	5.6	4.7	3.8	4.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

is dispersed and requires a large number of small instructional units. Each primary school in al-Ḥasakah province, for example, served an average sixty-four students in 1971, whereas each such school in Damascus typically had an enrollment of 383. Student/teacher ratios are a better measure. These have increased in Damascus, Aleppo, al-Ḥasakah, and al-Lādhiqīyah since the Ba'thi revolution, but have fallen in Dayr az-Zawr, as-Suwaydā', and Dar'ā. The range of ratios--and hence inequality--was greater in 1971 than in 1955 (see table 5.4).

Table 5.4

Primary Students per Teacher, 1955-1971

Province	Students per Teacher		
	1955	1963	1971
Damascus	35.9	33.3	37.7
Aleppo ^a	30.4	35.7	37.3
Hims	38.5	40.6	37.7
Ḥamāh	35.6	39.4	36.6
Al-Lādhiqīyah	37.6	42.2	43.9
Dayr az-Zawr	28.2	39.3	29.5
Al-Ḥasakah	25.6	31.8	32.2
As-Suwaydā'	33.1	32.6	27.3
Dar'ā	36.5	32.8	31.7
Syria	33.8	36.1	36.8

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

Clearly, growth rates in primary school enrollment and in the number of schools and teachers have varied from province to province. This accounts for the deterioration in the quality of education in some regions and its improvement in others. In Damascus, for example, student enrollment grew by 70.4 percent between 1963 and 1971; this exceeded growth in

the number of schools (3.6 percent) and teachers (50.6 percent). In Ḥamāh, by contrast, where enrollment increased by 62.7 percent, the number of schools and teachers grew at an even faster rate (see figs. 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).

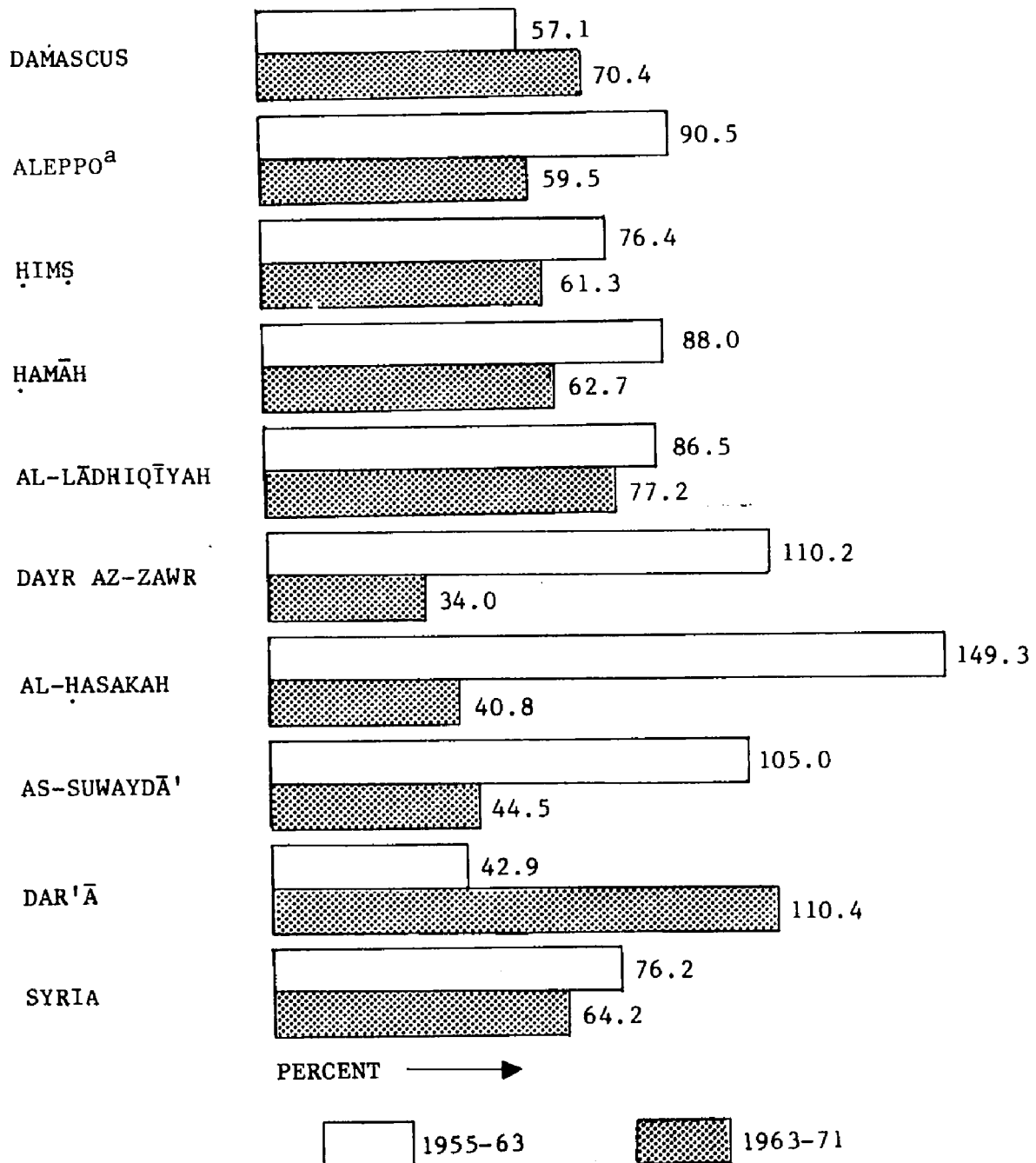


Fig. 5.1. Primary Student Growth Rates, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

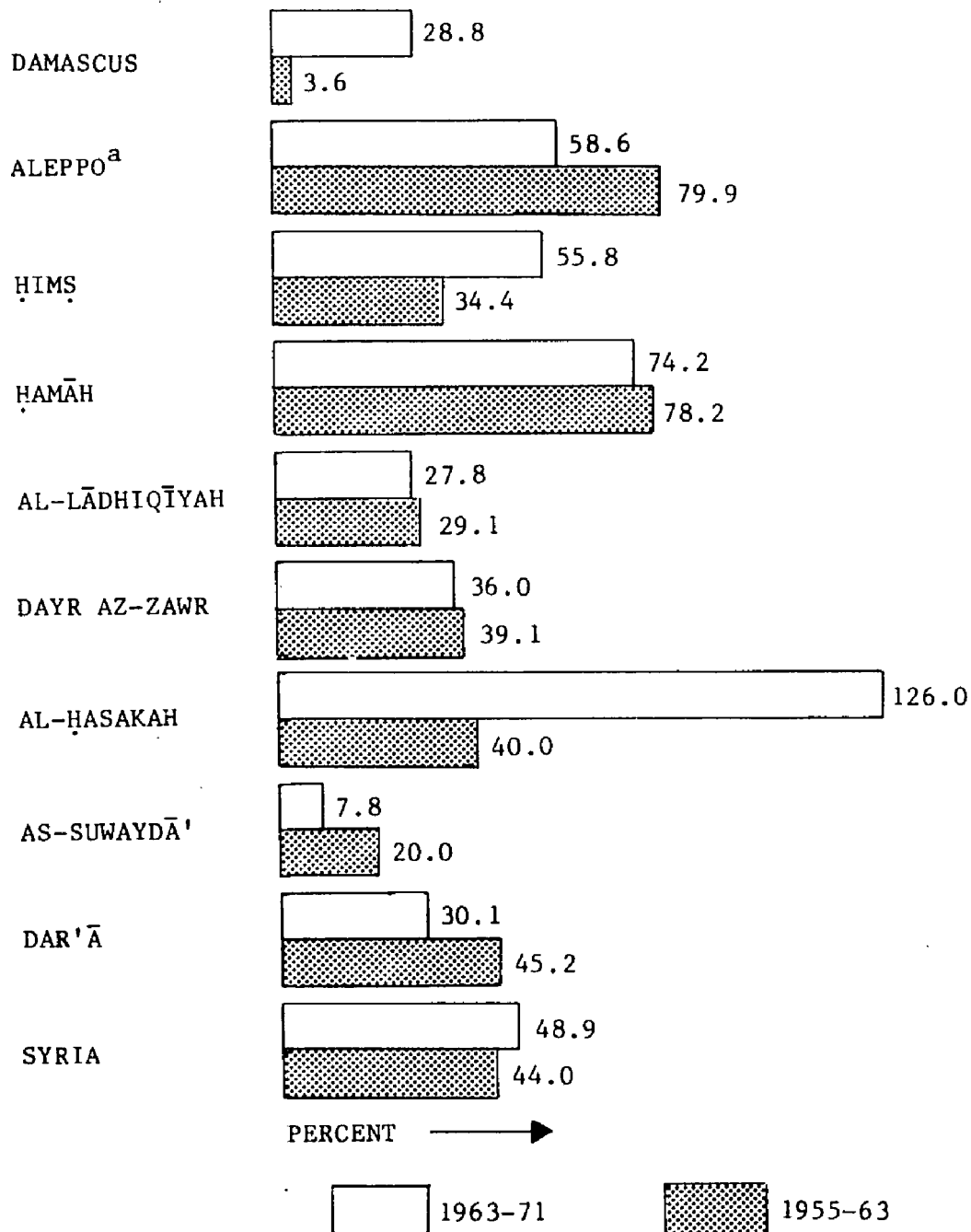


Fig. 5.2. Primary School Growth Rates, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

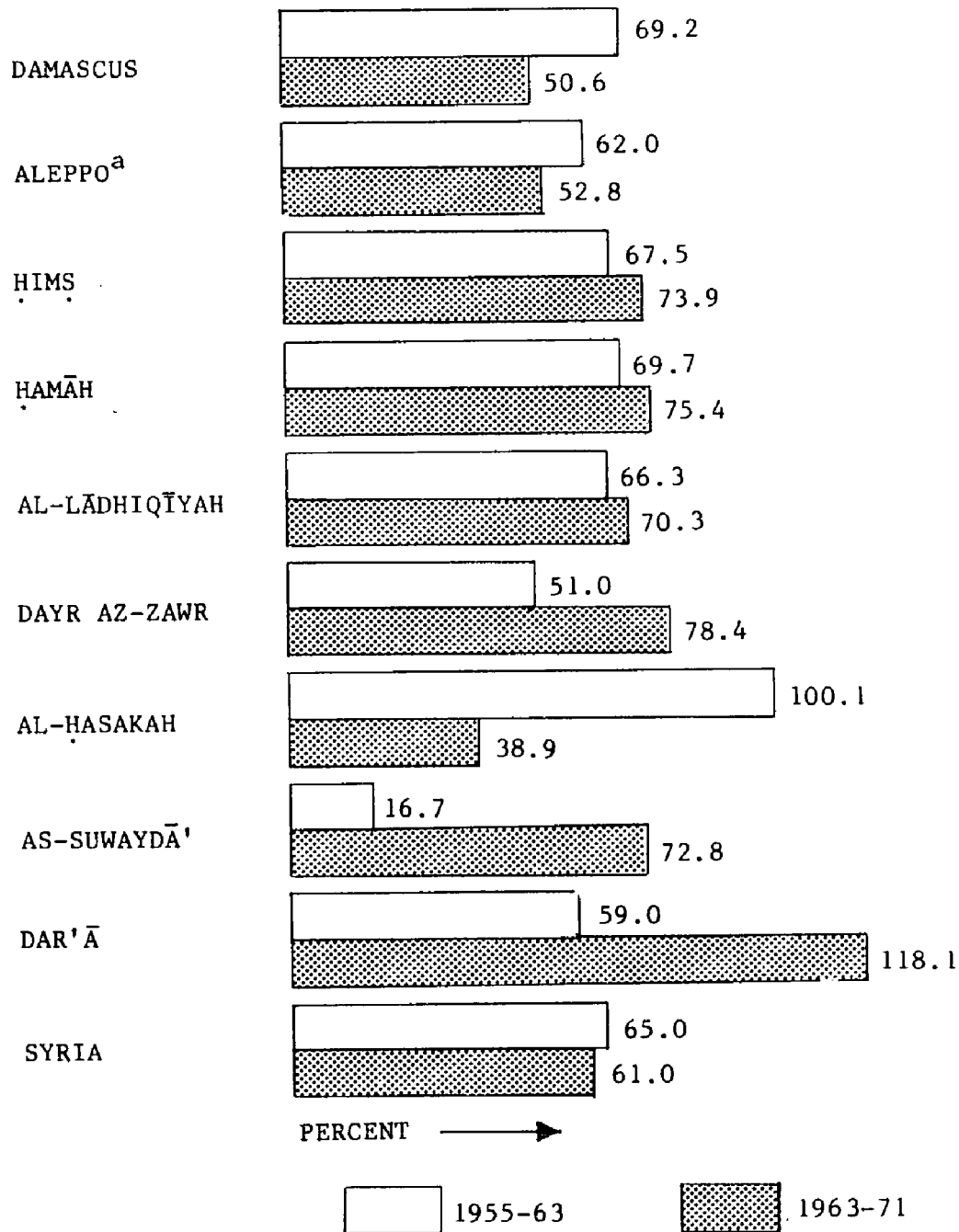


Fig. 5.3. Primary Teacher Growth Rates, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971).

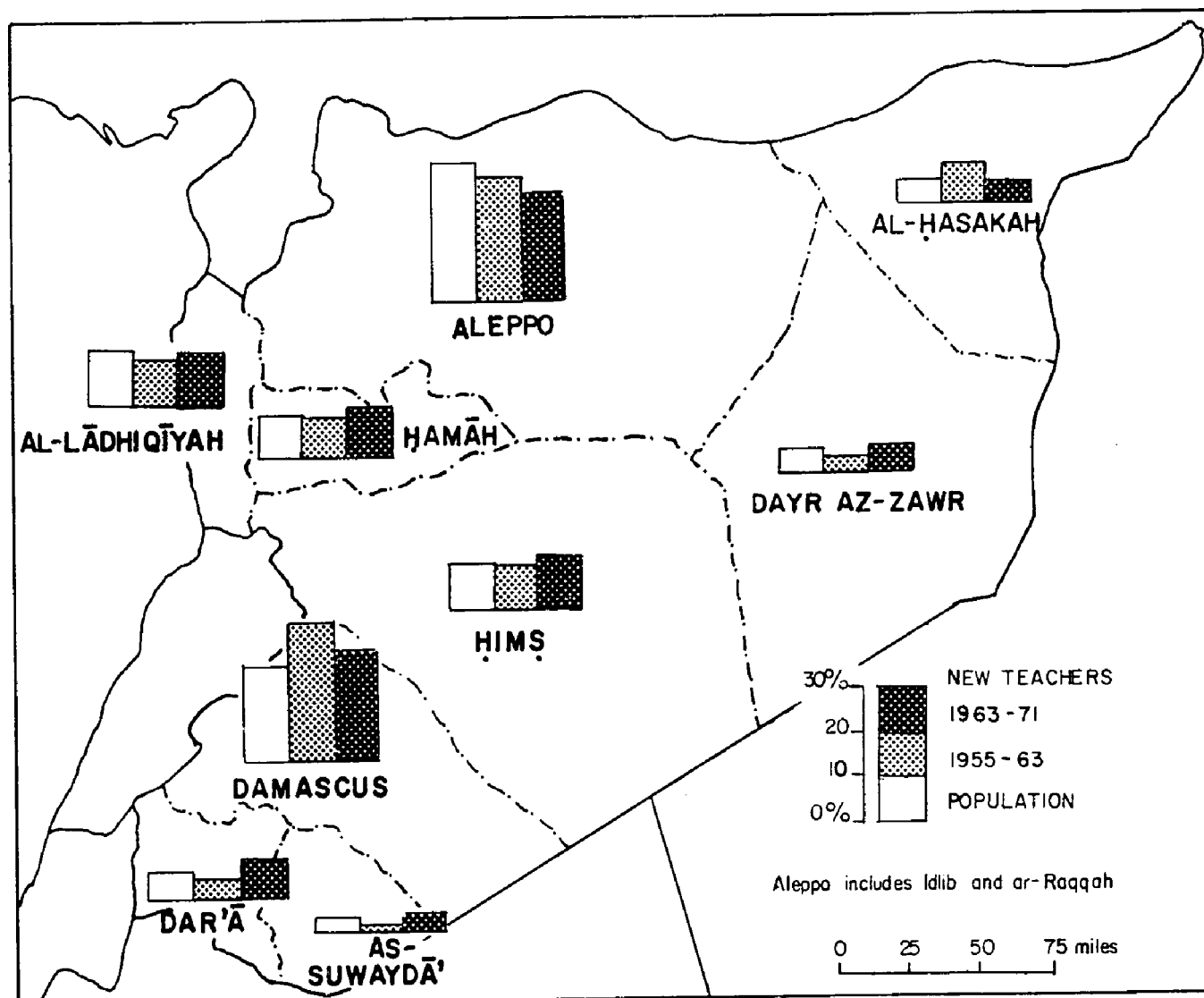
^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

No single measure adequately describes spatio-temporal variations in educational opportunity at the primary level, however, for growth rates are obviously highly dependent on base units. For this reason, pre- and post-Ba'thi revolution growth rates must be interpreted with caution. For example, the national rate of primary school growth was lower between 1963 and 1971 than between 1955 and 1963, although substantially more schools were built in the more recent period.

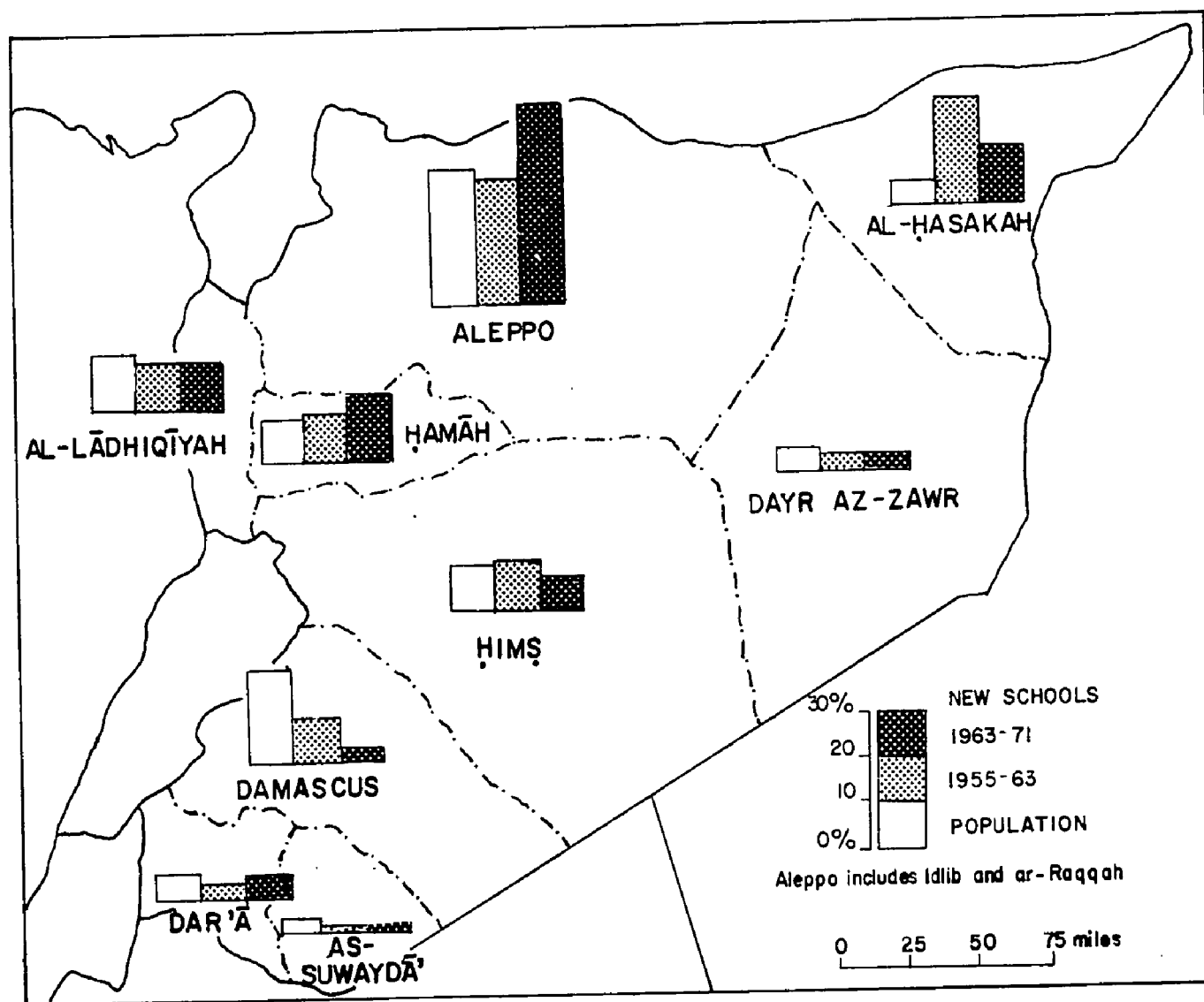
The most sensitive summary index of geographical change is the percentage distribution of net new primary teachers and schools since 1963. That the distribution of new teachers has been roughly proportional to each province's population implies that little regional convergence has occurred. Al-Lādhiqīyah, for example, which has 12 percent of Syria's population, received about the same share of all new teachers between 1963 and 1971 (see map 5.1).

Government has considerably more control over school construction than student enrollment ratios or where teachers will pursue their careers. It is significant therefore that only 1.4 percent of all primary schools built in Syria since 1963 were located in Damascus. Nevertheless, new school construction has not, as predicted, benefited the Ba'thi stronghold provinces so much as Aleppo, Ḥamāh, and al-Ḥasakah, within which 70.9 percent of all new primary schools erected between 1963 and 1971 were located (see map 5.2).

All told, inequalities in the geographical provision of primary education were not major when the Ba'th achieved power. Enrollment ratios were already fairly high in most provinces, even if Damascus had a disproportionately large share of all students. Logically, therefore, the amount of regional convergence or absolute growth which could occur



Map 5.1. Distribution of New Primary Teachers, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971).



in primary education was limited.

Educational expansion since 1963 has focused mainly on improving facilities at the secondary level. While primary school enrollment grew by only 64.2 percent between 1963 and 1971, the number of children attending secondary school rose by 186.4 percent. Secondary school and teacher growth rates were likewise far higher than those at the primary level.

Damascus province's share of all secondary educational facilities fell substantially between 1955 and 1971. In 1955, it had 27.1 percent of all schools and 37.2 percent of all teachers; in 1971, it had only 21.7 and 27.2 percent respectively. Similarly, the relative positions of Aleppo and as-Suwaydā', which had been improving before the Ba'thi revolution, worsened after 1963. Insofar as one can generalize about the complex and often contradictory patterns of change in other provinces, the relative standing of al-Lādhiqīyah and Ḥamāh, which deteriorated between 1955 and 1963, improved substantially after the revolution. In remaining provinces, relative improvement occurred in some variables, but not in others (see table 5.5).

Enrollment growth at the secondary level has outstripped new school construction. This is reflected in substantially higher student/school ratios in 1971 than in 1955 in every province except as-Suwaydā'. Nevertheless, because the number of secondary school teachers more than doubled between 1963 and 1971, student/teacher ratios improved after the revolution. They were much higher, however, than in 1955 (see table 5.6).

Disparate geographical growth rates to some extent confirm that the post-1963 expansion of secondary education has benefited noncore provinces most. While secondary student enrollment increased substantially in Damascus and Aleppo in the eight years after the Ba'th assumed power,

Table 5.5

Distribution of Secondary Schools, Teachers, and Students, 1955-1971

Province	Pop. (%)	Schools (%)			Teachers (%)			Students (%)		
		1955	1963	1971	1955	1963	1971	1955	1963	1971
Damascus	20.3	27.1	25.7	21.7	37.2	34.2	27.2	31.4	28.1	26.1
Aleppo ^a	29.9	17.9	24.7	21.7	18.4	25.2	22.0	18.3	23.6	22.3
Hims	9.6	12.4	11.7	12.0	10.7	9.1	11.3	11.4	11.5	10.6
Ḥamāh	8.6	9.2	8.3	9.6	8.4	7.2	9.1	9.5	9.0	9.6
Al-Lādhiqīyah	12.5	19.7	13.5	19.3	14.7	11.9	15.0	16.2	13.8	16.1
Dayr az-Zawr	4.9	4.6	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.6	3.7	3.0	3.7
Al-Hasakah	5.2	2.7	4.4	3.8	1.6	3.3	4.9	1.3	3.3	4.4
As-Ṣuwaydā'	3.0	2.3	3.1	2.5	2.5	3.0	2.8	3.6	3.7	2.4
Dar'ā	5.9	4.1	5.4	6.4	3.4	3.5	4.0	4.2	3.8	4.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

Table 5.6

Secondary Students per School and per
Teacher, 1955-1971

Province	Students per School			Students per Teacher		
	1955	1963	1971	1955	1963	1971
Damascus	301	315	455	13.3	22.9	22.5
Aleppo ^a	265	275	388	15.6	26.1	23.8
Hims	239	283	344	16.8	35.3	22.2
Ḥamāh	268	312	375	17.8	34.8	24.9
Al-Lādhiqīyah	213	295	314	17.3	32.5	25.1
Dayr az-Zawr	207	279	484	20.7	32.9	23.6
Al-Hasakah	120	214	441	12.2	27.6	21.4
As-Suwaydā'	409	341	365	22.7	34.4	20.1
Dar'ā	267	201	275	19.5	30.2	27.5
Syria	259	287	378	15.7	27.8	23.5

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

all but two remaining provinces (Ḥims and as-Suwaydā') experienced even higher growth rates. Similarly, although there were 117.9 percent more secondary schools in Syria as a whole, the number of schools in Damascus and Aleppo increased by only 83.8 and 91.6 percent. Contrary to my hypothesis, the highest growth rates did not uniformly occur in peripheral provinces. Although al-Lādhiqīyah and Dar'ā enjoyed the highest percentage increases, Dayr az-Zawr and as-Suwaydā' experienced the lowest.

The most striking changes have been in teacher growth rates. Between 1955 and 1963, the number of secondary school teachers rose by only 10.2 percent. In three provinces, there were actually fewer in 1963 than in 1955; one, al-Lādhiqīyah, lost 11.1 percent of its teachers. In the eight years after the revolution, by contrast, the number of teachers leapt by 239.4 percent nationally. This level of growth, however, was not

achieved throughout Syria. Significantly, Damascus and Aleppo had the lowest percentage increase, whereas in al-Lādhiqīyah the number of teachers more than trebled and in Dayr az-Zawr it nearly quadrupled (see figs. 5.4, 5.5, 5.6).

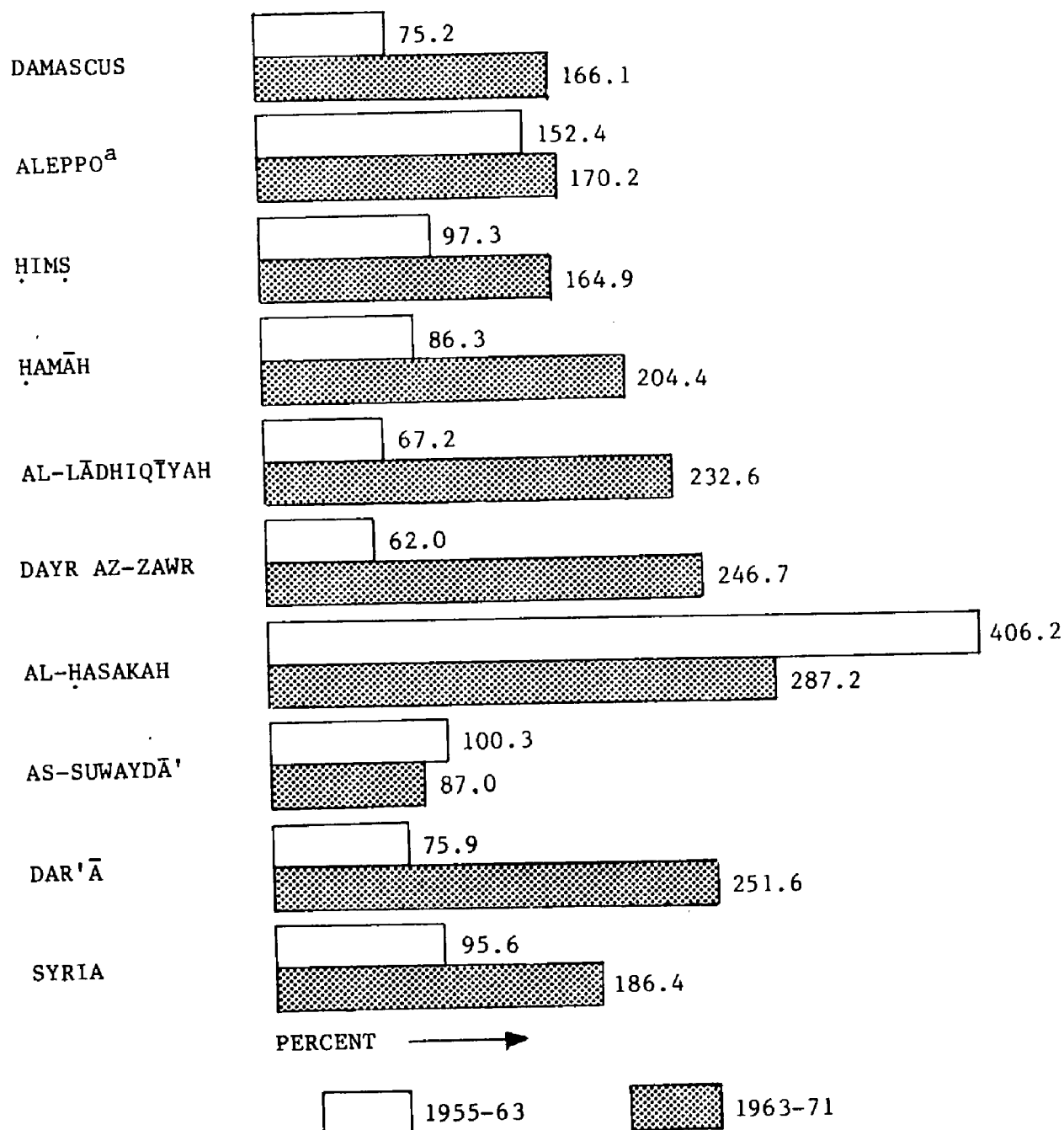


Fig. 5.4. Secondary School Growth Rates, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

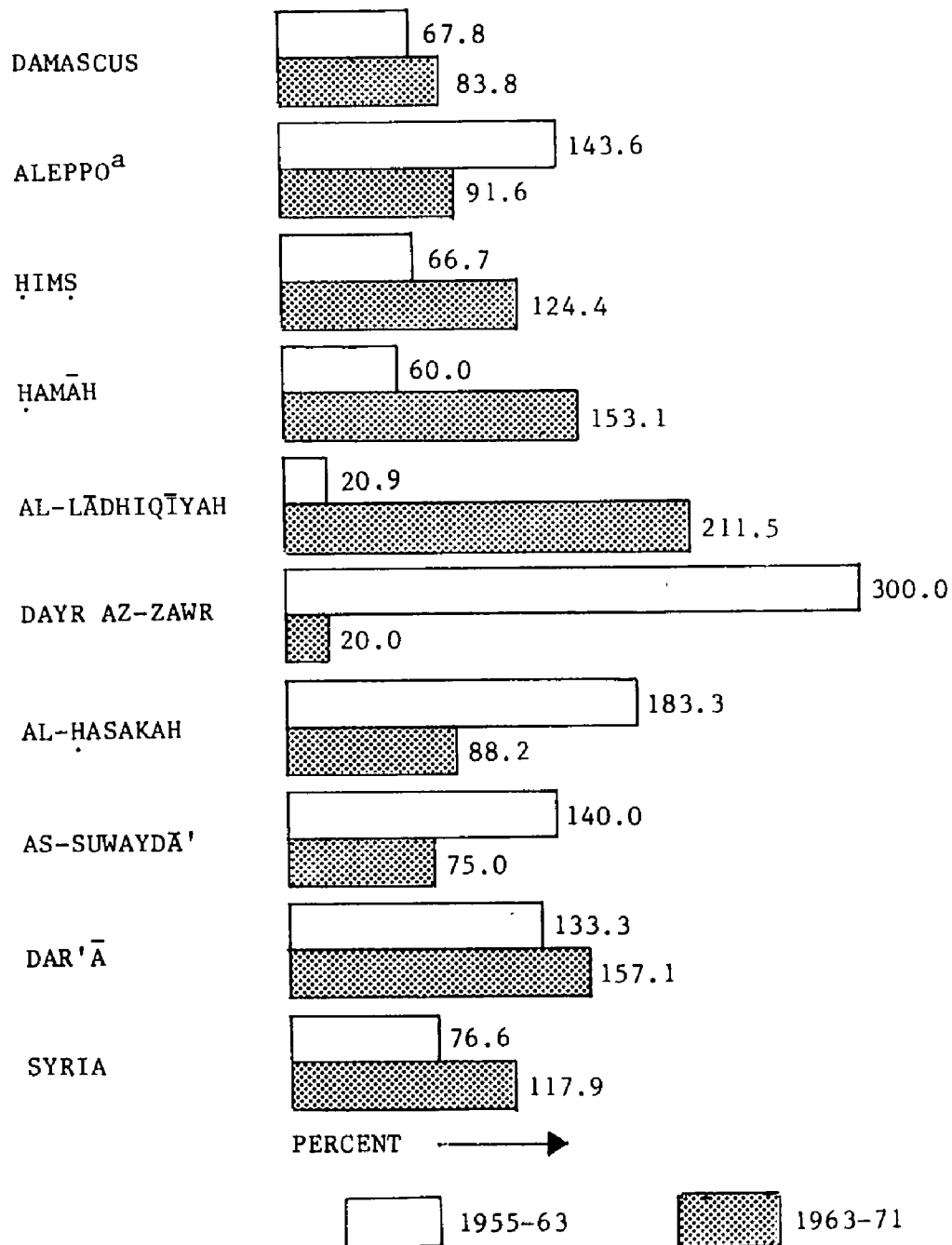


Fig. 5.5. Secondary School Growth Rates, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

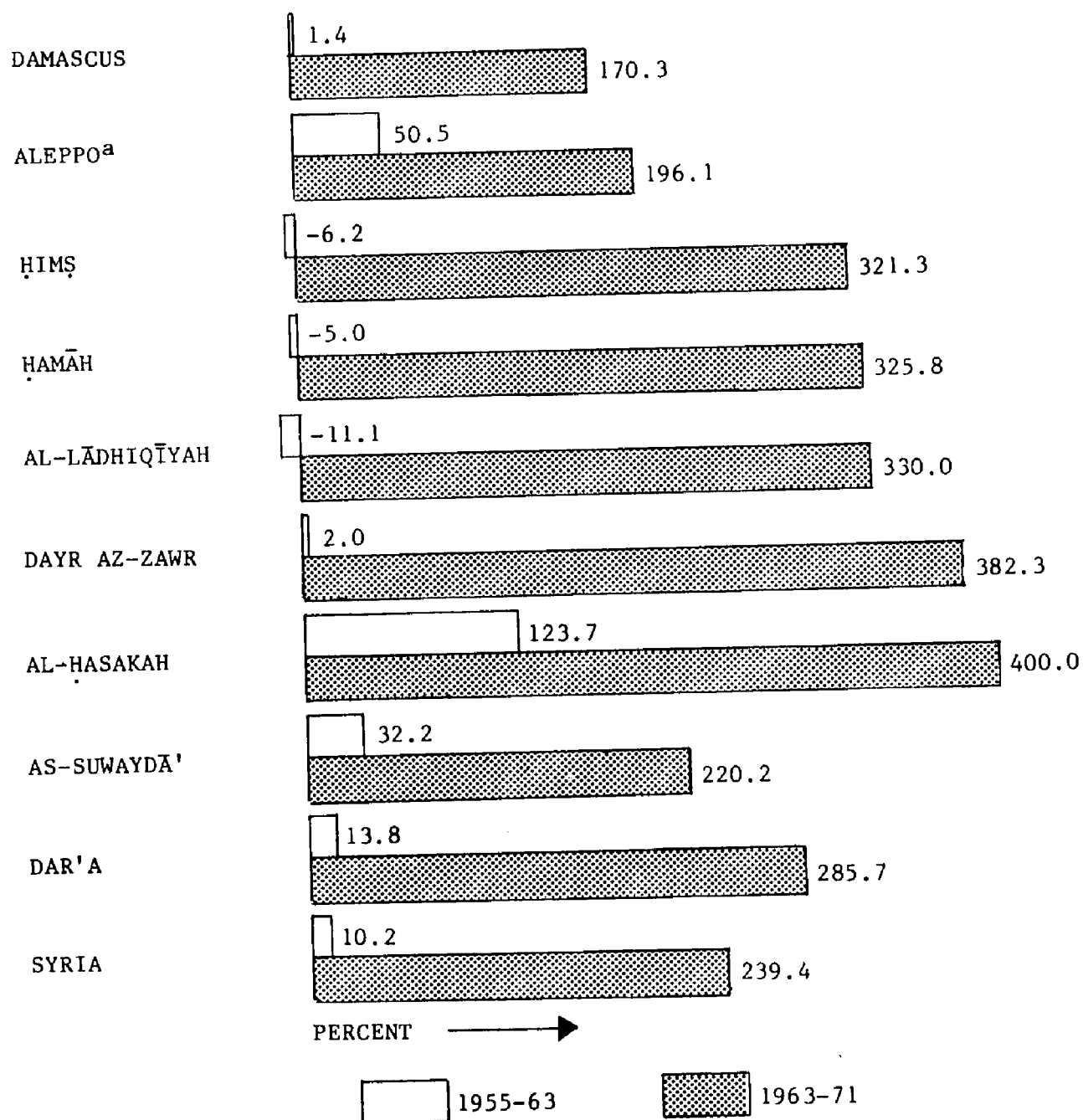


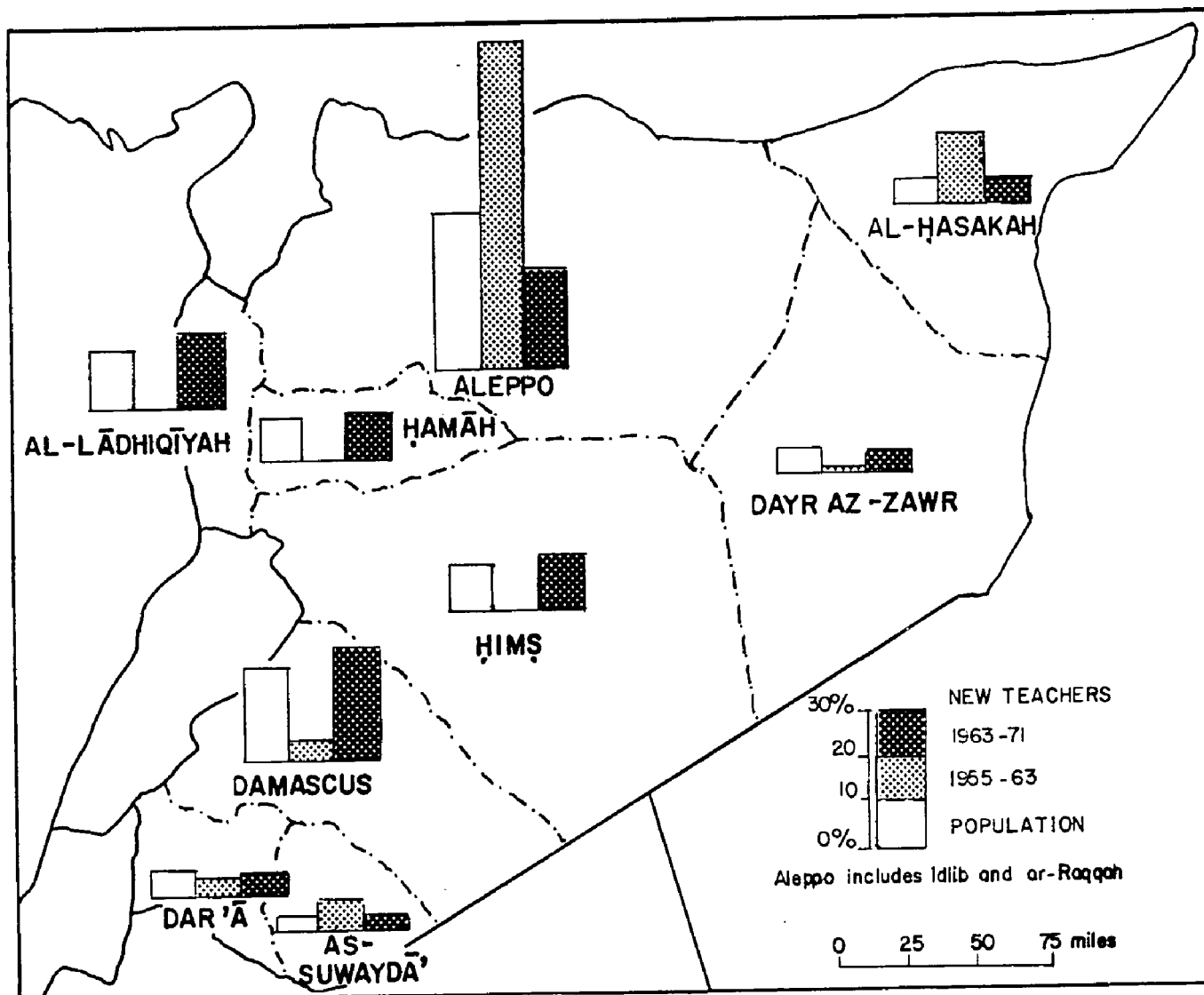
Fig. 5.6. Secondary Teacher Growth Rates, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah

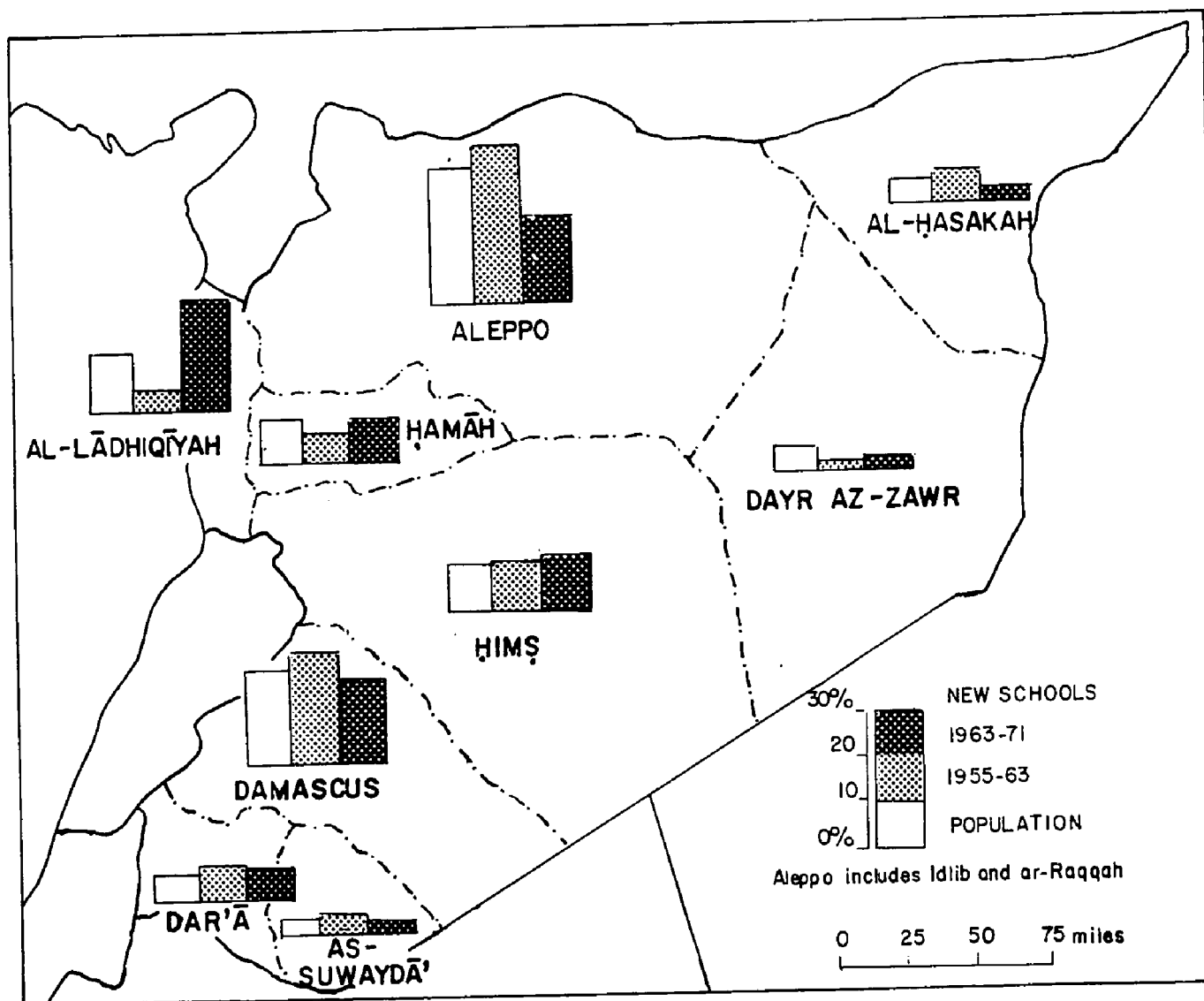
It must be reemphasized that base units influence and distort growth rates. Nevertheless, the distribution of new secondary schools and, to a lesser extent, teachers since 1963 underline the spatio-temporal changes which have occurred. Between 1963 and 1971, almost one-quarter of all new secondary schools opened were in al-Lādhiqīyah alone. Aleppo, with 30 percent of Syria's population, received only 19.2 percent. This does not, however, necessarily substantiate the hypothesis that politically overrepresented regions have generally enjoyed a disproportionate share of educational investment. Only 2.6 and 2.0 percent of all secondary schools built during these years were located in Dayr az-Zawr and as-Suwaydā' (see maps 5.3, 5.4).

The favored treatment evidently given to secondary education in al-Lādhiqīyah is consonant with other related developments in the province. In November 1976, President Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad laid the foundation stone of the University of al-Lādhiqīyah, Syria's first university outside Damascus and Aleppo. Eventually, it will have over 20,000 students. The project will cost \$US 100 millions.⁶³

Long-term investment in secondary and particularly higher education might be the best way in which the regime can favor al-Lādhiqīyah. In creating a large reservoir of people with desirable technical skills and qualifications, it is ensuring that the province will continue to provide a disproportionate number of persons to all sectors of the national elite. Whether this is intentional or incidental, however, is conjectural. One could convincingly argue that the construction of a university in al-Lādhiqīyah has nothing whatsoever to do with the national political prominence of persons from the region. Al-Lādhiqīyah is Syria's most populous province after Damascus and Aleppo. It is



Map 5.3. Distribution of New Secondary Teachers, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)



Map 5.4. Distribution of New Secondary Schools, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

therefore an entirely logical location for Syria's third university.

The Ba'thi regime has been less able to reduce acute geographical inequalities in health care delivery. If anything, the general provision of health care was more regionally unbalanced in 1971 than in 1963 or 1955.

In the post-Ba'thi period, the percentage of all doctors in Damascus rose from 44.6 to 50.7. Three provinces, Aleppo, al-Lādhiqīyah, and Ḥamāh, had a significantly smaller share of all doctors, and three, Dayr az-Zawr, Dar'ā, and as-Suwaydā', had only a marginally greater proportion. Three-quarters of all doctors in 1971 practiced either in Damascus or Aleppo (see table 5.7).

Table 5.7

Distribution of Doctors, 1956-1971

Province	Pop. (%)	Doctors (%)		
		1956 ^b	1963	1971
Damascus	20.3	48.1	44.6	50.7
Aleppo ^a	29.9	23.9	27.7	23.4
Ḥims	9.6	6.9	6.0	7.7
Ḥamāh	8.6	5.3	4.7	3.8
Al-Lādhiqīyah	12.5	8.9	7.7	6.1
Dayr az-Zawr	4.9	3.1	2.7	3.3
Al-Ḥasakah	5.2	2.3	4.3	2.7
As-Suwaydā'	3.0	0.5	0.7	0.7
Dar'ā	5.9	1.0	1.5	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1956-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

^bNo data for 1955 available.

The extent of geographical inequalities in health care delivery is most apparent in patient/doctor ratios. In 1971, each doctor served an average 3,788 people. Ratios ranged, however, from 1,726 patients/doctor in Damascus to 11,577 patients/doctor in as-Suwaydā'. This range was substantially narrower than in 1963, however, when ratios varied between 1/2,541 and 1/22,091. Health care has improved significantly in every province except al-Ḥasakah since the revolution. Between 1956 and 1963, patient/doctor ratios deteriorated in practically every region, with five provinces experiencing a net loss of doctors and with the number of doctors in the entire country falling by 10.4 percent. In the eight years after the Ba'th achieved power, by contrast, the number of doctors increased dramatically in three peripheral provinces in particular: Dayr az-Zawr, as-Suwaydā', and Dar'ā (see table 5.8).

Table 5.8

Patients per Doctor, 1956-1971

Province	Patients per Doctor		
	1956 ^b	1963	1971
Damascus	1,616	2,541	1,726
Aleppo ^a	4,588	6,239	4,996
Hims	5,229	8,891	4,235
Ḥamāh	5,270	8,911	8,167
Al-Lādhiqīyah	4,840	8,678	6,844
Dayr az-Zawr	9,629	11,124	5,322
Al-Ḥasakah	10,140	7,425	10,432
As-Suwaydā'	23,137	22,091	11,577
Dar'ā	14,404	15,074	8,971
Syria	3,730	5,494	3,788

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1956-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

^bNo data for 1955 available.

Even in semisocialist Syria, doctors are free agents, setting up their practices wherever they choose. Invariably, this has meant in Damascus, Aleppo, and Hims provinces, where 86.3 percent of all new doctors between 1963 and 1971 located. There is therefore a strong trend to increasing inequality of access to health care (see map 5.5).

The situation is probably far worse than even preceding tables imply, for a vast majority of all doctors are located in the urban centers of the various provinces. A 1971 United Nations report noted that

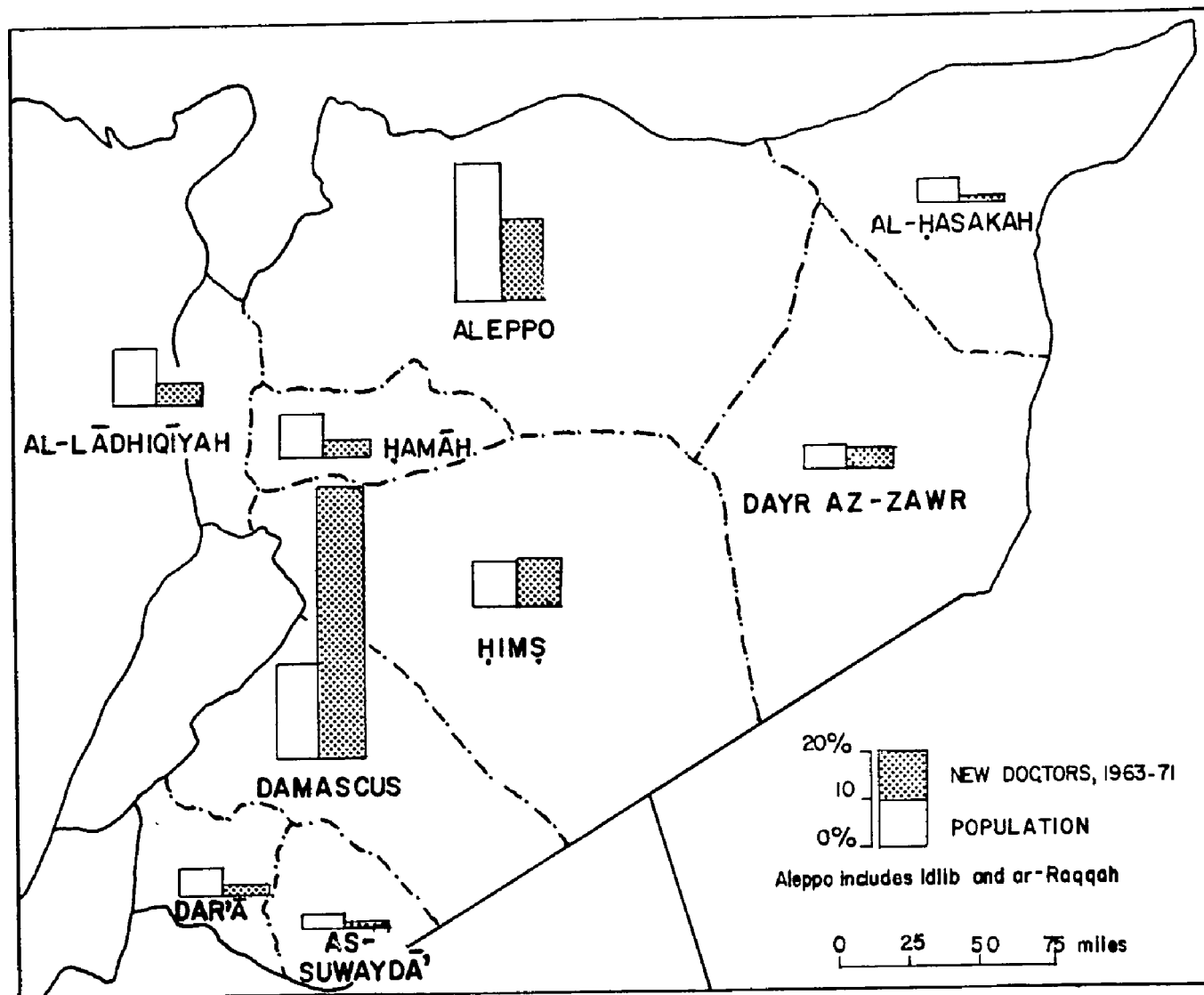
the inadequacy of medical facilities is compounded in Syria by questions of the accessibility of those facilities to the people. Leaving aside such potential barriers as income and cost, and accepted patterns of social behaviour the geographical dispersion of these facilities, when read in the context of transport facilities in the country, make it clear that the most favoured Syrians are those who live in the urban areas, particularly the Damascus and Aleppo areas.⁶⁴

Despite major efforts to increase the number of doctors and medical personnel in the third plan, their inequitable geographical distribution will probably persist.

When the regime builds hospitals, it at least roots them firmly in one place. Geographical equalization of health care delivery would therefore most likely be reflected in the provision of physical plant, over which the regime has more locational control.

Damascus and Aleppo provinces had a higher percentage of all government hospitals in 1971 (60 percent) than in 1955 (56 percent). This understates the overconcentration of facilities, for it does not include private hospitals, which are even more highly clustered in the cities of Damascus and Aleppo (see table 5.9).

The construction of a hospital can increase access to major health facilities dramatically. In Dayr az-Zawr, for example, where two new



Map 5.5. Distribution of New Doctors, 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1963-1971)

Table 5.9

Distribution of Government Hospitals, 1955-1971

Province	Pop. (%)	Hospitals (%)		
		1955	1963	1971
Damascus	20.3	28.0	31.0	33.0
Aleppo ^a	29.9	28.0	31.0	27.0
Ḥims	9.6	5.0	4.0	3.0
Ḥamāh	8.6	5.0	4.0	6.0
Al-Lādhiqīyah	12.5	9.0	8.0	9.0
Dayr az-Zawr	4.9	5.0	8.0	9.0
Al-Ḥasakah	5.2	9.0	8.0	6.0
As-Suwaydā'	3.0	5.0	4.0	3.0
Dar'ā	5.9	5.0	4.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

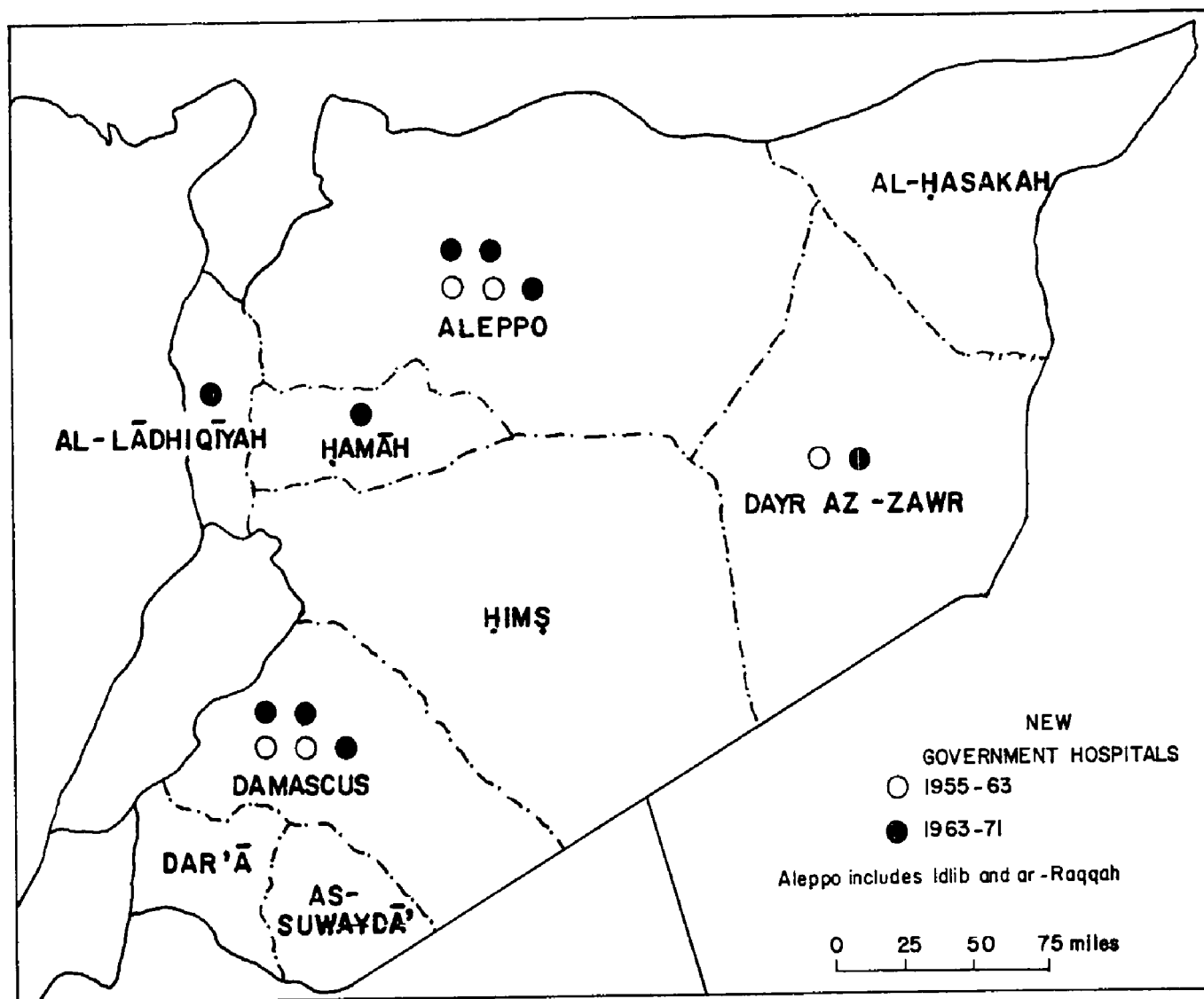
Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

hospitals were built between 1955 and 1971, the number of persons/hospital dropped from 312,984 to 97,585. Similar improvements were registered after 1963 in al-Lādhiqīyah, as-Suwaydā', and Ḥamāh. Conversely, where hospitals were not constructed--Ḥims for example--the burden on facilities became substantially greater (see table 5.10).

Given the tremendous improvements in health care delivery which result from the construction of a single hospital, one wonders why six of the nine new hospitals built between 1963 and 1971 were located in Damascus or Aleppo. This casts doubt on the periphery's commitment to geographical equalization, for the need was certainly greater elsewhere (see map 5.6).

Obviously, not all hospitals are of equal size. Thus, a truer surrogate measure of health care provision is the geographical distribution of hospital beds. This measure reveals an even greater maldis-



Map 5.6. Distribution of New Government Hospitals, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971 (Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

Table 5.10

Persons per Government Hospital, 1955-1971

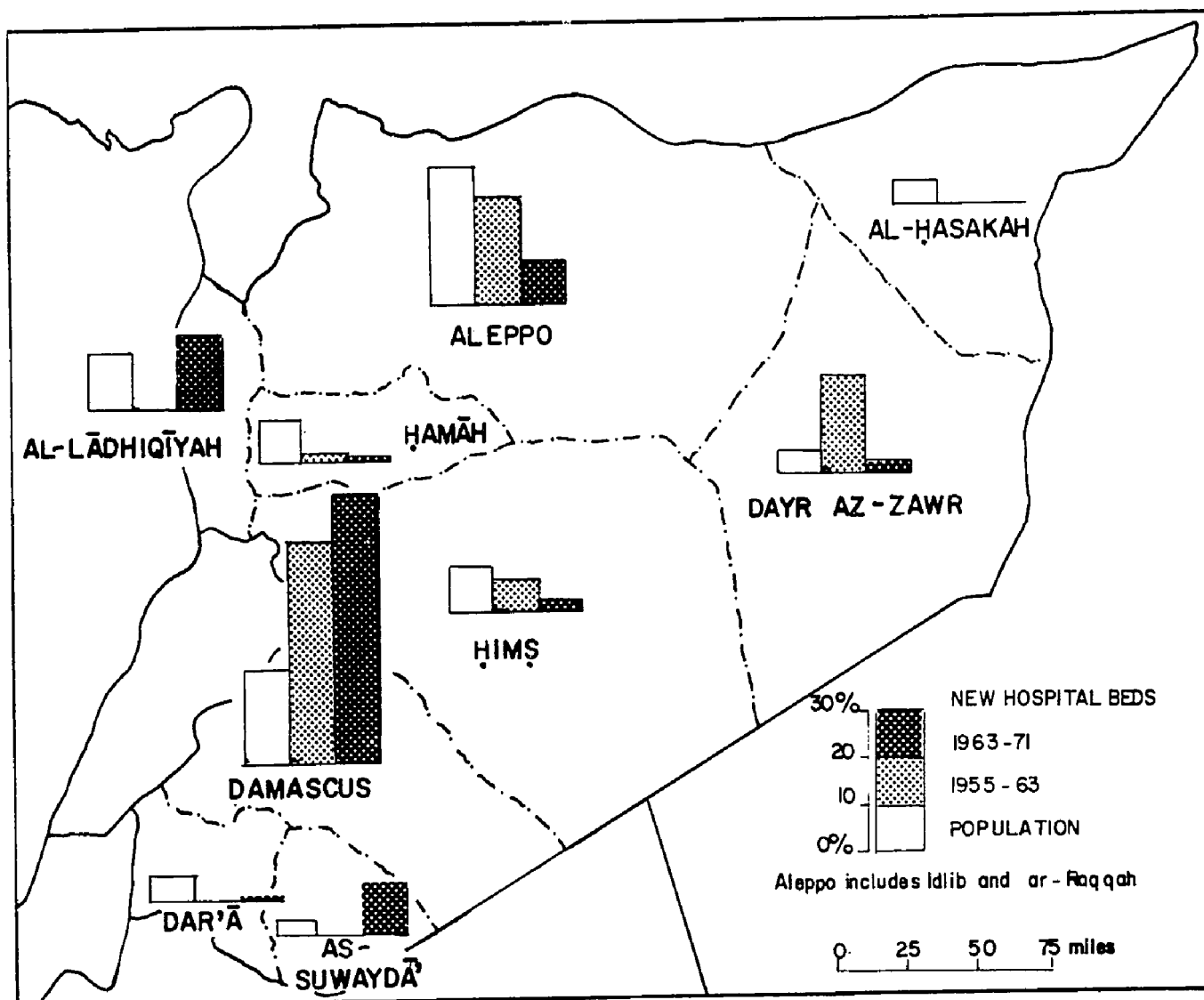
Province	Persons/Hospital (in thousands)		
	1955	1963	1971
Damascus	136.2	136.9	132.5
Aleppo ^a	192.8	209.0	215.9
Hims	123.7	515.7	546.3
Hamāh	289.5	401.0	257.3
Al-Lādhiqīyah	222.9	321.1	230.4
Dayr az-Zawr	313.0	144.6	97.6
Al-Hasakah	123.7	155.9	234.7
As-Suwaydā'	111.8	154.6	138.9
Dar'ā	154.6	226.1	233.2
Syria	186.4	204.1	191.0

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

tribution of facilities. Damascus, with only 20 percent of Syria's population, had 33 percent of all government hospitals, but over 52 percent of all government hospital beds. This is a higher percentage than in 1963. There were nineteen beds for every 10,000 Damascenes, compared to 8.3 beds for every 10,000 Syrians. Although the distribution of hospitals and hospital beds are not necessarily covariant, clearly the construction of a hospital increases the availability of the latter. Hence, whereas there were only 2.5 beds for every 10,000 people in Dayr az-Zawr, in 1955, there were 13.9 by 1971. In the 1963-71 period, almost 85 percent of new hospital beds were located in just three provinces, Damascus, al-Lādhiqīyah, and as-Suwaydā' (see map 5.7 and table 5.11).

Although health care delivery has generally improved in Syria since 1963, data do not permit one to conclude that significant geographical equalization of facilities has occurred. In some provinces,



Map 5.7. Distribution of New Government Hospital Beds, 1955-1963 and 1963-1971
(Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971)

Table 5.11

Distribution of Government Hospital Beds, 1955-1971

	Pop. (%)	Hospital Beds (%)			Hospital Beds/10,000		
		1955	1963	1971	1955	1963	1971
Damascus	20.9	51.3	50.4	52.6	15.4	17.5	19.0
Aleppo ^a	29.9	17.8	19.8	16.7	3.7	4.5	4.5
Hims	9.6	4.0	5.0	4.3	2.6	3.7	4.2
Hamāh	8.6	3.3	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.7
Al-Lādhiqīyah	12.5	9.2	5.6	8.5	5.0	3.3	6.5
Dayr az-Zawr	4.9	3.3	10.0	7.7	2.5	13.1	13.9
Al-Hasakah	5.2	3.7	2.2	1.4	3.6	2.8	1.5
As-Suwaydā'	3.0	3.3	1.4	4.1	7.1	3.4	15.5
Dar'ā	5.9	4.1	2.4	1.9	6.5	4.0	4.3
Total Syria	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	5.9	7.1	8.3

Source: Prepared from data in Syria, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1971.

^aIncludes Idlib and ar-Raqqah.

particularly al-Lādhiqīyah and Dayr az-Zawr, there has been considerable infrastructural development since the revolution. In others, such as Hims and al-Hasakah, access to medical personnel and plant has deteriorated. The concentration of doctors and hospitals in Syria's two major urban centers remains as acute and conspicuous today as it was several years before the Ba'th assumed power.

In sum, while the Ba'th's economic policies are wholly pragmatic and geared more to developing a national infrastructure and encouraging national growth than to achieving geographical equalization, the regime's social policies have met limited success in reducing center-periphery inequalities. This is most evident in the marginally more balanced distribution of secondary educational facilities since 1963. The nation-building credentials of the regime, however, derive less from its ability to engineer regional equalization than from a quantum leap in government

output since the revolution. The major contrast between the pre- and post-1963 regimes is the far greater effort made by the latter to solve Syria's principal developmental problems.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Cited in Rabinovich, Syria Under the Ba'th, p. 95.
2. Syria, Ministry of Planning, Second Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development, 1966-1970 (Damascus, 1967), pp. 3-4.
3. Idem, Third Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development in the Syrian Arab Republic (1971-1975) (Damascus, 1971), p. 10.
4. Zvi Y. Hershlag, The Economic Structure of the Middle East (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), pp. 66-67. See also Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Socialist Transformation in the Financial and Banking Sectors (Damascus, 1970) and idem, Le secteur public industriel en République Arabe Syrienne (Damascus, 1969).
5. Syria, Rapport 1973-1974 sur l'économie syrienne, p. B.107. The increasing role of government is also evidenced in the fact that while public administration accounted for only 3.1 percent of national income in 1956, it accounted for 10.3 percent in 1963 and 14.3 percent--more than industry--in 1969 (UNESOB, "Past developments and growth prospects in the agricultural sector of Syria," in Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1971, p. 49).
6. Cited in Be'eri, Army Officers, p. 337.
7. See Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, La planification économique et sociale en République Arabe Syrienne, 1960-1970 (Damascus, 1969); Ziad Keilany, "Economic Planning in Syria, 1960-1965: An Evaluation," Journal of Developing Areas 4 (1970):361-73; and idem, "The Role of National Planning in Economic Development; Syria: A Case Study, 1960-64" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1968); UNESOB, "Plan formulation and development perspectives in Syria," in Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1969, pp. 33-45.
8. For details of this reorganization, see Mohammad Imadi, "Situation actuelle et perspectives de la planification en Syrie," and "La réorganisation de l'appareil de planification en Syrie," in Syria, La planification économique et sociale, pp. 17-33.
9. New York Times, 17 May 1966.
10. Nadim Jabre, "Réflexions autour de la réforme agraire en Syrie," in Syria, Étude documentaire sur l'agriculture syrienne, p. 41.
11. UNESOB, "The role of land reform programmes in community develop-

ment and over-all social and economic development in selected countries of the Middle East," in Studies on Social Development in the Middle East, 1971 (New York: United Nations, 1973), p. 92.

12. This was especially so in agriculture, where the private sector was to have made 68.7 percent of all investments in the second plan. By 1969, only 8.6 percent of the total planned cumulative investment in this sector had actually been made (idem, "Past developments and growth prospects in the agricultural sector of Syria," p. 44).
13. The workshop also reported that "in none of (these) countries, with the exception of Lebanon, have measures been taken for projecting national plans and policies to the subnational level" (idem, "Regional planning and development in selected countries in the Middle East," in Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1969, p. 73). Another UN report on a regional planning conference attended by Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese planners remarked that "there was a consensus . . . that acceptance of regional planning was a problem in countries of the Middle East. Since it implied commitment, it could cause difficulties in view of the balance of social, confessional, political and other forces in these countries" (idem, "Report on the workshop on regional (subnational) planning and development in the Middle East," in Studies on Social Development in the Middle East, 1971, p. 82).
14. Imadi, "La réorganisation de l'appareil de planification," p. 31.
15. Syria, Rapport 1969-1970 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.82.
16. UNESOB, "Regional planning and development in selected countries in the Middle East," p. 71.
17. Ibid., p. 72.
18. See IBRD, The Economic Development of Syria.
19. Al-Lādhiqīyah town's annual percentage growth, for example, is 6.4, compared to 4.7 in Damascus and Ḥimṣ, 4.1 in Aleppo, and 3.6 in Ḥamāh. Fifty-two percent of al-Lādhiqīyah town's annual growth is due to migration, compared to 34 percent in Ḥimṣ and 14 percent in Ḥamāh (UNESOB, "Problems and policy implications of Middle Eastern urbanization," in Studies on Development Problems, 1972, p. 47).
20. Syria, Rapport 1966-1967 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.94.
21. Ibid.
22. Bernard Orgels, "Une petite ville méditerranéenne de Syrie: Tartous," Bulletin de la Société royale belge de Géographie 84 (1960): 83-98.
23. Ṭartūs's expansion is indeed a sight to behold: in 1974, it looked

like a village that was spontaneously sprouting high-rise buildings.

24. IBRD, The Economic Development of Syria, p. 206.
25. Nominally, expansion of al-Lādhiqīyah commenced in 1950, although it wasn't until much later that work actually got under way.
26. On the port of al-Lādhiqīyah, see L. Mourad, "Le port de Lattaquieh: Ses caractéristiques, son équipement son activité de 1957-1964," Syrie, Monde Arabe 12 (April 1965):29-45, and Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Les communications en Syrie (Damascus, 1968), pp. 68-77
27. Syria, Les communications en Syrie, pp. 77-78; idem, Rapport 1966-1967 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.94, and idem, Second Five-Year Plan, p. 50.
28. Parenthetically, the tourist boom in al-Lādhiqīyah also has little to do with the regime's composition. The juxtaposition of coastline and mountain produces a landscape equally beautiful to that of neighboring Lebanon. For long, scenery was one of Syria's notably unexploited resources and the regime has done much to change this. Since the Lebanese civil war, much summer tourist traffic has been diverted to the Jabal 'Alawi.
29. Syria, Rapport 1968-1969 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.73.
30. Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Les nouveaux projets de voies ferrées en Syrie (Damascus, 1969); idem, Rapport 1968-1969 sur l'économie syrienne, pp. A.73-74; and idem, Second Five-Year Plan, pp. 49-50. Under the third plan, the length of railways was to increase from 835 to 1,335 kilometers (idem, Third Five-Year Plan, annex I-B, pp. 12-13).
31. IBRD, The Economic Development of Syria, pp. 130-42, 425-36.
32. Bent Hansen, "Economic Development of Syria," in Economic Development and Population Growth in the Middle East, eds. Charles A. Cooper and Sydney S. Alexander (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 342, 357-8.
33. Syria, Second Five-Year Plan, pp. 19-22 and idem, Third Five-Year Plan, annex I-B, pp. 1-2.
34. Wheat production, for example, fell from 1,044,000 tons in 1965 to only 559,000 tons in 1966. By 1967, it had increased again to 1,049,000 tons, but by 1968 it dropped back to 600,000 tons (UNESOB, "Past developments and growth prospects in the agricultural sector of Syria," pp. 52-53).
35. Salah Da'boul, "L'économie agricole en Syrie," in Syria, Étude documentaire sur l'agriculture syrienne, p. 1.

36. UNESOB, "Past developments and growth prospects in the agricultural sector of Syria," p. 30.
37. "Six ans de révolution dans le secteur agricole," in Syria, Étude documentaire sur l'agriculture syrienne, p. 114.
38. Idem, Rapport 1970-1971 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.49.
39. Idem, Rapport 1965-1966 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.51 and Rapport 1966-1967 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.90; Hansen, "Economic Development of Syria," p. 348. See also Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Étude monographique sur le barrage de l'Euphrate (Damascus, 1973).
40. UNESOB, "Development planning and social objectives," p. 4.
41. Syria, Rapport 1966-1967 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.89.
42. Although agriculture currently receives only 20.4 percent of all specialized bank credit, loans to this sector increased by 300 percent between 1956 and 1969 (UNESOB, "Past developments and growth prospects in the agricultural sector of Syria," pp. 38-39).
43. Ibid.
44. In 1967, for example, 72 percent of such loans went to farmers in Syria's four principal cotton growing provinces: ar-Raqqah, Aleppo, Dayr az-Zawr, and al-Hasakah (Syria, Rapport 1967-1968 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.64).
45. UNESOB, "Past developments and growth prospects in the agricultural sector of Syria," p. 37. On agrarian reform, see Jabre, "Réflexions autour de la réforme agraire en Syrie," pp. 41-52; UNESOB, "The role of land reform programmes in community development," pp. 85-100; B. Khader, "Propriété agricole et réforme agraire en Syrie," Civilisations 25 (1975):62-83; idem, "Structures et réforme agraires en Syrie," Maghreb/Machrek, no. 65 (1974):45-54; and Issam El-Zaim, "La réforme agraire en Syrie," Tiers Monde 9 (1968):508-17.
46. On agricultural cooperatives, see Mansour Abou-Hassan, "Le syndicalisme en Syrie," in Syria, Étude documentaire sur l'agriculture syrienne, pp. 83-90 and Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Le syndicalisme paysan en République Arabe Syrienne (Damascus, 1969). On rural welfare programs, see UNESOB, "Some aspects of rural development problems and policies in selected countries of the Middle East," in Studies on Social Development in the Middle East, 1969, pp. 3-8.
47. Imadi, "Les aspects économiques de la révolution agricole," p. 98.
48. Syria, Rapport 1969-1970 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.70.
49. Idem, Second Five-Year Plan, pp. 45-47 and Third Five-Year Plan,

annex I-B, pp. 7-9. See also Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Le pétrole et le gaz en Syrie (Damascus, 1969).

50. UNESOB, Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1973, p. 136.
51. International Monetary Fund, International Financial Statistics 30 (July 1977):350-1.
52. Syria, Rapport 1969-1970 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.41.
53. "Syria and Lebanon," Quarterly Economic Review, no. 4 (1970). See also Syria, Arab Office for Press and Documentation, Étude sur l'industrie syrienne (Damascus, 1973) for a detailed account of developments in this sector.
54. UNESOB, "Regional planning and development in selected countries in the Middle East," pp. 87-88.
55. Syria, Rapport 1967-1968 sur l'économie syrienne, p. A.66.
56. UNESOB, "Report of the workshop on regional (subnational) planning," p. 77.
57. Conference participants did, however, recognize some of the consequences of this approach: "While it would not be possible to achieve equal development of regions, national considerations required at least balanced development. . . . Concentration of investment . . . in developed areas would only perpetuate the backwardness of the less developed areas since they would eventually be drained of their best human resources as well as their savings which would naturally flow to those areas where the return was quicker. . . . The overriding consideration in national development should be not the rate of growth but the direction and shape of growth. . . . There should be increased concern with less developed regions" (ibid.).
58. Ibid.
59. Idem, "Regional planning and development in selected countries in the Middle East," p. 73.
60. Ibid.
61. Unless otherwise indicated, all data within this section are from Syria's Statistical Abstract for the years 1955-1973. For clarity of reading, these have not been footnoted hereafter.
62. UNESOB, Studies on Selected Development Problems, 1971, p. 124 and ibid., 1973, p. 130.
63. Arab Report and Record, 16-30 November 1976, p. 707.
64. UNESOB, "Development planning and social objectives," p. 22.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study's principal hypotheses have been, first, that the Ba'thi revolution was a nation-building revolution and, second, that because of the geographic core's inability to solve the state's major developmental problems, the geographic periphery has furnished Syria with its first authentic nation-building elite. The periphery's infusion into political life has strengthened, rather than weakened, the political center.

Many Syrians, however, view events since 1963 very differently. Specifically, the prominence of 'Alawis and persons from al-Lādhiqīyah in strategic elite positions particularly--one of the most sensitive national political issues--has repeatedly exposed the regime to charges of dependence on a narrow regional and ethnic base of support. Surreptitiously distributed handbills occasionally urge the overthrow of the regime, which is characterized by its more incorrigible enemies as the "instrument of heretics who observe rituals borrowed from Christianity . . . (of) the bastard descendants of Crusaders."¹ Syria's intervention in the Lebanese civil war, apparently on the Christian side, reinforced this suspicion. The regime's 'Alawi core has presented opponents with a casus belli. This was underlined recently by the assassination of several prominent 'Alawis, including the Rector of Damascus University.² Even President Sādāt of Egypt has castigated what he referred to as Syria's "tangled, rancorous Alawite Ba'th party."³

The regime has responded to these charges and fears by attempting to persuade the Sunni majority that 'Alawi doctrine and practices are not so different from their own. Thus, it allegedly published and circulated a book purporting to prove that the 'Alawi community is by origin, belief, and ceremony fully Islamic. As if to emphasize its point, it issued a Qur'ān with a portrait of President Asad as a frontispiece.⁴ The regime also managed to have neighboring Lebanon's tiny 'Alawi community officially declared a part of the Shi'a community, whose Islamic credentials are not in doubt. This was, of course, for domestic consumption. Finally, Asad regularly makes a point of praying in a mosque, especially with such devout leaders as King Khālīd of Saudi Arabia at his side. On the face of it, this is not remarkable. Most Sunnis, however, are aware that 'Alawis conventionally do not frequent mosques. When the Ottoman Tanzimat reformers built mosques in the Jabal 'Alawi to correct what they perceived as heresy, 'Alawis simply used them for sheltering animals.⁵

While the regime clearly does have an 'Alawī--al-Lādhiqīyah core, as I showed in Chapter II, this is to some extent predicated on the need to establish a degree of mutual trust among national decision-makers. There is no evidence that this group has sinister, grand designs for its region any more than the conspicuous reliance by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter on Bostonian, Texan, and Georgian political advisors and aides--their so-called mafias--implies or implied consistent, overt, geographical favoritism in all spheres of government policy and activity.⁶ As noted, al-Lādhiqīyah has not benefited especially from its disproportionate share of political power.

Furthermore, while the geographic and ethnic affiliations of an

elite member may shape his political attitudes and allegiances in some contexts, in most they do not. They are but two components of his aggregate, composite identity and have as little power to predict political behavior as age, class, or occupation. Concomitantly, elite members from the same region or ethnic group do not necessarily always act in concert or have common interests and goals. On the contrary, some of the most bitter disputes since 1963 have been among 'Alawis. Two recent examples underline this point. In 1976, many 'Alawi officers were purged for expressing opposition to the regime's policies in the Lebanese civil war. Early in 1977, another seventy 'Alawi officers were reportedly arrested for circulating a petition criticizing corruption within Asad's entourage.⁷

The prominence of 'Alawis in the elite can partly be explained by their traditional overrepresentation in the army and the Ba'th. They were attracted to these bodies precisely because they were the most explicitly secular, national ones in a country with profound subnational divisions in the immediate postindependence era. 'Alawis, more than most, hoped to live in a Syria where their identities did not perpetually place them at a political, economic, and social disadvantage. This is, of course, a common phenomenon, similar in many respects to the appeals which Marxism had for many Eastern European Jewish intellectuals. Ironically, expedience dictated that 'Alawis manipulate subnational ties, which they wished to purge from the political and social fabric of Syria, to facilitate the Ba'th's climb to power. While they viewed their temporary solidarity as a means to an end, however, many others viewed it as their only end.

It is important to reemphasize that the new elite is not only com-

prised of 'Alawis and persons from al-Lādhiqīyah. Rather, it is made up of a coalition of Ba'this from several peripheral provinces and from all communities. Furthermore, since 1970 the urban center has received a greater share of power. The regime's geographic and ethnic base is, in actuality, broader and transcends subnational divisions more successfully than that of the ancien régime. If not entirely representative in composition, the new elite is nevertheless national in outlook and in its policies. This is particularly evident in the regime's economic and social development strategies.

Syria's acute political instability in the 1950s and early 1960s was directly related to its lack of an effective state-idea. From a political geographic point of view, the Ba'thi regime's major nation-building accomplishment has been to bestow upon Syria an identity which it hitherto lacked.

The Ba'th was created to achieve Arab unity and propagate the pan-Arab state-idea. One might expect, then, that its first goal after achieving power would have been to sign away Syria's very existence and put the state up for adoption. This, indeed, very nearly happened. Between 1963, when plans to unite with Iraq and Egypt fell through, and 1970, however, no one talked more and did less about Arab unity than the Ba'th. On the contrary, it injected a strong isolationism into Syria's foreign policy. For seven years, Syria effectively removed itself from the vagaries of Arab unity politics.

There are several possible explanations for this dramatic about-face. One is that Syria's foreign policy simply reflected traditional minority apprehensions about being engulfed within an even larger state. The heterodox periphery, according to this interpretation, fostered

Syria's uniqueness because it almost alone was committed to the Syrian state-idea and to Syria's separate existence. It is telling that critics accuse the Ba'th of resembling the minority-dominated, Syrian nationalist SSNP. They point to the similarity of their constituencies (charging that after the SSNP was banned many party members joined the Ba'th) and, more especially, their common isolationism.⁸

An alternative explanation is that as a result of the Ba'th's transformation in the early 1960s, its priorities were reversed. This tangible ideological reorientation was a product of the ascendance of new groups within the party. Under its veteran urban bourgeois leadership, the Ba'th devoted most of its energies to achieving Arab unity, rather than socialism. As noted in Chapter IV, this idée fixe increasingly alienated the party's provincial and regional minority rank and file membership, who impatiently awaited long-promised structural reform within Syria. When they emerged in full force within the party in the early 1960s, they infused it with a dose of radicalism. To them, Arab unity could wait, socialism could not.

Isolationism was undoubtedly also a product of Syria's bitter union with Egypt between 1958 and 1961. The United Arab Republic disillusioned and chastened Syrians in general but Ba'this in particular, for Egypt treated Syria not as an equal partner, but as a distant province, if not a colony. In the space of three years, Egypt managed to do what French colonial rule had not: make Syria conscious of its identity and force it to accept that its own interests did not always coincide with and should not as a matter of course always be subservient to those of pan-Arabism. Above all, Syria learned not to throw itself so hastily and imprudently into the arms of another Arab state.⁹

Whatever its source, isolationism between 1963 and 1970 fostered Syria's sense of uniqueness, for

the neo-Ba'th, despite its official compliance with Arab unity, has in practice adopted a wholly independent line in inter-Arab relations. Unlike the old Ba'th which led Syria into union with Egypt, the neo-Ba'th endeavored to demonstrate Syria's separate entity.¹⁰

Syria, however, could not forever continue its self-imposed exile. The change had not been from a state in which people considered themselves Arabs and not Syrians to one in which they considered themselves Syrians and not Arabs. Rather, it was to a state that was more identifiably Syrian Arab. One of the most direct and positive results of Asad's advent to power in 1970 was Syria's emergence from its isolationist corner. It is now a party to Arab integration schemes, but on its own terms. This is evident in a subtle change of emphasis: Syria now cautiously seeks very loose federation and coordination rather than full union with other Arab states.

The pragmatic self-interest of post-1970 foreign policy--a rather recent innovation in Syria--is vividly reflected in the regime's giddy relations with neighboring countries. Once the archenemy of the reactionary "dwarf," Ḥusayn, to the south and poised to intervene on the side of the Palestinians in the 1970 Jordanian civil war, it now sends 30,000 troops into Lebanon to quell them while Asad warmly clasps the Hashimite king's hand and talks about federation. Once hurtling invectives at the bedouin "puppets" of the Arabian peninsula and pointing an indignant, accusing finger at their imperialist-tainted and mispent oil wealth, it now merrily sends its loan-seeking representatives to distant desert capitals and graciously and gratefully opens both hands to gather their largesse--some \$700 millions in 1976 alone.¹¹ The regime was

hardly on speaking terms with Egypt in the mid-1960s. And yet in 1973 the two countries mounted a well-coordinated joint attack on Israel. Through it all, only Iraq--Ba'thi Iraq--has remained a villain. The two periodically close their boundaries, pipelines, and airline offices as they bicker over who can rightfully claim to be Ba'thi and squabble over the allocation of the Euphrates' waters.¹²

The point is not that Syrian foreign policy is any more capricious or opportunistic than that of any other state, for it is not. Rather, it is that Syria now defines and designs its own confidently autonomous foreign policy, whereas formerly it almost abrogated this right, assigning it to fraternal Egypt or Iraq. This is but one manifestation of Syria's emerging political geographic self-esteem and its success in freeing itself from its former, external, quasi-functional political centers in Cairo and Baghdad.

A second nation-building accomplishment of the regime has been its relative success in integrating Syria's constituent parts. Specifically, it has undermined political regionalism by destroying its base (the local power of large landowning families), by suppressing its instruments (political parties with narrow geographic constituencies), and by attempting to eradicate what sustained it (a fragmented space economy and an inadequate communications infrastructure).

The regime has also introduced major secularist reforms, although not without opposition. In April 1967, for example, a controversial article urging the creation of a new socialist society within which God and religion would become "mummies in the museum of history" appeared in the army newspaper, Jaysh al-Sha'b.¹³ The fierce reaction was predictable, for the piece offended both Muslim and Christian leaders, who united in

opposition to such overt atheism. For three days, strikes and demonstrations in the major cities endangered the regime, ending only after mass arrests.¹⁴

In the same year, the Ba'th brought all private education, which is to say all schools run by the various Christian sects, under the Ministry of Education's control. Private schools were permitted to teach the language of the religious rite for only two hours a week. All textbooks, including those dealing with religious matters, had to be approved by the government. According to the then Minister of Education, a Christian from al-Lādhiqīyah province, the textbooks "must not reflect communalism in those schools which used to teach communal topics that no longer agree with the thought patterns of our generation."¹⁵ The purpose of these restrictions was

to impose a teaching method which will guarantee conceptual coordination among citizens in order to achieve national unity . . . as they advance . . . towards the end of revolution and towards . . . a free, united socialist society.¹⁶

Again, the reaction was hostile.¹⁷ Many schools closed altogether, and an estimated 15,000 Christian children moved to schools in Lebanon.¹⁸

Most controversial of all the Ba'th's secularist actions, however, was its omission from the 1969 constitution of a clause specifying that the president of the state must be a Muslim. The opening phrase of the presidential oath was similarly changed from, "I swear by God," to "I swear by my honor and faith." These modifications provoked mass demonstrations throughout urban Syria. Because many Sunnis view the Muslim credentials of 'Alawis with undisguised skepticism, the new constitution was also seen as a means of enabling Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad to become president, which he did in 1971. Always the pragmatist, Asad promptly restored the traditional oath after being sworn in.¹⁹

Despite the opposition which its integrative policies initially met, the regime has decisively undermined the power and autonomy of Syria's diverse cultural groups and established a strong central government. For the first time in centuries, centripetal forces outbalance centrifugal ones and center-periphery cleavages have been bridged. Arguably these changes were first introduced by the heterodox periphery because it had most to gain from them. At the very least, the regime had a stronger interest in appearing to be more secularist than preceding regimes precisely because it was accused of being an instrument of minority groups. One reason why it has been so concerned about recent events in Lebanon is its fear that the strife would spill over into Syria, to its detriment.

Syria has undergone other profound changes since 1963. Not the least of these has been its transcendence from a country in which political life was almost pathologically unstable to one in which political stability has become the norm. The Ba'th has been in power for almost a decade and a half, a striking accomplishment by the standards of the 1950s and early 1960s. Almost one-half the population has never known anything but Ba'thi rule.

Stability and longevity do not a successful or legitimate regime necessarily make. The least charitable explanation of the Ba'th's lengthy tenure is that it is simply a corollary to the regime's coercive power. Undoubtedly, repressive apparatus have been more refined and pervasive under the Ba'th than at any other time. The regime has also destroyed much of its opposition and potential counter-elites through land reform, nationalization, and, occasionally, arbitrary imprisonment.

The marked reduction in the number of coups since 1963--a fair

measure of stability--similarly need not imply that the regime has greater legitimacy than preceding ones. The upper echelons of the officer corps were raised on coups. After a decade and a half of the same old tricks, officers had by 1963 developed them into an imaginative art form, if not a science. But to be good at making coups is also to be good at preventing them. The creation of an "ideological" army, the careful positioning of a loyal palace guard outside the capital, and the appointment of friends, political bedfellows, and relatives to strategic command positions all have one very obvious purpose.

I attribute the regime's stability and longevity more to the fact that as a nation-building regime it has penetrated society and had some success in mobilizing it in support of its goals. The regime has an unprecedented, though far from complete, degree of popular legitimacy. This has been especially true since 1970.

The Ba'th realized that power could not be maintained or a revolution made "simply by seizing the political center." It was also necessary "to combine goal setting from above and mobilized mass support . . . from below," as in China and Vietnam.²⁰ It sought to do this through activist one-party rule and through its organizational apparatus, which now "covers the entire country, down to small and faraway villages."²¹ The party currently boasts a membership of 100,000, an improvement indeed over the 500 it had shortly after the revolution.²² It controls trade unions, youth, student, and women's organizations, a people's militia, and peasant organizations. The latter alone had over 200,000 members by 1972. In this manner, "peasants could be drawn into national political life, be brought to identify with nationalist goals, and enlisted in the effort at social reorganization in the countryside."²³ According to

Hinnebusch, the results have been salutary, for the regime

has had some success in undermining the attachments of the masses to the regime's traditional rivals, legitimizing its rule in the countryside, and building a base of peasant support. Given the persistence of opposition power in the cities, this rural base represents an indispensable source of stability and power.²⁴

The creation of a base of support in the countryside was perhaps the major accomplishment of the radical Jadid-dominated faction of the Ba'th, which controlled Syria until 1970.²⁵ Prior to Asad's coup, however, segments of the urban population remained vigorously opposed to the regime and to some of its socialist excesses. When this was so, Ba'thi rule remained "in danger of being erased from the political map in favour of conservative forces."²⁶

It is to Asad's credit that he recognized this possibility and pulled Syria sharply to the center, if not to the right. Specifically, he brought more urban Sunnis into the political decision-making process, gave non-Ba'this a nominal share of power in a so-called National Progressive Front of kindred socialist groups and communists, and hastened national parliamentary elections and the adoption of a new constitution. Furthermore, while not actually dismantling the public sector, Asad made substantial concessions to Syrian capitalists and considerably eased restrictions on foreign investment.²⁷ As a result, in the six years after the coup, private investment within Syria increased tenfold.²⁸ Many businessmen who smuggled capital out of the country at the height of the nationalizations in the mid-1960s have returned to Syria after being granted amnesty. With justice, many would dispute whether the regime can be called socialist at all now.

A remark made by the Minister of the Economy indicates the extent of the changes associated with Asad's advent to power:

A new middle class has grown up in the shadow of the Baathists. Because it was able to adapt itself to the system we installed, it has become richer and larger than the old owning class.²⁹

In other words, the regime now receives the support of peasants, who have directly benefited from land redistribution, rural cooperatives, regularized and stabilized tenant rights, irrigation development, and rural public works construction, as well as the goodwill of this growing middle class, which feeds off the government's vast demands for goods and services and busily "adapts itself" to the system the Ba'th installed.

While this balance is maintained, the regime is not seriously endangered. Both Asad and his moderate policies have been popular. The regime can still enjoy and capitalize on the kudos it won as a result of the military's performance in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. For now, Syria is united in a way that it has not been since independence. If there is a threat to the regime it is from the left, for many of the inequalities which the pre-1970 radical Ba'th zealously attacked have started to reappear. In the more affluent residential districts of Damascus, for example, average apartments rent for \$1,000-1,500 per month; in less fashionable areas, they can command \$800.³⁰ The influx of 300,000 mostly Christian bourgeois refugees from Lebanon in recent months will doubtlessly exacerbate this situation.³¹ The regime has itself been accused of corruption. And, perhaps most important, Asad's relatively moderate posture towards Israel and his firm suppression of the Palestinians in Lebanon have aroused the left's considerable ire.

In conclusion, the Ba'thi revolution was triggered by the inability of Syria's traditional elite to solve the state's major developmental problems. The nation-building impetus came from the periphery because it

had greater ability and motivation than the geographic core to create a strong central government, replace supra- and subnational allegiances with national ones, and reduce social and geographical inequalities of wealth, power, and opportunity. Syria is not unique in this cycle, because "as history shows, the periphery may in time rise up to destroy the selfish center and the self-sufficient fools who govern it."³²

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. Eric Rouleau, "Assad's calculated risk," Guardian Weekly, 27 June 1976. European visitors to the Jabal 'Alawi early this century did not help matters by writing pseudo-scientific and conjectural articles to this effect and by enthusiastically noting the large number of 'Alawis with blond hair and blue eyes. See, for example, Henri Lammens, "Les Nosairis: furent-ils chrétiens?" Revue de l'Orient chrétien 6 (1901):33-50 and his "Au pays des Nosairis."
2. New York Times, 10 July 1977.
3. Cited in Daniel Dishon, "The Lebanese War: An All-Arab Crisis," Midstream 33 (1977):30.
4. Kelidar, "Religion and State in Syria," p. 18. I was unable to ascertain facts of publication for either volume during research.
5. Colonel Nieger, "En Syrie: Les Alaouites," La Géographie 37 (1922): 98-99.
6. Thus, six of Carter's seven top staff positions are held by Georgians. As the Boston Globe, 15 January 1977, remarked, the White House "looks like the cast of 'Gone with the Wind.'" 'Alawis are not this overrepresented among Asad's advisors.
7. Arab Report and Record, 1-15 February 1977, p. 95. Nevertheless, many scholars continue to interpret Syrian politics solely in terms of conflict between Sunnis and 'Alawis. See, for example, Stephen Oren, "Sects and secularism in Syria," Midstream 19 (1973): 39-44.
8. Ma'oz, in "Attempts at Creating a Political Community in Modern Syria," p. 401, for example, suggested that "the neo-Ba'th adopted . . . a policy which was more in line with the PPS (SSNP) . . . than with the ideas of the old Ba'th." He charged that although the SSNP was banned, "its ideas were not forgotten—they were to be carried on, some years later, by . . . Ṣalāḥ Jadīd." Jadīd's brother was, incidently, a prominent member of the SSNP.
9. Nor was Nāsir especially happy about the United Arab Republic's failure. He had been warned by Syrian ex-President Qūwatlī, however, that "Syria (is) a difficult country to govern. The Prophet himself travelled this far and turned back. Fifty percent of the Syrians consider themselves national leaders, twenty-five percent think they are prophets, and ten percent imagine they are Gods." Cited in Kerr, The Arab Cold War, p. 29.

10. Ma'oz, "Attempts at Creating a Political Community in Modern Syria," p. 402.
11. Arab Report and Record, 16-30 June 1976, p. 394.
12. Because the Iraqi regime has a core of Ba'this from the small, provincial town of Tikrit, the Syrian regime has had no difficulty countering Iraqi propaganda about its composition: Syrian broadcasts regularly refer to the "Tikriti gang" which governs Iraq.
13. Al-Hayāt, 5 May 1967.
14. See al-Hayāt, 6 and 10 May 1967, and al-Nahār, 9 May 1967. For an English summary of the events, see Middle East Record, 1967, pp. 499-500. The regime quickly backed down, labelling the article "a link in the chain of an American-Israeli-reactionary conspiracy. . . . Investigation by the authorities has proved that the article and its author were merely tools of the CIA." The riots, of course, were similarly condemned as the work of omnipresent foreign-financed reactionaries. The author of the article and the editor of Jaysh al-Sha'b were sentenced to life imprisonment.
15. Cited in Ma'oz, "Society and State in Modern Syria," p. 81.
16. Ibid.
17. See Middle East Record, 1967, p. 501 for a summary.
18. Al-Nahār, 15 November 1967 and al-Hayāt, 3 December 1967. Because of language restrictions, the Armenian community suffered more than most from government supervision of curricula. See Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Ebb and Flow of the Armenian Minority in the Arab Middle East," Middle East Journal 28 (1974):27.
19. See J. Donohue, "La nouvelle constitution syrienne et ses détracteurs," Travaux et Jours 47 (1973):93-112. When the constitution finally came into force in May 1973, article 3 specified after all that "the President of the Republic is to be of Islamic faith." According to the constitution, 'Alawis must therefore be Muslim. A translation of the constitution by Peter B. Heller appears in Middle East Journal 28 (1974):53-66.
20. Hinnebusch, "Local Politics in Syria," p. 1.
21. Ma'oz, "Society and State in Modern Syria," p. 78.
22. This is Hinnebusch's estimate, "Local Politics in Syria," p. 6.
23. Ibid., p. 1.
24. Ibid., p. 22.
25. I would argue that this base was not as wide or solid as Hinnebusch

claims. Had the "peasant masses" been this mobilizable by the Ba'th, the party would not have done so poorly in the 1973 elections. Turnout was extremely low: 25 percent in Damascus, 35 percent in Hims, and a peak of only 50 percent in the Ba'thi stronghold of al-Lādhiqīyah. Furthermore, it would not have had to rely so extensively on patron-client networks to bring out the vote in al-Lādhiqīyah and as-Suwaydā' in particular, where local traditional elites may not have suffered greatly as a result of the revolution. Nor would the Ba'th have had to resort to intimidation of independent candidates. In al-Lādhiqīyah, the campaign to pressure such candidates to withdraw was so successful that the list of National Progressive Front candidates was unchallenged. See Elisabeth Picard, "L'analyse des élections non-concurrientielles: l'opération électorale des 3 et 4 Mai 1973 en Syrie," fiche technique no. 3, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, March 1976, and idem, "L'analyse des élections non-concurrientielles: les fonctions des législatives syriennes de 1973," fiche technique no. 5, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, March 1976.

26. Eric Rouleau, "Syria: Realism on the left," Guardian Weekly, 2 September 1972.
27. On changes in Syria since 1970, see Kerr, "Hafiz Asad and the Changing Patterns of Syrian Politics."
28. Rouleau, "Assad's calculated risk."
29. Ibid. The Minister of the Economy, Muḥammad Ḥaydar from al-Lādhiqīyah, "adapted" himself so well that he has been charged with immense corruption.
30. Rouleau, "Assad's calculated risk."
31. Arab Report and Record, 16-30 June 1976, p. 394.
32. Peter H. Merkl, Modern Comparative Politics (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 261.

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