A Model of Praetorian States

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Introduction

As discussed in the last chapter, this dissertation has identified praetorian armies as being a unique political actor positioned to shape and determine the outcomes of a transition. The literature on the breakdown of democratic transitions, generally, and that of Egypt, particularly, should not overlook the single most powerful entity in many of these cases: the military. While chapter 1 shed light on how much of the 'Arab Spring' scholarship emphasizes procedural, ideological and systemic/structural factors, this chapter offers an alternative explanation. A praetorian army, as found in the Egyptian case, is not a mere bystander, nor a neutral observer to the momentous political changes materializing in the country. Conversely, it is by far the most consequential actor in the political arena both influencing and responding to events, such as the January 25th uprising, the parliamentary elections of 2011-2012, as well as the rise (and subsequent fall) of the Muslim Brotherhood. For our purposes, we will adopt, for now, a succinct definition of praetorianism:

> Praetorianism is a political system where civilians serve in government at the pleasure (and by permission) of the army.[1]

The Egyptian Armed Forces (hereafter: EAF), not unlike any other praetorian army, have clearly defined interests, prerogatives and objectives, which they seek to defend either by manipulating a given political arrangement, the so-called "ruling but not governing formula" (Cook 2007), or by taking over power themselves.[2] While it is generally costly to opt for the latter (due to potentially prohibitive political costs of assuming the spotlight), a praetorian army would feel compelled to incur such costs, if the praetorian system *itself* were threatened by the unchecked rise of a dominant civilian party. In fact, all militaries in countries going through transitions are especially antithetical to attempts of imposing 'subjective civilian control.' That is to say the military will resort to all means to forestall a systemic shift in the balance of power within the political system towards civilians. Civilian control must be avoided at all costs. To put things in a wider regional perspective, Egypt's army is praetorian; Tunisia's is not. This

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[1] This chapter introduces two complementary definitions in a forthcoming section.
[2] The next chapter explains in details why the EAF should, in fact, be considered praetorian.

substantive difference in the nature of both countries' militaries has determined the varying outcomes in both transitions.

The main questions then become why a praetorian military allows civilians to govern at all, and why, to borrow Huntington's (1957, 83) terms, it fears *subjective* civilian control (the dominance of a single party) more than *objective* civilian control (the institution of systemic and constitutional checks on the army's influence). Even more intriguing is the question of why a military abandons the seemingly more advantageous position of pulling the political strings from behind the curtains to taking the spotlight. Would it not be in the EAF's interest to establish an unambiguous military dictatorship? In a span of one year, it appears as if Cairo had oscillated wildly between the nadir of military rule (with the unprecedented free election of Mohamed Morsi, a civilian) and its zenith (with the latter's forceful ouster by the military). This cannot be simply attributed to a change of fortunes, but rather to the shifting roles a praetorian military assumes based on the prevailing circumstances. To put it differently, the EAF is flexible enough to assume different roles based on shifting structural opportunities and risks. To probe the events in Egypt further, we should first investigate the notion of praetorianism itself, and whether it can be applied to the case at hand.

This chapter will begin by highlighting how the various types of civilian-based authoritarian systems of government do not exactly apply to the Egyptian case. It will then discuss how the literature has either affirmed or dismissed the centrality of militaries in undermining political institutions and transitions. The second chapter also proposes a more precise definition of praetorianism (than has thus far been offered in the pertinent literature), and contends that a praetorian army, as a chief political actor, will seek to manage, subvert and wholly control political transitions to ensure civilians do not actually *rule*. Finally, it will suggest a typology of civil-military relations under different regime types, including praetorianism, and argue that subjective civilian control is likely to fail during a transition in a praetorian state.

Defining praetorianism requires a brief elaboration on the different types of authoritarian systems, and why a praetorian state is not to be confused with, say, a military dictatorship. This chapter would, furthermore, detail and explain the three different types of praetorian armies (ruler, guardian and moderator). Following that will be a discussion on why praetorianism, as a theoretical framework, matters in this and other similar cases. Finally, the chapter concludes with the broader debate on civil-military relations, and delineates that body of work's relevance to the praetorian model of government. All these arguments should bolster our contentions that a) militaries matter to political transitions; b) praetorian armies are

qualitatively different from other armies; and c) praetorian states are considerably less likely to undergo a successful democratic transition, let alone democratic consolidation.

Authoritarianism is not the same as Praetorianism

Not all authoritarian regimes are the same. There are essential differences between single-party systems, military dictatorships, personalistic regimes, and, to add to Barbara Geddes' (1999, 121) classification: praetorian states. It is imperative at this point to underscore the distinctions between these four archetypes of authoritarianism. This should allow us to illuminate the distinctive features of praetorianism that doom prospects for the completion or consolidation of democratic transitions (Linz and Stepan 1986). Unfortunately, many Middle East scholars commit the mistake of overlooking the consequential role of the praetorian military in Egypt by describing its pre-2011 political system as single-party authoritarianism (Brownlee 2007), where access to public office and influence over policy were typically controlled by the National Democratic Party (NDP).[3] Under military regimes, furthermore, a group of officers, a junta, will decide who governs and exert some degree of influence over policy. Personalist regimes differ from both types insofar that political opportunities and power is distributed via direct order from and association with a leader (Geddes 1999, 121).

Within the civilian-based authoritarian framework, many scholars regard the military as a component, perhaps a pillar, of these regime, but they do not see that institution as the crux of the political system. Philippe Droz-Vincent (2014a, 180), for example, speaks of Arab militaries, including Egypt's as "an essential, but very specific, *part* of Arab authoritarian regimes" (Italics added). More generously, he discusses Arab regimes' "progressive institutionalization of the military apparatus into the authoritarian state" (Droz-Vincent 2014a, 190). That is the overarching authoritarian structure subsumes within it the armed forces.

Other authors specializing in the Middle East even describe an enfeebled army that was hapless when the protests broke out, or even attempted to save Mubarak's regime, but could not. Hazem Kandil (2012, 5), for instance, argues that the EAF did not defend Mubarak's regime when the uprising broke out in 2011, because they had *lost* their privileged status within the ruling regime to the police. More scholars make similar assertions about an army whose decision not to stand by Mubarak's beleaguered regime was motivated by its own diminished role and status vis-à-vis the National Democratic Party and/or other security agencies (Masoud 2011; Stacher 2012, 7-8). Droz-Vincent (2014b: 699) reiterates this point more generally arguing

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[3] Single-party regimes may allow electoral competition with other parties for purposes of legitimating an otherwise rigged process (Geddes 1999).

that the military is *not* "the main arm of authoritarian regimes (as compared with the interior ministry)." Hicham Bou Nassif (2015) contends that the military's senior leadership stood by Mubarak's side, but fearing a mutiny of disgruntled junior officers they were compelled to oust the aging dictator.[4] While it is generally true that Mubarak's reliance on the police had grown in the last few years of his reign (for reasons that will be explained in forthcoming chapters), the military's role as the custodian of the state (and the regime) was hardly in doubt. Institutional rivalry does not fully account for the military's overall interest in unseating Mubarak and his NDP, nor does it explain why the EAF adopted the exact plans for the transition that followed.

The Egyptian army is not a mere prop in the coercive apparatus of an authoritarian regime, to be sure, but rather is the central pillar upon which all-else rests. If it withholds support, the structure comes crumbling down. This is why Mubarak's resignation and the dissolution of the NDP did not spell an end to non-democratic rule in Egypt. It was the end of that system's external façade. The praetorian system remained, even as its civilian veneer was replaced by something else. Put differently, contemplate a counter-factual: what if the police, widely considered to be the strongest coercive pillar of Mubarak's regime, had attempted to force the three-decade long tyrant into retirement, and take over the political reins itself? Would they have been able to do so, and design a "transition"? This is simply unimaginable, given the diminished legitimacy, political power, and coercive capabilities enjoyed by the police force compared to the EAF. The truth is political regimes in Egypt had staked their claim to rule Egypt, since the 1952 military coup, upon their association with (in Morsi's case, palpable deference to) the EAF.[5] This decades-long political system shuffles the cards occasionally, but never in a way has that undermined the abiding predominance of the generals.[6]

Egypt's system is not necessarily a military dictatorship either, at least not according to how many political scientists often speak of the notion. Geddes (1999, 121-138) views military governments as inherently precarious and containing "the seeds of their own destruction" (1999, 131) due to the officers' preference to maintain unity of rank and institutional cohesion than to become politically polarized. This claim finds much support in the literature (Janowitz 1960,

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[4] Hicham Bou Nassif, " Generals and Autocrats: How Coup-Proofing Predetermined the Military's Elite Behavior in the Arab Spring," *Political Science Quarterly* (forthcoming, 2015)

[5] Mohamed Morsi repeatedly exalted the role of the army as a "shield" and a "sword" for the nation, attended several military-themed events, called the generals "men like gold", and ultimately deflected leaked charges brought about by a judicial committee suggesting the involvement of the military in the killing and torturing of protesters in 2011.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd08XdiJxYg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbRz7lmbfv0
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SorcNA5W_z8

[6] The upcoming chapter expands further on the praetorian 'credentials' of the Egyptian military.

1977; Finer 1975; Bienen 1978; Decalo 1976; Kennedy 1974; Van Doorn 1968, 1969; Stepan 1988; and Huntington 1991). Geddes (1999, 122-136) adds that the temptation for the officers is significant to return to the barracks before the situation in the country has reached crisis-level or factional splits within the army have started to materialize, since they are likely to secure favorable negotiated terms in a transition. The differences, therefore, between a military government and a praetorian state are that the former tends to be short-lived with a small chance of survival (11 percent according to Geddes). Praetorian states, conversely, tend to be long lasting, as the cases of Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Turkey and Pakistan demonstrate. Also, in praetorian systems, the officers may have a civilian cadre in government, but they will continue to enjoy tremendous power over that government both overtly and covertly. It is safer, therefore, to consider military dictatorships as either a distinct category separate from praetorianism, or that concept could, incidentally, characterize a *ruling type* praetorian military.[7]

Several comparativists hold the view that coups generally take place in countries that had had coups before. Post-colonial liberation struggles led by armies award them a privileged status that allows them to intervene later on (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Brownlee et al. 2015). It is what Jenkins and Kposowa (1990) label "political centrality." The Egyptian case is, indeed, a classical example of a military whose 1952 coup happily induced the end of Britain's colonial spell in Egypt. The military then proceeded to rule, govern or both at different intervals of the country's subsequent history.

Other scholars and authors who have focused on studying the EAF have tended to focus on the military's economic and institutional activities/interests (Marshall 2015; Sayigh 2012; Abul-Magd 2013; and Azzam 2012), ideological predispositions against the Islamists (Ashour 2015) or its internal make up (Droz-Vincent 2014a; Bou Nassif, 2015).[8] In doing so, they might be missing the forest for the trees. By focusing on these partial, albeit important, attributes, one is inclined to overlook the larger picture of an entire political system that is designed by military officers, for military officers. The foregoing is merely some snapshots of that system, but they fail to pinpoint its underlying logic and dynamic. This system is highly adaptable, and allows for various configurations of authority, but ultimately its *raison d'être* is the preservation of the military as the hegemonic and preeminent institution within the state. Presidents like Mubarak and Morsi can come and go, but the army remains unchecked and firmly in control. Only within that framework can we begin to understand why the military would dismiss Mubarak, hold

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[7] The forthcoming section will shed light on the various types of praetorian militaries.
[8] Bou Nassif argues that the army leadership had the "will but not the capacity" to defend the regime, as more junior officers would not have likely obeyed orders to crack down on protesters. This does not explain, however, why these same officers participated in a brutal crackdown against supporters of President Mohamed Morsi in 2013.

competitive elections, allow the Brothers to govern, and ultimately (and violently) end Egypt's brief transitional experiment.

The Egyptian political system, it should be noted, is not a military dictatorship; Egypt has been a military-dominated state since 1952. What this means in practice is that "[t]he officers of the *military enclave* along with their civilian allies, strategically created political systems that have benefited themselves at the expense of the rest of society" (Cook 2007, 15). By developing systems that create an illusory façade of pluralistic politics, they seek to guarantee the maintenance of their political order. "During periods of crisis, however, the military elite tend to strip away this façade, revealing themselves as the locus of power and reinforcing the authoritarian core of the political order" (Ibid). A military dictatorship, on the other hand, is one where the military not only wields influence and power in shaping and managing the polity, but also carries out the burdensome and mostly thankless task of governance. It is the rule of uniformed general in most positions of government. Egypt's system is more complex than that, and the army prefers a more circumspective approach to exercising its dominance over civilians. Egypt is a praetorian state.

In short, Egypt's polity is not a civilian-based dictatorship; though, to be sure, at different stages, various elements of personalistic,[9] single-party and even Sultanistic (Chehabi 1998) rule were unequivocal. During these periods, the military had opted to retreat into a "moderator type" (Nordlinger 1977), but still within the superseding praetorian framework.

The Army as a Decisive Actor

No revolution of the masses can triumph without the help of a portion of the armed forces that sustained the old regime. (Lenin 1916)[10]

Some scholars downplay the independent nature of the military and its influence, therefore, on political outcomes. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006, 224), for example, implicitly lump the military together with affluent political elites, depriving the former of its independent bureaucratic, social, economic and political interests as well as its own agency for autonomous political action. Barzel (2002), similarly, treats the state as a monolithic actor devoid of factions, and do not flesh out the ingrained tensions between the army and the government. To be sure, a considerable portion of academic literature tends to emphasize the significant role armed forces play in determining the success or failure of a transition towards democracy, and this

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[9] In personalist regimes, the discretion and decisions of one leader determines the political fortunes of the entire ruling class (Geddes, 1999: 121).

[10] Qtd. in D.E.H Russel, Rebellion, Revolution and Armed Force: A Comparative Study of Fifteen Countries with Special Emphasis on Cuba and South Africa. (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 12.

dissertation endorses that view. Prominent transitologist, Alfred Stepan (1988, X), strongly suggested the development of a "democratic strategy" to deal with the military during times of transition for three reasons:

1) the military either heads or provides the core repressive apparatus to the foregoing authoritarian regime.

2) most new transitional regimes face immediate challenges on how to contain and deal with the military and other security agencies.

3) The military continues to pose either directly or indirectly a possible, and rather threatening, alternative to democracy.

The author illustrates that several reasons render the military a principal stakeholder in the outcome of democratic transitions. Inevitably, there is contestation between the military and the new government concerning potential retribution for past human rights violations, the military's own organizational mission, structure and who controls it, and, finally, the military's budget. Stepan (1988, 68) calls that the "articulated conflict." Furthermore, another area of contestation emerges over "military prerogatives" where "the military as an institution assumes they have an acquired right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extramilitary areas within the state apparatus, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or civil society" (Stepan 1988, 93). Institutional prerogatives are also a priority to the military. These pressing interests accentuate a military's propensity to intervene in politics, particularly given the salient levels of uncertainty and turmoil engulfing a transitional process and a possible power vacuum.

For better or worse, armies play a pivotal role during periods of political upheaval and mass mobilization; an officer corps' decision to extend or withhold support from a ruling regime following popular protests can be decisive. As Zoltan Barany (2011, 28), for example, bluntly put it: "No institution matters more to a state's survival than its military, and no revolution within a state can succeed without the support or at least acquiescence of its armed forces." In some of these cases, the unity of the military is itself at stake. Social uprisings could, in fact, create fractures and defections within the armed forces, thus setting the stage for a breakdown of authoritarianism and the instigation of a democratic transition (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; O'Donnell et al. 1986; Nepstad 2011). In fact, Chenoweth and Stephan (2012) have shown that popular mobilizations have a forty-six times greater chance of success in toppling sitting regimes, when the military *refuses* to repress them. Furthermore, the army's role during the transition during a transition equally matters. Guillermo O'Donnell rightly cautioned that the

"central problem for democratic consolidation is to prevent a military coup" (O'Donnell 1985,1). Other authors, such as Naunihal Singh (2014), Nikolay Marinov and Hein Goemans (2014, 3) have buttressed O'Donnell's claim with a large body of data suggesting that of all cases of democratic failure, coup d'états were to blame in approximately seventy-five percent of the cases. In short, armies play a critical role in both the inception and termination of transitions.

In all the Arab Spring countries that experienced a transition (the list includes Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen, but not Libya which witnessed a foreign military intervention), the military, or at least a portion of it, withdrew backing from the ruling regime precipitating its downfall (Brownlee et al. 2015). In Egypt, for instance, although the military deployed to the streets of the country after January 28th, 2011, it did not embark on a large-scale crackdown of the protesters, and instead issued a 'communiqué' "endorsing and reaffirming the legitimate demands of the people."[11] It took only one day after that for Mubarak to step down, and hand over power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The military, thus, proved instrumental in the ouster of long-serving dictator, Hosni Mubarak.

Much of the burgeoning scholarship on the Arab Spring has tried to explicate the varying responses by the militaries in the different countries. In almost all cases, regimes asked their armed forces to partake in restoring order and quell uprisings. The reaction of the respective armies' command was not uniform. In Syria, Libya and Bahrain, lethal force was deployed against civilians, while in Egypt and Tunisia, the militaries refused to crack down. A big debate in Middle East scholarship ensued regarding the exact causes of this variation. This author argued then, amongst others, that the critical variables were *military composition* (whether or not any given military was fairly representative of its society's ethnic, tribal, sectarian and socio-economic classes) and *military doctrine* (whether or not a military had defense of the nation against external, as opposed to internal, enemies as its primary creed and objective) (Barany 2011; El-Shimy 2011; and Droz-Vincent 2013).[12] An additional variable is the size of the military, which is said to determine its proclivity (even ability) to side either with the regime or with the protesters; smaller armies may not have the option of standing against a revolting population, or so goes the argument (Angrist 2013; Droz-Vincent, 2013). Other authors also cite this size variable as a reason explaining why the Tunisian military did not follow the lead of its Egyptian counterpart by waging a military coup ending the transition (Gelvin 2015).

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[11] "The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces Communique no. 1." February 10th, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqOYewaFA6c>

[12] Barany suggests armies reacted differently to the Arab Spring depending on perceptions of regime legitimacy by the population and army, as well as degree of unity within ranks, and whether or not the army had historically had "blood on their hands." (Barany 2011)

Authoritarian regimes may resort to coup-proofing techniques, such as "ethnic-stacking" and nepotism to tighten their grip on the military's room for maneuver; according to this logic, the Syrian, Libyan and Bahraini regime were best positioned to ward off challenges to their rule, because they had "stacked" their armed forces with loyalists from kin, tribe, ethnicity or sect (Bou Nassif 2012).[13] Finally, others scholars still ascribe differing army reactions to the nature and sources of revenue of a particular authoritarian government. Jason Brownlee, Andrew Reynolds and Tarek Masoud (2015) see regimes characterized by "dynastic personalism", where a precedent of hereditary rule occurred and power is centered on one person, and whose source of income is oil "rents" to be uniquely capable of retaining their generals' loyalty, such as is the case in the Kingdom of Bahrain.[14] When neither element is present, as in Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen, the army either acts to remove the dictator (Egypt and Tunisia) or fractures (Yemen) (Ibid).

The fact that all of the foregoing authors writing on the political upheaval in the Arab world felt it necessary to address the role of the military in instigating change attests to the centrality of the army in the study of political transitions. However, there is an insurmountable need to question these accounts' ability to fully explain our case, Egypt. These explanations appear better able to tackle the role of the military in initiating a transition, rather than its role in its termination (or management). It takes, this dissertation argues, an incomplete snapshot of an army's decision at one moment. To be sure, it is the same size, same doctrine, same composition Egyptian military that ended Mubarak's three-decade rule and imprisoned him, only to terminate, two-years later, any prospect for democratic transition, shoot at demonstrators and imprison tens of thousands of protesters. The difference in size, for example, between the Egyptian and Tunisian armies does not adequately explain the absence of a coup in Tunis. Tarek Masoud (2015) convincingly demonstrated that small militaries are as adept at waging takeovers of government as large ones.[15] In fact, at a time when the national population was close to twenty two million, Egypt's army, estimated at 65,000 troops at most, overthrew the monarchy in 1952. Hazim Kandil (2012, 7) additionally argues that at the time, Egypt's army was "understaffed, unequipped, and trained for little more than parade ground marches." There is no reason to think of Tunisia's army size, henceforth, as determinative of its decision-making

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[13] In 2015, Bou Nassif added another variable determining a military's reaction to the protests: fear of army fracture. He argued that standing with the Mubarak regime would have split the army along generational lines, with the mid-rank officers decidedly sympathetic to the masses on the streets. (Bou Nassif, 2015:4)

[14] Despite having the highest per capita ratio of protesters per population (approximately 25 percent), Manama did not experience a political transition, and the army sided unambiguously with the beleaguered King (Kamrava, 2014).

[15] Conversely, Naunihal Singh building on a large-N study of coups from 1950 till 2000 argues that smaller armies may be more coup-prone, as fear of army-fracture is much smaller than in larger ones (Singh, 2014).

(Masoud, 2015: 9-13). More generally, Robin Luckham (1971, 3) reiterates these points by stating that in most post-colonial "new nations...even the smallest and most poorly equipped of modern armies have been able to displace the politicians at will."

In order to get around this dilemma, some scholars have long pointed to civilian actors as being the driving force behind the success or failure of a transition. If civilians are able to organize themselves into political parties, compete peacefully for office, and accept the legitimacy of the elections' winners, the transition is likely to be completed, and democracy should eventually consolidate (Linz 1978; Linz and Stepan 1996). The military, in other words, would be inclined to support these arrangements, and disinclined to challenge them. Masoud (2015, 24) adds to this argument the qualifier that, in an ideal situation, election results should produce an equitable distribution of power among the competing factions that prompts the various actors to compromise with one another; a phenomenon that he labels as "empirical pluralism" or a "sufficiently even balance of power." This is not dissimilar to Dankwart Rustow's "inconclusive political struggle" argument (Rustow 1970). This line of argumentation bears more than a passing resemblance to other efforts that put the onus of successful transitions on a robust civil society (Masoud 2014; 2015), the presence of a "political society" (Stepan 2013), or even people's commitment to democracy itself, as there can be no "democracy without democrats" (Waterbury 1994: 23).

When some or all of the aforementioned conditions are absent, conventional wisdom maintains that instability would follow, violence might erupt, disgruntled civilians summon the military, and the army, then, sees an opportunity or an obligation to intervene in the political process (Linz 1978; Stepan 1988). Juan Linz captured the spirit of this progression of events as "knocking at the barracks" by the "disloyal opposition" (Linz 1978). A similar argument is made by Marcus Mietzner (2008, 4) who states: "the level of engagement of the armed forces in political affairs rises and falls with fluctuations in the effectiveness of civilian governance."

This purported correlation between civilians' failure to manage a transition or accept its outcomes, on the one hand, and a military coup, on the other, is exaggerated. Military coups and political interventions have taken place across a wide array of countries with varying strength of civil groups and institutions. Luckham (1971, 10) agrees with the above statement, but goes further by arguing that a strong civil society may, counter-intuitively, compel the military to intervene more heavy-handedly:

> There is a great range and diversity among those countries within which intervention does occur, from countries with relatively high per capita incomes and relatively powerful civilian organizations like Argentina, Venezuela, Turkey, Spain or

Greece, to those with the feeblest of civilian institutions like Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Togo, Upper Volta or the Central African Republic. In the former group, it may indeed by sometimes that the threat of *strong civilian resistance* forces the military to press its political intervention *more deeply...* (Italics added)

Furthermore, as there are some countries that may have divergences in the strength, cohesion and democratic commitment of their civil and political societies, militaries should not be reified as a one and the same. What this research argues, and aims to demonstrate is that praetorian armies are qualitatively different and unique. They do not wait for civilians to draw them into the political field; it works the other way around. They do not intervene after seeing civilians haplessly fail in managing or leading a transition, but rather, they can be the main culprits behind such failure. As the following chapters will show, the EAF actively and consistently micro-managed Egypt's transition to achieve specific objectives, and when civilians sought to gain the upper hand in that process, the military led a concerted effort to undermine the actors as well as end that very transition. Civil-military relations, therefore, matter during the transition, but, especially, beforehand.

This dissertation argues then that the best way to account for a military's behavior before, during and after a transition is to consider its position within or without the regime. Simply put, the Egyptian military was (and remains) largely outside and independent of ruling regimes and governments. What is more, it enjoys the status of praetorian army allowing it to summon, dismiss and replace both regimes and governments, when expedient or necessary. The Tunisian army, on the other hand, occupies no such position within its respective political system, and was content to return to the barracks after removing Ben Ali (Droz-Vincent 2014a, 183). It may side with civil society actors at a moment of regime weakness, as was the case in January 2011, but cannot overhaul the political system *at will*. Paradoxically, its size and composition permitted it to oust Ben Ali, but not to get rid of the Islamist *En-Nahda* party and its allies two years later. In both cases, there were popular calls for the military to intervene. The intervention of the Egyptian army, likewise, was not driven merely by popular demand, even though that was a crucial consideration, but rather by the fear that the praetorian system was itself imperiled by an array of civilian competitors. The latter group comprised the National Democratic Party (NDP) of Mubarak, young activists and finally the Muslim Brotherhood. All of these challengers had to be reined in, and that's precisely what the EAF accomplished through its numerous political and armed interventions during the transition.

How to define a Praetorian State?

Before we trace the impact of a military's role and posture on the evolution and ultimate outcomes of political transitions, we should first define praetorianism more rigorously and unambiguously.[16] What do we mean when we say that Egypt is a praetorian state? And is it in fact one? What are the characteristics of a praetorian army? Is praetorianism defined by an action, for example the carrying out of a military coup or rule by uniformed officers? Or is it more systemic and structural so as to be measured in an army's day-to-day activities and the procedures of government? Or does it perhaps relate to an issue of legitimacy: that is the regime's claim to authority rests, at a maximum, on discernible military credentials or, at a minimum, on the generals' tacit support? Finally, are all praetorian armies one and the same, or is there, in fact, some variation within that category?

Praetorian armies, to be sure, are not inherently unprofessional, and may, in fact, meet the criteria set forth by Samuel Huntington for 'military professionalism.' Huntington, in his seminal work *The Soldier and the State*, defines military professionalism as comprising: technical expertise (in the management of violence), a sense of social responsibility (towards the military security of its country), and a high level of *corporateness* (organic unity for a bureaucratic organization that has barriers for entry) (Huntington 1957, 11-16). The late scholar made three fundamental claims: 1) there is a discernible (indeed desirable) distinction between civilian and military roles; 2) professionalism is the key to preserving such distinctive roles and civilian control; and 3) that professionalism is achieved when the military enjoys institutional autonomy (i.e.: politicians do not interfere in its organization for political purposes) (Feaver 2003, 7). Huntington (1957, 121) extrapolated that professional militaries are very likely to carry out orders made by civilian authorities. Other scholars, such as David Shambaugh (2002, 13), disagreed, however, and argued that professional militaries have a much greater propensity for political intervention.

We see little evidence to support Huntington's line of reasoning in our case study. If we were to apply the foregoing definition of professionalism to the EAF (or any other praetorian army, such as Pakistan's), the result would most likely be that they are professional. In fact, Morris Janowitz (1964, 1-2, 31-40, and 65-74) responded to Huntington arguing that professionalism made civilian control less probable, since the greater the military cohesion, the

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[16] The earliest use of the term "praetorian" refers to the imperial guard in the capital of the Roman Empire. These soldiers became infamous for their frequent interferences in imperial politics, leaning at times on the Senate, and at times determining who the Roman Emperor would be (Nordlinger 1977, 3).

greater is its ability to politically intervene. Likewise, Samuel Finer (1962, 20-25) argued against Huntington that military professionalism might in fact increase propensity for political intervention. Praetorian armies, like other militaries, may well be *professional*, in accordance with Huntington's postulation (Perlmutter 1974). What is more, professional autonomy of the military can generate parochial institutional interests that lead to praetorianism (Perlmutter 1977). This work argues that the degree of a given military's involvement in politics is contingent upon its doctrine, *de jure* and *de facto* roles in the state, and whether or not civilians actually enjoy any tangible degree of control over its activities, missions and decision-making. In a praetorian setting, the military's entanglement in political affairs is not a disruptive moment, as much as it is continuation or augmentation of business as usual. What matters is the *degree* of political intervention: latent, overt or violent, not whether it would occur at all.[17]

Other typical reasons for military engagement in politics provided by the literature are equally inadequate to account for the decision of the Egyptian military to fully intervene in the political process. Such explanations claim that the military may be responding to threats to national unity and security, the causes of which might be internal (secessionist movement, political turmoil, street mobilization and lawlessness) or external (wars, international terrorism, etc.) The military could expand the concept of national security to encompass domestic politics and internal matters (Majeed and MacDonald 2010, 10). On the external threat front, the classical "garrison state" by H. Lasswell (1941), for instance, argued that a prolonged threat of war might drive the army to institutionalize its political role. The praetorian model may, in fact, agree more with others, such as Andreski (1954), Desch (1999) and Hunter (1996) who argued the threat of war may lead to the opposite outcome: greater civilian control. In Egypt, the military shifted from a heavy-handed intervention in politics and governance into a more withdrawn role in the aftermath of the Six-Day War with Israel in 1967. More recently, and as this research shall explain, the military consciously orchestrated events between 2012 and 2013 that exacerbated political turmoil and street mobilization against Mohamed Morsi. It was not saving the country from chaos; it was abetting it. The threat-oriented explanation is, therefore, ill-suited to explicate the motivations of a praetorian military.

The final paradigm trying to explain why militaries get into politics emphasizes the role of "developed political culture," where the higher the efficacy and legitimacy of the civilian government, the lower the odds for military intervention, and vice versa (Finer, 2003: 86-89). Militaries seek political control, or so goes the reasoning, only after civilian bodies of the state

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[17] The forthcoming sections would discuss at length the different types/roles of praetorian armies, and why those changes take place.

have failed to meet the needs of the populace or run the government effectively. Of course measuring political culture is a fraught task, even if we were to apply Larry Diamond's elaborate definition of it as: "a people's predominant beliefs, attitudes, values, ideals, sentiments and evaluations about the political system of its country, and the role of self in that system" (Diamond 1994, 7-8). Furthermore, Finer's argument, as Mietzner (2008, 17) demonstrates is almost tautological. Does developed political culture precede military non-intervention? Or is the non-intervention of the army a precondition for a developed political culture? In either case, we see mixed results when applying this analytical approach to the case at hand. On the one hand, one could argue that the army ousted Mubarak and Morsi due to their failure to run stable and effective administrations. On the other hand, the same can be said of President Sisi's whose administration has scored much lower on the economic and security fronts. Additionally, at least in the case of Morsi, the military and other state institutions may have played a spoiler's role in his inability to run an effective government. As Daniel Lev (1966, 39) showed in his seminal study on the failure of Indonesia's parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, the (praetorian) Indonesian army precipitated that system's downfall: "because it could, but also because it had compelling interests in a quite different political system." In short, a praetorian army should not be viewed as merely reactive to external circumstances, such as war, protests or government performance, or a hostage to its level of professionalism. It is unlike other armies insofar that is an autonomous political actor cultivating a polity of its own.

But, again, what is praetorianism? Unfortunately, much of the classical literature on this phenomenon deals with these questions unsystematically and almost haphazardly. The term 'praetorian' is often deployed without precision. Some general definitions exist, but they lack exact tools of measurement and verification, rendering them too inexact and equivocal to apply to individual cases with a satisfactory degree of certainty. In other words, there is no praetorianism model in Political Science. The first introduction of, and arguably still foremost contribution to, the praetorianism literature comes from Amos Perlmutter's *Egypt: The Praetorian State* (1974). In his seminal study, Perlmutter highlights the chief hallmarks of a praetorian state as one where:

> the military has the *potential* of dominating the political system. Its political processes favor the development of the army as the core group and as a political ruling class... In praetorian states, an army interferes in government affairs, and effects and sustains particular constitutional provisions. (Italics added) (Perlmutter 1974, 6)

In a similar vein, Eric A. Nordlinger argues that praetorianism takes place when military officers have become a "major or predominant" political actor, but he qualifies that designation

with the army's "actual or threatened use of force" to usurp power in the system virtually *at will*. In a sense, they can use their power to determine who sits on the throne or if to take it for themselves (Nordlinger 1977, 2-3). In other words, there are no prohibitive constraints, on the officer's involvement in the political sphere;[18] a fact that is often *not* missed on civilians in government. Nordlinger continues to expatiate the concept by contending that a regime is considered praetorian, even when the rulers had taken off their military uniforms for several years, if it meets these conditions:

1- the military came to power by means of a coup;

2- the highest government officials have served in the army or continue to; and

3- the rulers are primarily dependent on the support of the armed forces for the retention of power. (Nordlinger 1977, 112)[19]

As Peter D. Feaver (2003, 8) explains a "return to the barracks" is not tantamount with effective civilian control. Praetorian militaries, such as those of Algeria, Egypt and Turkey have been content to return to the barracks "because they have overseen the development of an institutional setting—a system—that ensures the predominance of the officers" (Cook, 2007: 8). These conditions closely resemble an earlier description of the Egyptian praetorian state. Perlmutter (1974, 112-16) reasoned that Anwar al-Sadat's regime was as praetorian as that of his predecessor Gamal Abdel Nasser, because the former (like the latter) hailed from the officer corps, military generals led major government portfolios, and "the regime of Sadat is completely dependent on the support of the military." In a praetorian state, the highest military rank could be that of president.

When a military is praetorian, the political regime is inherently one where the armed forces enjoy a predominant position within the system, often emanating from a colonial liberation struggle or modernization efforts led by the military itself. As Jenkins and Kposowa (1990) argue, a military's success in securing independence from a foreign power via a coup or armed struggle, if followed by military control over state resources, may well pave the way for a politicized army that is inclined to intervene in politics. Steven Cook (2007) while discussing

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[18] Typically, there are constitutional provisions in praetorian states prohibiting forceful and unconstitutional change of regime. In practice, these provisions have been applied selectively to ward off possible coups by rogue officers, or "coups from the middle" according to Naunihal Singh's definition. (Singh 2014) In Egypt, members of the civilian opposition have also often faced in court the charge of "plotting to bring down the ruling regime." Yet, when the military, as institution, ousts a ruling regime, officers face no charges in that regard.

[19] (Nordlinger, 1977: 116) applies this description to the Egyptian case, and asserts the continuing praetorian system under President Anwar al-Sadat (1970-1981), as the president was an officer, military officers led major government portfolios, and "the regime of Sadat is completely dependent on the military."

praetorian militaries argues that such a modernizing economic role inexorably led to deeper political involvement. While military rule initially succeeded in jumpstarting many economies, and embarking on programs of industrialization, these economies eventually stagnated, and the officers became more concerned with preserving regimes "in which they were (and remain) the primary beneficiaries" (Cook 2007, 14).[20] This preeminent position of "modernizing agent" (Perlmutter 1974, 82) allows it to confer or withhold legitimacy and support from any particular political arrangement. Mubarak, for instance, may have taken off his air force uniform, but he still drew a considerable part of his legitimacy as president from having taken part in the October/Yom Kippur War of 1973, attending ceremonies celebrating officers' graduation and showering the army with material benefits.

More broadly, we can induce certain assumptions about praetorian systems and militaries:

1- Praetorian armies are *rational* and *purposive*:

They develop objectives and pursue them. These objectives are seldom the whims of some generals, but rather the culmination of serious deliberations and studying within a formal body within the army (in the Egyptian case, this body is known as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, SCAF). They seek to issue joint decisions that obtain the support of at least a majority of the military's most senior generals. In the process of producing such decisions, they must be internally justified and defended as good for nation and army. There is a cost-benefit analysis that takes place, particularly when it comes to the potentially costly decisions of launching a direct takeover of government; as Nordlinger (1977, 63) elaborates: "[t]he coup d'etat is a consciously conceived and purposefully executed act. It is purposefully undertaken in order to achieve consciously formulated goals, with an awareness of the possible costs and risks involved."

The objectives are not exclusively institutional, but extend to the realms of governance, politics, the economy and national security. To put it differently, a praetorian army has an expansive view of what's good for the army and what's good for the nation, and often fuses the two.

2- Praetorian armies are *politicized*:

They are enmeshed either deeply or superficially in political questions relating to the army's perception of the national interest, institutional autonomy and, more significantly,

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[20] For a longer discussion on the role of decolonization in creating politicized armies see: Janowitz, 1964; Johnson (ed.), 1962; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; and Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, 2015.

overall preservation of the political system. This inevitably gets the army's senior commanders involved in partisan politics, issues of governance and other political matters. In Egypt, the EAF's track record of interference in political and economic (and sometimes partisan) issues goes back to 1952, and did not end. What changed was the degree and extent of interference throughout the years, not its kind.

3- Praetorian armies are *cohesive* and *unitary*:

They are hierarchical and obediently follow a chain of command, which begins with an officer in the post of defense minister, chief of staff and then commanders of the various divisions of the military, such as infantry, artillery, air defense, etc. While this is theoretically true for any modern professional army, praetorian officers are additionally required to follow and accept what can come across as glaringly political decisions by their senior command. If an officer was to publicly disagree or disobey a more senior officer's directive, he subjects himself to penalties, or depending on the gravity of his act, a military trial. Since all officers more or less have both a personal and an institutional stake in the continuation of praetorianism, they are prone to keeping disagreements to a minimum.

As a general rule, an army is automatically the best positioned institution to defend its respective interests, as it enjoys high degree of internal cohesion, hierarchical set up and has access to considerable power resources. Armies are unique also in that they enjoy an e*sprit de corps*. "Praetorians are primarily, often solely, motivated by the defense or enhancement of military interests, and they act upon them even when these conflict with constitutional rules and norms, and what may appear to others as the best interests of the nation" (Nordlinger 1977, 65). Since they conflate the army with the nation itself, they are able to rationalize even the most predatory interventions, as good for the country.

In the Egyptian case, and despite the SCAF's deep (and rather controversial) involvement in political affairs since 2011, no senior officer publicly disagreed with any of the body's decisions. A handful of junior officers who joined protests in Tahrir Square on 8 April 2011 were promptly court-martialed.[21]

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[21] "After al-Sisi approves the Sentencing of 21 April 8th Officers, the Officers' Lawyer: The Ruling is an Indictment of their Participation in the Revolution…" *Al-Youm Al-Sabe'*, September 29th, 2012. http://www.youm7.com/story/0000/0/0/-/801158#.VkjucoSDDzI

4- Praetorian armies are *foundational*:

They establish the political system and all of its rules, usually following a coup d'état against civilian political actors of all stripes. The army becomes subsequently a central source of legitimation of the system and its office holders. The foundation of an "officers' republic" (to borrow Yezid Sayigh's (2012) memorable term) often follows a period of infighting coupled with mismanagement/maladministration by civilian politicians. In *Political Order in Changing Societies*, *Samuel* P. Huntington speaks of "praetorian societies" where all within the polity do not accept political institutions and leaders as legitimate. An army's political intervention in such a situation is premised on its role as the only legitimate arbitrator among political actors, or even a substitute for non-existent social forces (Huntington 1968, 196).

Coups that occur to merely tilt the balance among various political actors or that maintain a form of controlled pluralistic politics are not to be confused with what I term *foundational praetorian coups*. The latter painstakingly sweep away more than the president or a political party; they aim to accomplish the twin goals of societal demobilization and political organization. In other words, they end the two foremost manifestations of civilian participation in politics: public demonstrations/strikes/sit-ins as well as the actual ability of political parties and civil society organizations to participate in political life. They severely curtail, sometimes end, associations along political lines. Public protests are outright outlawed or severely restricted, while parties are either dissolved, prohibited from engaging voters either directly or in the media, or, finally, are allowed to run in elections that are neither free nor fair. Such elections, if held, happen only after a few years of unilateral rule by the officers. These armies, additionally, tend to contribute directly or indirectly to the writing of a new founding constitution for the country. These provisions are specifically crafted to reaffirm the privileged and special status of the armed forces within said system.

The Free Officers' 1952 coup d'etat was of the *foundational praetorian* kind, as it not only ended the monarchic system, but also dismantled parliament, political parties and even social movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt would not witness pluralistic elections for three more decades. The 2013 coup was a *restorative coup* insofar that it sought to reassert the military's dominance over politics, following the rise of a potentially hegemonic party in the Muslim Brotherhood. This coup did not formally ban all political parties (even though it did ban the most popular one, the FJP), but effectively removed parties from political life, and erected enormous barriers against their participation in parliamentary elections. It has

also promulgated some of the most repressive laws against freedom of assembly and speech since the foundational coup in 1952.

5- Praetorian armies are *autonomous* (from civilian institutions) and largely *unaccountable* (to the public or representatives).

The authority of a praetorian army is often unquestionable. They are to autonomously run their own institutional affairs on matters as promotions, arms procurement, as well as devise and manage their own budget. There is no meaningful, sometimes not even nominal, civilian oversight (let alone civilian control) over the military. The EAF, for instance, used to present a single figure for its budget to the Egyptian parliament, under Mubarak, only to be quickly rubber-stamped. Since 2011, when the SCAF took over, the army's budget had not even been subjected to a nominal vote by a legislature.[22] To be sure, the president usually has the freedom to choose whomever officer he pleases to become minister of defense. This was evident in Mubarak's dismissal of the alarmingly charismatic defense minister at the time, Field Marshall Abdel Halim Abu Ghazala in 1989.[23] However, such a decision is not easy to make, as the president must carefully assess whether such a decision would evoke a reaction from his officers.

6- Praetorian armies are the core segment of *the ruling class*:

In the absence of contested politics, officers become an integral part of the higher echelons of government, state bureaucracy/institutions and private-sector ventures. This penetration of the state makes it especially difficult to end the praetorian system by merely changing a cabinet or even the president. Egypt is a case where EAF officers, both active and retired, are enmeshed within all sectors of the economy and institutions of local and national government. Additionally, praetorian officers enjoy a much-privileged socio-economic status than other "civilians" or citizens making them almost their own class. Senior officers may well constitute a "*military enclave*" which is an elite separated from society in military-only facilities, such as schools, hospitals, clubs and residential areas. In these enclaves, officers subscribe to "specific ideas about the military's organizational and technological capacities as well as a particular nationalist narrative that places the officers in a superior position to civilians" (Cook 2007, 15)

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[22] Between 2011 and until the time of this writing in June 2015, the lower house of parliament was in session only for about four months (February – May 2011).

[23] "Abu Ghazala's Family Reveals the Secrets of His Life and Dismissal in Mubarak's Era." *Sada al-Balad*. March 25th, 2015. <http://www.el-balad.com/1452884>

7- Praetorian armies have both the *will* and *capacity* to take over government either directly or indirectly should need be, or to set entirely new rules for the political system:

This depends on the type and stage of praetorianism in the state; both of which are highly adaptable to changing political conditions and structural opportunities/limitations. However, a direct intervention happens when civilians wishing to curtail the military's prerogatives and powers imperil the praetorian system itself. Otherwise, a praetorian army would prefer not to incur the cost of direct rule, and would prefer to *delegate* the task of governance to pliant civilians and/or ex-army officers.

8- Praetorian armies are *corporatist*:

Officers have a "singleness of purpose" (Welch 1987), a shared institutional identity and common objectives, such as securing high military budgets, autonomous finances, and preserving military rules and special status. In this case, and in the words of Muhammad Tariq Majeed and Ronald MacDonald, "the armed forces consider themselves a separate corporate body and all civilian groups as another corporate body...such a perception on the part of the military represents 'the conduct of civil-military relations as a zero-sum game'" (Majeed and MacDonlad 2010). Attempts by civilians to take away any of the military's privileges are promptly resisted by the institution of the military, and odds of internal army fraction as a result of political intervention are minimal. Praetorian militaries are typically concerned with the protection and enhancement of their institutional prerogatives and interests, including budgetary support, internal autonomy and warding off attempts at control by rival institutions; Nordlinger (1977, 65) calls these the "institutions' corporate interests." For instance, in Latin America and until 1960, almost invariably, defense expenditures were increased following military coups (Lieuwen 1960, 147-148). Following the 2013 coup and despite a staggering budget deficit, Egypt embarked on a lofty weapons purchase spree to the tune of 81 billion Egyptian Pounds (approximately 10 billion US Dollars).[24] This suggests a tangible correlation between interventionist armies' institutional and corporatist interests, on the one hand, and their decisions to intervene, on the other.

In short, praetorian armies are acutely sensitive to civilian attempts at taking away their "sectional interests" (Finer 1962, 34), and they will seek to bolster them when possible.

9- Praetorian armies have a "manifest destiny":

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[24] "LE 81 Billion is the Bill for Egypt's Weapons Purchases in 2015." *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 10 October, 2015. < http://www.almasryalyoum.com/news/details/824442>

Building on the model conceived by Samuel Finer in his classic *The Man on the Horseback* (1962, 28), we can posit praetorians as embracing a worldview that renders them invariably superior to civilians and better prepared to tackle the burden of running a government. Civilian administrations are unfavorably portrayed as weak, chaotic and incompetent, particularly when compared to the scrupulous discipline of the military. Praetorian armies see their rule, and sometimes governance, as an inevitable burden they must carry. It is their duty, the reasoning goes, to rescue the nation, and help her advance, modernize and attain security.

To address seemingly intractable problems with their countries' political systems, and according to Stanley G. Payne (1967, 188-189), officers can present themselves as the "[men] of iron to perform the drastic surgery needed to amputate the gangrenous elements of the existing system." The officers portray themselves as responsible and patriotic being left with no choice but to intervene in politics to protect the nation and the constitution from the ominous repercussions of continued civilian rule (Nordlinger 1977, 19). Danopolous and Watson (1996, XIII) expand the mission of the army to encompass safeguarding against a threat, be it foreign or local, economic or political, ideological or material. This notion of defending "the fundamental living being of the nation" is what is known is some Latin American countries as "*patriae.*" Similarly, Koonings and Kruit (2002, 19) underscore two chief motivations for military takeovers of political institutions, which are especially prevalent in praetorian states:

> First, there is the notion that is the military institution is exceptionally well placed not only to defend but also to *define* the essence of the nation by birthright and competence. Second, the military "knows" that "civilians", that is to say, civilian politicians, the institutional framework of civic governance, the actions of social interest groups, and the overall political culture tend to be inadequate to address the needs of the nation. (Italics, added)

In other words, praetorian militaries, espouse a sense of institutional competence and superiority vis-à-vis their civilian counterparts, and occasionally the feel the need to save *their* beloved nation from the perceived shortcomings of civilian politics.

Armed forces, to be sure, are created to defend the state, and they are, therefore, well positioned to claim to be the guardians of the national interest. Luckham (1971, 27), for example, argues that the occasions in which the military decides to forcefully intervene in politics occur due to a "dispute with other elites as to the definition or methods of pursuit of the national will…Insofar as any special interests are invoked they derive from the professional

imperatives of the military establishment itself."[25] The army symbolizes the nation's independence and sovereignty. Nationalism and national virtues play a paramount role in the training and education of officers. Praetorian officers embody that ethic and doctrine often speaking of their mission to save and build the state against enemies both domestic and foreign (Finer 1962, 29). Edwin Lieuwen (1964, 98) captures the essence of this dynamic rather eloquently:

> The generals are not capricious ogres whose only interests are destroying democracy and raiding the national treasury... [Officers] view themselves as sincere patriots. Their intervention, they believe, is always in the national interest—to save their country or protect their institution, which they consider the very embodiment of the nationhood.

These foregoing characteristics of praetorian militaries should help us better appreciate their peculiar nature, and, therefore, their role in the countries over which they rule. Finally, we can develop a working definition of the phenomenon of praetorianism in either of the following iterations:

> Praetorianism is a political system where the armed forces are autonomous from and unaccountable to civilian government, and have the ability to replace or influence that government at will. The generals believe themselves to be more competent and indeed more patriotic than their civilian counterparts. In addition, senior officers dominate all levels of the state apparatus, and develop personal and institutional stakes in the economy.

Or more concisely:

> Praetorianism is the ability of the military to dominate the state by ruling or acting as kingmakers, to influence/veto government policies, and make decisions that are autonomous from and unaccountable to civilian officials.

This definition is in line with H. Lasswell's classical postulation of the so-called "garrison state" in which the power/prerogatives of the military so supersedes those of civilian institutions and actors that the military is driven into pursuing and retaining a predominant political role (Lasswell 1941). Yet, while Lasswell projected the military to want to take a share, however significant, in political power alongside civilians, praetorianism deems the military as the distributor of such a share of power to pliant civilians. Praetorian armies take over the system, and then decide how/if they want to include civilians in governing. A more succinct and precise definition may read:

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[25] Luckham even gives the example of the 1952 coup d'etat in Egypt, where the officers cited the insufficient arming by the hitherto reigning King Farouq as responsible for military defeat four years earlier.

Praetorianism is a political system where civilians serve in government at the pleasure and by permission of the army.

Types of Praetorian Armies

While all praetorian armies should share these chief characteristics, it is important to note that not all praetorian systems are not uniformly of the same type. These militaries assume varying roles and functions based on the situational circumstances, opportunities available, as much as degree of competition/cooperation with civilians. Praetorian armies can either rule and govern (ruler type), or rule but not govern in one of two arrangements: 1- (moderator type): the army takes a back seat to civilians in government exercising little more than veto power over issues it deems central to its interests. 2- (guardian type): civilians are still in charge of government, but generals actively watch over them to ensure they are acting in tandem with the military's political outlook.

Praetorian armies enjoy a salient amount of *latent* political power that emanates from their institutional, or de facto, powers as much as constitutional/de jure privileges. They may, with certain precipitating antecedents, opt to exercise their power directly and overtly. These antecedents include *necessary* conditions, such as a socio-political crisis, the presence of a 'disloyal opposition', and a popular backlash against governing group (Linz 1978). If the government is perceived as both incompetent and illegitimate, popular protests may well lead either to a revolution, a military coup or both (Goldstone 2001). The Egyptian case both in 2011 and 2013 combined elements of revolution and coup, due to perceived failure of government as well as perceived loss of legitimacy. To be sure, the *sufficient* condition is the emergence of the governing civilian group as a *potentially hegemonic party* that aims to immediately or gradually impose civilian control (either subjective or objective), and rescind long-standing military prerogatives.

In most cases, the officers would rather let civilians bear the brunt of the burden of dealing with issues such as healthcare, education and infrastructure. Direct military takeovers, furthermore, necessitate significant levels of repression. This process is costly to the army's "image, prestige, and even morale and discipline: the more thoroughly and the longer it is engaged in forceful repression...the more it fractures," as (Droz-Vincent 2014a, 181) admonishes. Praetorian armies can also tolerate a wide range of ruling arrangements from the patrimonial personalistic/single-party rule of Hosni Mubarak to the charismatic personalism of (Gamal Abdel Nasser), and even competitive authoritarianism (the ill-fated elections of 2011-2012). However, they stand ready to interfere should insubordinate civilian actors threaten

their immediate interests or autonomy, or attempt to reallocate power towards their own group. These conditions, in the terminology of this research, are: 1) the threatening rise of a potentially hegemonic party, and 2) a threat to the pillars of the praetorian system.

In order to adapt to these diverse political arrangements, praetorian armies operate along the spectrum of the aforementioned types. These types reflect the exact political role a praetorian army elects to play at any given point. The spectrum stretches from a situation of taking a back seat to observe and monitor the civilians' performance, all the way to taking direct control of all the levers of power, and partaking not only in decision-making, but also in policy implementation. Amos Perlmutter (1974) had proposed two types of praetorian armies: arbitrators and rulers. He suggested the arbitrator type is professional, non-Partisan and non-ideological. It imposes term limits on its own rule and arranges to hand over government to an "acceptable civilian regime." We can see parallels between this description and the course of actions that the SCAF had adopted from February 2011- June 2013 one year into Mohamed Morsi's presidency. It should be noted that the arbitrator army does not relinquish political power and influence upon returning to the barracks, but rather acts as a "trustee and guardian of civilian authority and political stability... If the conditions for the return of a civilian regime are not fulfilled, an arbitrator army may eventually become a ruler army"[26] (Perlmutter 1974, 8)

The second type is the ruler type, in which the army is expected to form an independent political organization, such as the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) after 1954, and a fairly coherent and elaborate political ideology (pan-Arab socialism, also in the 1950s and early 1960s). In the recent Egyptian case, that ideology is characterized by a profound antipathy towards political Islam, a mission of combating Islamists of all stripes and an emphasis on hyper-nationalism. Perlmutter further elaborates that "the ruler army is not committed to a time limit on its own rule; nor does it make any provisions for its eventual return to the barracks" (Perlmutter 1978, 8). This is because they have come to thoroughly distrust civilians as a ruling class. By the time the army intervenes, "the civilians have demonstrated their inability to control the situation" (Perlmutter 1978, 18). The army capitalizes on a lack of cohesion among political and social actors, and exploits the existing disorder among civilians to establish its own "political organization" (Ibid, 19). To consolidate its rule, the author argues the army resorts to one-man rule who authority stems primarily from the military's continued support (Ibid, 16).

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[26] The following chapters would shed light on the reasons the military deemed Morsi's presidency too dangerous for the praetorian system in Egypt.

An even more useful dissection of types of praetorianism is in table I below, where Nordlinger proposes a more inclusive typology of three types of praetorian armies (thus allowing for a wider range of the spectrum). (Nordlinger 1977, 22):

	Moderators	*Guardians*	*Rulers*
Extent of Power	Veto	Governmental Control	Regime Dominance
Political and Economic Objectives	Preserve Status Quo	Preserve Status Quo and/or correct malpractices and deficiencies	Effect Political Change and sometimes socioeconomic change

Table I

(Types of Praetorian Armies)

Argentina provides a good example of a country where the army switches its role from moderators to rulers, as a result of evolving political conditions. Between 1959 amd1962, the Argentinian army made several demands of President Frondizi to replace certain cabinet ministers and replace them with others more palatable to the officers, break diplomatic relations with Cuba and crackdown on the activities of the Communist parties. The president agreed to about half of their demands (Finer 1962, 167-169). However the President's decision to allow the working-class *peronistas* to contest the elections, and their ensuing impressive victory, precipitated the 1962 coup, where the army moved subsequently to the status of guardian/ruler (Nordlinger 1977, 23).

Moderators are generally content with the prevailing civilian-led political arrangement, and exercise their power primarily through infrequent objections to forthcoming government policies. They consider themselves to have a "duty to arbitrate or veto...In this conception the armed forces are not to merge into the public authorities but to remain distinct and outside them but with the power to intervene against them" (Finer 1962, 31). As Mietzner (2008, 12-13) notes: "they have enough institutional powers to judge the performance of civilian governments and remove them if deemed necessary." This role is called in Spanish public law *poder*

moderador, or the 'moderating power' (Finer 1962, 31). *Guardians*, on the other hand, believe that the goals of preserving the status quo and amending the mistakes of the previous administration can only be accomplished through their own government control. "Military officers are on the whole reluctant to take the reins of government into their own hands. That the guardians do so is partly attributable to the belief that they have no alternative in the absence of an elite group capable of preserving the political and economic status quo, or that without a takeover, power would gravitate towards political elites whose goals are at odds with those of the military" (Nordlinger 1977, 24-25).

Nordlinger (1977, 142) further illuminates the reasons that compel the military to enter the realm of governance: "[m]any praetorians took up the reins of government with little enthusiasm. Most of them would probably have much preferred to remain in the barracks if their objectives, particularly the defense or enhancement of the military's corporate interests, could have been realized from that vantage point." Under this model, the military may elect to play the role of a "king-maker" adjudicating the competition amongst several political groups, and conferring power to one of them in return for concessions (Mietzner 2008, 13).

Rulers not only control the government, but dominate the regime. Their political and economic goals are remarkably ambitious, which leads sometimes to their labeling as 'modernizers' or 'revolutionaries.' (Nordlinger 1977, 26) They also seek eliminate all centers of contestation in order to monopolize power, be they monarchies, oligarchies or political parties. "To remove a traditional oligarchy from government is insufficient without concomitantly neutralizing its power base..." (Ibid, 26-27) *Rulers* typically embark on a much more repressive form of authoritarianism than guardian regimes. Almost all independent political and semi-political organizations get outlawed or have their activities severely restricted, the media is heavily censored and physical punishment more widespread towards any form of opposition.

The Ruling praetorians believe in the need to dominate and penetrate society, the polity and the economy from above with minimal societal input (Ibid). Mietzner (2008, 12) crucially adds that under praetorian government, "the military is the main component of the regime, and all other institutions are under its control. Executive, legislature, and judiciary are either directly occupied by members of the armed forces or by loyalist civilians." They rule according to emergency laws or tailored regulations. In an extreme case, such as Egypt under Sisi, the government operates extra-constitutionally, insofar that it does not even need to amend or suspend the constitution, but proceeds to ignore it with impunity.

Whereas the classical literature on praetorianism discusses these notions as discreet types, this dissertation proposes that there is, in fact, fluidity among the three types. A military moves from one type to another to secure and maximize its interests as well as the odds for the survival and prosperity of the overall praetorian system. For example, within the span of four years (2010-2013), the EAF switched its type from moderator under Mubarak to Guardian, following Mubarak's downfall and under Morsi, and, finally, to ruler with the coup of July 3rd, 2013. It may yet decide to change its type down the road, but that depends on whether it can build or find an acceptable civilian alternative.

Civil-Military Relations in a Praetorian Setting

Peter D. Feaver (2003: 1) once wondered as to why civilians at all come to control the military: "given that military institutions enjoy an overwhelming advantage in coercive power, how is it that civilian institutions are able to impose their will on their more powerful military agents?"[27] He went on to lay out the *problematique* as follows: "the very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity" (Feaver 2003, 4). Like Feaver, Finer (1962, 4) urges scholars to stop asking why militaries decide to engage in politics, but rather "why they ever do otherwise." He goes on to explain that of all political actors, the army is the most suited to assume power, as it has "three massive political advantages over civilian organization: a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms...The wonder, therefore, is not why this rebels against its civilian masters, but why it ever obeys them" (Finer 1962, 5).

Militaries jeopardize, hence, the rule of civilians by virtue of their possession of arms with which they can forcefully take over the government. Militaries, furthermore, and due to the nature of their missions, harbor some of the most undemocratic norms and values of any state institution (Kohn 1997, 141). The threat the armed forces pose to civilian rule is not, therefore, unique to praetorian states. To be sure, there are serious limitations on any given military's behavior. Their ability to sustain their takeover of government, for instance, becomes insurmountably difficult, if they solely rely on physical compulsion (Finer 1962, 16). To cement their hold on power militaries must seek a form of legitimacy through including civilians in some capacity, however limited.

It is beyond the scope or goal of this research to offer a comprehensive account of the civil-military relations literature. However, it is imperative to obtain an understanding of the 'civilian control' concept, and assess how it applies, if at all, to cases of praetorian rule, and posit

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[27] Thomas Bruneau and Scott Tollefson (2006: 1) similarly wondered as to "who guards the guardians."

an alternative notion of 'military control.' Welch (1976, 2) defines civilian control as one of "setting limits within which members of the armed forces, and the military as an institution accept the government's definition of appropriate areas of responsibility."[28] While this definition may apply to most cases, a praetorian army would almost unilaterally set political objectives for the state, and devise means to maximize its institutional interests, achieve organizational autonomy, and promote and implement its doctrinal beliefs. This is why we should not conflate praetorianism with authoritarianism; authoritarian regimes, particularly dynastic personalistic and one-party states, may well enjoy a remarkable degree of civilian control over the armed forces. This is achieved through any number of coup-proofing tactics that effectively subordinate the generals to civilians in positions of power. In these cases, the military is mostly subjected to 'subjective civilian control.' In praetorian states, on the other hand, the concept of civilian control proves insufficient to explain the underlying nature of the relationship between governing civilians and ruling generals. We may as well supplant that concept with a novel notion of *military control* by which we may gauge the extent of military control over civilians rather than the other way around.

The Political Science literature offers three chief conceptual models of civil-military relations that generally correspond with regime types: The Democratic, the Authoritarian and the Praetorian. First, in a Democratic model, elected officeholders exercise *de jure* and *de facto* control over the military. These civilians have the ultimate say in matters of national security, foreign policy, decisions of war and peace, the budget of the army, and may appoint civilians in the post of minister of defense. The army is constitutionally obligated to abstain from participating in politics, and obliged to obey civilians' orders (Dahl 1971, 221) through what Samuel Huntington (1957) had labelled 'objective civilian control.' Needless to say the military in this model harbors a culture of respect for the political leaders and political non-intervention (Finer 1975).

Objective control, which we can also call democratic control, is not confined to power relations between civilian institutions, on the one hand, and the military, on the other. It should be an institutional process through which elected civilians regulate and sanction the size, structure, function and use of the armed forces (Callaghan and Kuhlmann 2002, 4). Droz-Vincent (2014b, 708) described democratic control as "the removal of the military from power positions outside the defense area...and the appointment (and acceptance by military hierarchies) of civilian seniority in defense areas." This process should take shape through such

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[28] Ultimately, the best indicator for whether civilians or the military have the upper hand and thus 'control' is who emerges victorious, when their interests and preferences diverge (Desch 2001).

measures as transparent parliamentary review of military budgets (Born 2003), the appointment of civilians in the post of defense minister (Page 1992, 174) and (Fedorov 2002, 16) as well as the inclusion of the media and civil society in discussing defense policy and how to carry it out (Mietzner 2008, 6).

Under the authoritarian model, civilians may enjoy supremacy over the army, but not as a result of the prevalence of the rule of law or due to normative respect for civilian institutions. In extreme ideological single-party cases, the military may be indoctrinated to embrace the ideology and values of the ruling party (Perlmutter 1982, 310-331), such as the case in the intimate relationship between the Communist Party and the Red Army in China.[29] In most other cases, however, the military is scrupulously kept away from politics, and is subjected to the *de facto* dominance of civilian bodies and leaders.

There are several coup-proofing tactics that authoritarian regimes deploy to neutralize the threat of an army coup or political intervention. These could include centralization of the command structure, frequent reshuffles in senior posts (Kammen and Chandra 1999, 83), ethnic/sectarian appointments (Bou Nassif 2012), building rival armed bodies (Droz-Vincent 2014a), etc. In either case of dominant civilian authority, to be sure, the military engages in politics only to the extent deemed desirable and/or necessary by the civilians in control. It may well be that an authoritarian system could have a weak civilian authority and a powerful military. Since the military is not in charge of the system and does not directly or indirectly rule the country, it cannot be regarded praetorian. In this case, Lasswell's "garrison state" concept of a military having a share in political power is more apt (Lasswell 1941).

Finally, under the praetorian model, the army is a political actor that oversees the political process and vies for power, albeit not invariably with the same desire/need to push civilians aside. Nordlinger (1977, 10) sums up the essence of civil-military relations in praetorian states by asserting that praetorianism is, in fact, the opposite of civilian control. Talking about this relationship in terms of *military control* would be more apt. In this model, otherwise labeled by (Janowitz 1964, 2-8) as "military oligarchy," there is scant subjective or objective civilian control exercised over the armed forces. The military may decide to obey the orders of ruling civilians in some instances, but may also object to other decisions that are incompatible with its vision or interests. More significantly, it retains the *de facto* prerogative to replace or overtake the civilian government when need be.

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[29] Perlmutter, Amos. "Civil-Military Relations in Socialist Authoritarian and Praetorian States: Prospects and Retrospects" in Kolkowicz, R. and Korbonsk, A. (eds.) Soldiers, Peasants, and Bureacracy: Civil-Military Relations in Communist and Modernizing Socieities. G. Allen and Unwin: London, 1982.

Welch (1976, 3) sees the military's general involvement in politics as falling at different intervals of a continuum, which begins with *military influence* (when there is civilian control both objective and subjective) to *military participation* (in garrison state situations) to *military control (with some civilian partners)* to finally *military control (without partners)*. Military control is evident in praetorian states, and if the army opts to partner with civilians, it is a guardian or a moderator army. If the army decides not to partner with civilians, it is a ruler. In other words, under *military control*, civilian control has disappeared, where the government is unable to supervise or oversee the military's activities or even define its "functions and functioning" (Welch 1976, 4-5). Should the government infringe upon the military's prerogatives, the military supplants that government either through partnerships or through a direct military junta rule.

Huntington (1968, 196) attributes this phenomenon to the prevalence of feeble civilian institutions, and the absence of "professional political leaders...recognized and accepted as legitimate intermediaries to moderate group conflicts." Indeed, the argument that the incompetence and illegitimacy of civilian groups and leaders drives the military to take charge of politics finds support in Luckham (1971, 16-17) who contends that weak civilian authorities prompts armies to "both take a wider role in political allocations, *and* is exposed to greater political pressures to do so from outside political groups wishing to co-opt the means of violence to support their interests." Additionally, civilian authorities would often under this model refrain from interference in the internal affairs of the military, since that would typically engender interventionist moves by the army (Nordlinger 1977, 71).

Table III should portray how the pertinent configurations of regime type and power of civilian and military authorities impact civil-military relations. In Democratic countries, where civilian power is high, and military power is either high or low, there is civilian objective control. In Authoritarian regimes, where civilian power is high, and the military's is either high or low, the result is subjective control. However, if civilian power is low, and the military's is high, the result is a garrison state model. Also, if civilian power is low, and so is the military's, there is political vacuum. Finally, civilian power is never high in praetorian states (and military power is never low), but when civilian power is low, and the military's is high, the result is military control with a ruler-type army. When civilian power is low, and the military's is medium, the outcome is military control through a guardian state. Finally, if the civilian power is medium, and the military's is medium as well, we should have the weakest form of military control, where the generals play the role of moderators:

Regime Type	Civilian Power	Military Power	Type of Civil-Military Relations
Democratic	High	High/Low	Objective/Democratic Control
Authoritarian	High	Low	Subjective Control
Authoritarian	High	High	Subjective Control (Military Influence)
Authoritarian	Low	High	Military Participation (Garrison State)
Authoritarian	Low	Low	Political Vacuum
Praetorian	Low	High	*Military Control* (Rulers without Partners)
Praetorian	Low	Medium	*Military Control* (Guardians with Partners)
Praetorian	Medium	Medium	*Military Control* (Moderators)

Table II

(Configurations of Regime Type, Civilian and Military Powers, and types of Civil-Military Relations)

The abiding predominance of military power vis-à-vis civilian power in praetorian settings render them particularly unconducive to producing successful democratic transitions, in the case of a breakdown of civilian authoritarian structures. Elections in these countries may produce elected officials and institutions, but their powers are inherently curtailed and monitored by the military. Mietzner (2008, 5) is cognizant of this impediment, and warns: "[M]ilitaries that have supported, participated in, or dominated authoritarian regimes are likely to be crucial players in the transition, trying to preserve as many of their previous political and institutional privileges as possible." They do so by controlling the very transitional process, even

if allowing civilian groups to partake in that process to bestow legitimacy upon it. Indeed, whether or not 'civilian control' is achieved during a tumultuous transition can be the critical determinant of the success or failure of that transition (O'Donnell et al. 1986, 32), (Cottey et al. 2002, 4). Phillipe Droz-Vincent (2014b, 697) warns that "[a]n essential factor in the successful transition from authoritarian to democratic rule is the establishment of democratic civil-military relations."

To be sure, the odds of securing civilian control during a transition are much higher, if they are of the objective/democratic kind (Mietzner 2008, 6). This should be all the more evident in praetorian states, where the army, much more powerful than civilians, would not agree to become a tool of or subservient to an elected president or a majority party. To reduce the military's sensitivity in this respect, an "institutionalized system of checks and balances" is required to allay the army's apprehension that "a single political actor can gain monopolistic power over the military" (Ibid).

In Egypt's case, the first attempts at controlling the military by elected civilians during the 'democratic' transition did not in fact meet the criteria for objective/democratic control, since the military retained virtually all of its powers and autonomy in the country's short-lived 2012 constitution. Under that document, the military shielded its budget from parliamentary oversight, banned civilians from holding the post of minister of defense and enshrined the principle of trying civilians before military courts. The attempts, rather, were subjective coming through Morsi's backroom deals to replace the SCAF's hostile leadership with one he thought would be more acquiescent. What is more, the overwhelming rise of Morsi's Freedom and Justice Party gave reason to the army to fear that it may seek to perform that aforementioned "monopolistic power" (Ibid). With unsystematic attempts for subjective control thwarted by the powerful praetorian institution, the Morsi-selected military leadership proceeded to overthrow him in a coup less than a year after their appointment. This demonstrates the skewed nature of civil-military relations in a praetorian country going through a transition: a fact of which new civilian authorities should have been acutely cognizant.