SUMMER SCHOOL IN GLOBAL POLITICS, DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY 2018

The military and politics in the Middle East

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Date: June 25 - 29

Time: 5.00 pm - 7.00 pm

Room: 24.224 - Mercè Rodoreda Building 24 (Floor 2)

The core topic of this course will be the role of an essential and yet frequently forgotten pillar of political regimes in the Middle East, the military.

The course will first deal with armies in the state, the rise of post-independence armies, the politicization of the officer corps in the hectic context of great Arab-Israeli wars in the Middle East. That essential background was formative in various polities with the crucial role of coups d’état or at least in other cases the looming threat of coups.

Then, the course will give keys to understand another long period, that of armies under enduring authoritarian regimes: the armed forces adapted themselves to this new setting and defined their new relations with regimes, often made up of political quietism compensated with strong privileges and privileged access to core decision-making circles.

It will thereafter offer glimpses into the post-2011 period where the armed forces, along with another very different intervening factor, namely huge social mobilizations against authoritarian rule, proved crucial actors for the fate of regimes and the re-formation of new kinds of regimes in cases when incumbents were overthrown. And in 2018, armies or what remain from them are key actors at least in Egypt, Libya, Yemen or Syria.
Session 1. Introduction: armies, regimes, militarization

- Why study the military in the Arab World, is it crucial?

- How I approach the topic? = I'm not interested in military history, battles, military build-ups... you should go back to historians or strategic yearbooks... though important these elements are, this is not the way I approach the topic, cf remarks by M Shaw (Theories of the New Western Way of War): the need to understand the broader, deeper concept of warfare as a type of power, and relations with the state, regime, society, the economy etc.

I don’t have any ambition to be exhaustive in the case studies, I just take a few ones, but will deal with many others in the first two sessions when setting a few hypotheses to understand Arab armies.

**Hypothesis (1): the military and the state**

History matters, Arab armies have been constructed over a period of several decades in specific relations with the state

**Required reading:**


Session 2. Hypothesis (2): the military and regimes

Arab armies have built in specific relations with regimes (as differentiated from states cf G O'Donnell). They have been deeply embedded in power structures at all levels: from the presidency or throne down to the level of urban neighborhoods and rural villages. They are embedded in power structures.

Their relations with police/security forces.

Their relation to societies and their functioning as social welfare systems for core constituencies.

**Required reading:**

Robert Springborg, Egypt, Polity, 2017, ch 2
H Kandil, Soldiers, Spies and Statesmen, Verso, 2012, ch 5


**Hypothesis (3): armies and revolutions (2011-12) and regime reformation**

Changes in 2011, it was induced by other factors, but the military played a key role in drawing post-uprising trajectories.

**Required reading:**

Roger Owen, The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life, Harvard UP, pp 44-48

Yezid Sayigh, Above the State, The Officers’ Republic in Egypt, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (website), 2012


**Session 3. Case studies 1 and 2: the exception, Tunisia and the trendsetting case, Egypt**

**Required reading:**


**Session 4. Case study 3: Libya**

How we ended up with such a fragmentation, also parallels with Yemen
Required reading:

L Anderson, “They defeated all us”, *The Middle East Journal*, 71(2), Spring 2017


Philippe Droz-Vincent, “Competitive Statehood in Libya”, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 29(3), 2018

Session 5. Case study 4: Syria

How did the regime resist?

Required reading:

N Van Dam, *Destroying Syria*, Tauris, 2017, pp 24-47 and 105-115


Ph Droz-Vincent, “Syria, state of barbary (take two): from the Arab Spring to the return of violence”, *The Middle East Journal*, Volume 68, Number 1, Winter 2014 , pp. 33-58

Conclusion

What prospects for demilitarization, civilian control?

Required reading:

Ph Droz-Vincent, “Prospects for the democratic control of the armed forces, comparative lessons for the Arab World”, *Armed Forces and Society*, October 2014