The army is a crucial institution within the state. Charles Tilly highlights the link between war making and state making in the Western European context. According to Tilly, engaging in wars led monarchs to create armies and eventually to exercise a monopoly over the use of violence, a key element of the state-building process. Outside this region, things evolved in a different way, especially in countries that were the result of decolonization. In such countries, the army was an external element that did not result from the development of society but was rather created by the colonial powers. Despite this reality, armies have played a very important role in developing countries, where they are often perceived as the most reliable institutions and as an element of stability and development.

In this class, we will analyze the role of military institutions in the Middle East by combining theoretical and empirical perspectives. On the theoretical level, different aspects will be addressed: specificities of the military institution, civil-military relations, decision-making process on security issues, monopoly over the use of legitimate force, interactions between different state (and non-state) actors, states’ reactions to new forms of threats, etc. To illustrate these issues, different examples will be analyzed in depth, from the most “emblematic” ones (Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Iraq) to less studied cases (Lebanon, Gulf countries). We will use comparisons with Asian and Latin American countries to show their differences and similarities with Middle Eastern countries.

This class offers an original approach to Middle Eastern states through the study of the role of military institutions.

23/01/2014 - First session: Introduction

- Students’ and professor’s presentation
- Brief introduction to the course
- Explanation of work methods and modes of validation
- Distribution of work
30/01/2014 - Second session: The role of the military institution

Oral presentation: historical and theoretical analysis of the role of the military and the specificities of the military in the Middle East


Part I: The military in Politics

06/02/2014 - Third session: Civil-Military relations

Oral presentation: Comparative analysis of different types of civil-military relations in the Middle East


13/02/2014 - Fourth session: The army as a political actor

Oral presentation: The political role of the army in Egypt and Algeria

Recommended readings: Cook, Steven A., Ruling, but not governing: the military and political development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey, Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007 (Chapter 1: “Ruling, But Not Governing: A Logic of Regime Stability”)

20/02/2014 - Fifth session: Democracy and military coups

Oral presentation: Coups d’Etat: the Turkish democracy at stake


06/03/2014 - Sixth session: The army as a tool to preserve the regime

Oral presentation: The role of the army in Syria and in Iraq (under Saddam Hussein)

Part II: Military institutions, Nation-building and State building

13/03/2014 - Seventh session: Military institutions and plural societies

Oral presentation: Comparative study between Lebanon and Iraq

Recommended readings: Koekenbier, Pieter, “Multietnic Armies. Lebanese Lessons and Iraqi Implications, June 2005, Middle East Series, 05/31

20/03/2014 - Eighth session: War making and state making in the Gulf

Oral presentation: Building the army, building the state? The case of the United Arab Emirates


Part III: The regional environment

27/03/2014 - Ninth session: Military balance in the Middle East

Oral presentation: The Arab armies and the Arab-Israeli conflict

Recommended readings: Cordesman, Anthony, Military Balance in the Middle East, Westport, Praeger, 2004 (Chapter 2: “The Changing Face of the Middle East Military Balance”)

03/04/2014 - Tenth session: Security in the Gulf region

Oral presentation: Facing the Iranian “threat”, defense strategies in the Gulf region


Oral presentation: The new missions of the armies in the Middle East

Recommended readings: Sayegh, Yezid, “Fixing Broken Windows”: Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen”, Carnegie Papers, N 17, October 2009
17/04/2014 - Twelfth session: Conclusion

Final exam
General conclusion

Modes of Validation

**40% a 20-minutes oral presentation (to be presented in pairs):** presenters must provide hard copies of a detailed presentation outline with a bibliography.

**30% final exam during the last session**

**20% press review presented in pairs (15 min)**

**10% in-class participation:** only relevant participation is counted

Selective bibliography


GERVAIS, Victor, “Shielding the state: UAE military efforts to counter Iran’s disruptive options in the Gulf”, Paris papers, IRSEM, 2012, N 7

GUASZONE, Laura, PIOPPI, Daniela, *The Arab State and Neo-liberal Globalization, the Restructuring of State Power in the Middle East*, Reading, Ithaca Press, 2009


KOEKENBIER, Pieter, “Multiethnic Armies. Lebanese Lessons and Iraqi Implications”, June 2005, Middle East Series, 05/31


SAYEGH, Yezid, “‘Fixing Broken Windows’: Security Sector Reform in Palestine, Lebanon, and Yemen”, Carnegie Papers, N 17, October 2009

SAYEGH, Yezid, “Above the State. The Officer’s Republic in Egypt”, The Carnegie Papers, August 2012

SCHLUMBERGER, Oliver, Arab authoritarianism : dynamics and durability in nondemocratic regimes, Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, c2007
