



## ABSTRACT BOOK

Istanbul University  
Faculty of Economics  
Department of Political Science and  
International Relations

7-9 May 2026





International Conferences on Regional Politics (ICRP):  
Middle East  
Abstract Book

Editors:

Muharrem Hilmi Özev      Serdar Taşçı  
Nurbanu Yaşar      Hakan Morçişek



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## **About International Conferences On Regional Politics (ICRP)**

International Conferences on Regional Politics (ICRP) is organized by the Department of Political Science and International Relations of Istanbul University's Faculty of Economics. ICRP seeks each year to convene experts on a common platform by selecting a different geographic theme. The theme for the 2026 conference has been designated as the Middle East.

The principal objectives of the conference are:

- To bring together scholars from various disciplines—foremost Political Science, International Relations, and Security Studies—within a shared forum for discussion.
- To evaluate recent developments in critical areas such as conflict dynamics, alliance structures, energy policies, migration flows, and social movements in the Middle East.
- To enrich the literature by publishing selected outstanding papers presented at the conference in peer-reviewed journals or in a conference volume bearing an ISBN, thereby providing original data and new theoretical frameworks.
- To formulate concrete and practical policy recommendations concerning the region's challenges in peace, security, and development

## Foreword

The Middle East has long been one of the most active and complex regions in world politics. Today, it is more than a regional arena; it has become a space where the future shape of the global order is quietly being formed. In this sense, the region resembles a living laboratory—restless, layered, and full of unfolding possibilities.

Within this context, the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Istanbul University’s Faculty of Economics has organized this conference as part of the International Conferences on Regional Politics (ICRP). The aim is to revisit the Middle East’s many dimensions at a time when both regional and global dynamics are changing with unusual speed.

The theme of the conference, “The Middle East: Rethinking Regional and Global Perspectives,” invites us to look beyond immediate events. It encourages us to see how local developments echo across borders and shape wider global patterns. From energy policies to security structures, from migration flows to climate and water-related challenges, the discussions gathered here trace a wide and interconnected landscape.

This Abstract Book brings together contributions from scholars of different disciplines. Each paper offers its own insight, yet together they form a broader conversation—one that seeks not only to understand but also to connect ideas across fields. All submissions have been carefully reviewed through a double-blind peer review process, ensuring both academic rigor and intellectual integrity. In this way, the volume stands as a reliable and thoughtful contribution to ongoing scholarly work.

We extend our sincere thanks to the researchers who shared their work, to the reviewers whose careful readings strengthened each contribution, and to the organizing team whose dedication made this conference possible.

In a city like Istanbul—where histories, cultures, and ideas have long met and intertwined—we hope this gathering will inspire new reflections on peace, security, and sustainable development. May it also open paths for continued dialogue and collaboration across disciplines and borders.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muharrem Hilmi Özev

**SECTION 1**

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**11:15-12:15**

**SESSION 1, DOCTORAL HALL**

**Session Program**

**AbdelQadir Houti**

*British Security Policy and State Formulation in Transjordan (1930-1956): The Arab Legion Military Discipline and Political Constrain*

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**Serra Can**

*Soviet Hierarchy during the Cold War: The Tale of Middle Eastern Subordinates*

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**Orhan Hayal and Muhammet Salih Kahraman**

*A "Good Neighbor" for the Middle East: Constructing Türkiye as a Development Mediator in the Early Cold War*

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**Hassan Abdullah Al-Dajah**

*Peacebuilding and Diplomacy in the Middle East*

## **British Security Policy and State Formulation in Transjordan (1930-1956): The Arab Legion between Military Discipline and Political Constrain**

*AbdelQadir Houti (University of Kalba, United Arab Emirates)*

This paper appraises the role of the British security policy in building the state in Transjordan between 1930 and 1956, and specifically, the Arab Legion as one of the best examples of a military and political institution. It studies British imperial policies, according to which security arrangements were used not only to maintain the stability of the region but also to help in the establishment of the state apparatus in the major geopolitical space of the Middle East. The key inquiry that the current research will set out to answer is just how far British military structure helped the unification of the Transjordan state and at the same time assessing the constraints set by local politics and international forces. The present paper will be written using a historical political approach based on archival British documents, official documents, and eyewitness testimonies as an effort to trace the history of the Arab Legion under the leadership of John Bagot Glubb (Glubb Pasha). The particular emphasis is placed on the principal crises, including the Iraqi Revolt of 1941 and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, to examine the relations between the military discipline and the political decision-making process, and the imperial limitations. The discussion shows that the Arab Legion was more than a military unit, it was a government machine, which played the role of controlling its borders, stabilization of the country, and the institutionalization of Transjordan. This paper concludes that the British security policy in Transjordan was only riddled with the structural contradictions and it was maintaining imperialistic interests with a gradual accriment of local sovereignty. Placing Transjordan into context regarding regional and global politics, the given research paper will make its contribution to the debates concerning the topic of regional security, colonial authority, and the historical backgrounds of the modern state-building on the territory of the Middle East. Also, the work provides some knowledge about the changing role of local sovereignty and how the British influence affected the Transjordan political situation in the long run.

**Keywords:** regional security, state formation, British Imperial policy, Transjordan, Arab Legion, Middle East politics

## Soviet Hierarchy during the Cold War: The Tale of Middle Eastern Subordinates

*Serra Can (Sakarya University, Türkiye)*

While America's informal empire in the Middle East or previous colonial orders under the British and the French have been extensively studied, the existence of a Soviet order in the Middle East is not commonplace. However, bipolarity during the Cold War also penetrated the Middle East region and enabled the Soviets, aside from the US, to establish their own security hierarchy. Radical Arab states such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and South Yemen joined the Soviet security order. To benefit from the latter, they subordinated to the Soviet Union and accepted Moscow as their security patron. Much is known about Soviet hierarchy in Eastern Europe and American hierarchy in Latin America but why Middle Eastern states accepted the Soviet Union as their patron remains underexamined. By investigating their subordinate motivations in seeking shelter under the Soviet security umbrella, this study sheds light on how Soviet order in the Middle East evolved, persisted, and fell apart. The study draws on David A. Lake's theory of hierarchy.

**Keywords:** Subordinate motivations, hierarchy theory, Soviet patron, Middle East, security order

## A “Good Neighbor” for the Middle East: Constructing Türkiye as a Development Mediator in the Early Cold War

*Orhan Hayal (Türkiye) and Muhammet Salih Kahraman (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

In the early Cold War, U.S. policymakers increasingly sought to position Türkiye as a regional mediator through which development initiatives could be conveyed to the Middle East. This article examines how Türkiye was constructed as a regional mediator through which institutional practices and reform models could be conveyed to the Middle East. After 1945, American officials came to believe that the direct transfer of U.S. or West European administrative frameworks into newly independent Arab states would likely encounter political resistance and legitimacy concerns. Türkiye appeared to offer a more adaptable alternative: a Muslim-majority country shaped by selective modernization, closely connected to Western strategic networks, and perceived as culturally proximate to neighboring societies. Drawing on diplomatic correspondence and policy debates, the study reconstructs how a “Good Neighbor” analogy, adapted from earlier U.S. hemispheric experience, informed development diplomacy in the region. This strategy materialized through institutional channels centered in Ankara. Administrative training at the Türkiye and Middle East Institute of Public Administration (TODAIE), technical education at the Middle East Technical University (METU), and UN-supported infrastructure programs facilitated the cross-border circulation of administrative techniques and professional norms. As decolonization advanced, Arab nationalism and resistance to Western-backed regional arrangements reshaped the interpretation of these initiatives. Türkiye’s diplomatic positioning further narrowed the political space for accepting its intermediary role. The article argues that while this experiment expanded opportunities for technical cooperation, it also exposed the political constraints that shaped the reception of Cold War development initiatives.

**Keywords:** Türkiye, US foreign policy, Cold War development, knowledge translation

## Peacebuilding and Diplomacy in the Middle East

*Hassan Abdullah Al-Dajah (Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Jordan)*

This paper aims to address the topic of peacebuilding and diplomacy in the Middle East, a key focus of political studies and international relations, given the complexity of the geopolitical structure and the intertwining of domestic and foreign interests. The region suffers from protracted conflicts, ranging from sectarian to political and economic disputes, making it a testing ground for multi-level peace mechanisms. Conflicts are not limited to disputes between states; they also include internal conflicts fueled by social divisions and competing identities. A descriptive-analytical approach will be used to study concepts and variables, their relationship to the factors influencing peace in the Middle East, and to analyze their dimensions to extract conclusions and recommendations. Diplomatic efforts aim to overcome these crises through negotiation, mediation, and the application of international legal tools, with a focus on addressing the deep roots of the conflict. Experience has shown that formal agreements alone are not sufficient to ensure lasting peace unless they are supported by development programs and political and institutional reforms. The lack of trust between the parties and the weakness of the institutional structure often lead to fragility and collapse of agreements.

On the other hand, regional and international interventions, along with ongoing humanitarian crises, pose major challenges to the peacebuilding process. Nevertheless, the presence of effective international and regional organizations, in addition to popular and community initiatives, opens new horizons for enhancing opportunities for coexistence. Combining formal and informal diplomacy (Track II Diplomacy) with investment in sustainable development represents a promising path to establishing long-term stability in the region. Therefore, true peace in the Middle East requires integrating political solutions with economic and social dimensions to ensure broader justice and more lasting stability.

**Keywords:** Peacebuilding, diplomacy, Middle East, conflicts & mediation

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**11:15-12:15**

**SESSION 2, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Elif Tuğçe Kurt**

*19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Orta Doğusu'nu Belgelemek: Yıldız Sarayı Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu'nda Bulunan 779-44 Numaralı Fotoğraf Albümü Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme*

**Mehmet Fahri Danış**

*Mitin Ezgisi: Feyruz'un Müziğinde Lübnan'ın Kurucu Anlatıları*

**Ayşe Ersay**

*Görsel İktidar ve Pan-İslamizm: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı Sanatında Ortadoğu İmgesi*

**Gökçe Arslan**

*Çatışma Çözümünde Kadınların Rolü: "Peki Şimdi Nereye" Filmi Örneği*

## 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Orta Doęusu'nu Belgelemek: Yıldız Sarayı Fotoęraf Koleksiyonu'nda Bulunan 779-44 Numaralı Fotoęraf Albümü Üzerine Bir Deęerlendirme

*Elif Tuęçe Kurt (Yıldız Teknik University, Türkiye)*

Bu alıřma, Yıldız Sarayı Fotoęraf Koleksiyonu'nda yer alan ve 779-44 numarasıyla kayıtlı 209 fotoęraftan oluřan albümü, 19. yüzyılda Osmanlı Orta Doęusu'nun tarihsel, mekânsal ve kültürel deęerlerini belgeleyen bir görsel kaynak olarak ele almaktadır. Albüm, 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında İstanbul ve Beyrut merkezli faaliyet gösteren ve bölgenin önde gelen fotoęrafçılarından kabul edilen Tancredé Dumas tarafından hazırlanmıştır. Albümün Yıldız Sarayı'na hangi kořullarda dâhil edildięi kesin olarak bilinmemekle birlikte sipariř, hediye ya da farklı dolařım kanallarıyla saray arřivine girmiř olması mümkündür. Bu belirsizlik, albümün tek yönlü bir temsil aracı olarak deęil, dönemin belgeleme pratięi ierisinde deęerlendirilmesini gerekli kılar. Albümün coęrafi kapsamı Akka, Hayfa, Nasıra, Nablus, Lazkiye, Trablusřam ve Beyrut gibi merkezlere uzanmakta; idari-askerî yapılar, eęitim kurumları, dini mekânlar, altyapı unsurları ve antik kalıntılar gibi temaları iermektedir. Bu yönüyle alıřma, söz konusu albümün II. Abdülhamid dönemi fotoęraf arřivcilięi baęlamındaki deęerini tartıřmaya açmakta ve Osmanlı Orta Doęusu'nun çok katmanlı yapısına dair görsel tarih alıřmaları için katkı sunmayı amalamaktadır.

**Keywords:** Osmanlı Orta Doęusu, Yıldız Sarayı Fotoęraf Koleksiyonu, Tancredé Dumas, 19. yüzyılda fotoęraf

## Mitin Ezgisi: Feyruz'un Müziğinde Lübnan'ın Kurucu Anlatıları

*Mehmet Fahri Danış (Atatürk University, Türkiye)*

Her ulus-devlet, kendi mevcudiyet tarzını ve ideal kimlik sınırlarını popülerleştirmek, onu mümkün kılan “kurucu mit”i halk nezdinde somutlaştırmak için belli birtakım araçları kullanmak ister. Ortadoğu’da çevresindeki diğer siyasi birimlerden farklı, istisnai bir ulus-devlet örneği olarak Lübnan; kendi original mevcudiyetini Fenike mitine, yani Lübnanlıların Arap, Suriyeli ya da Doğulu değil Batılı, Akdenizli, “medeni” bir kavim olarak Fenikelilere dayandığı tezine dayandırır. Bu haliyle Lübnanlı olmak Fenikeli olmaya eşitlenirken belli birtakım gelenekler, kurucu anlatılar olarak bu mit temelinde anlam kazanır. Bu çalışmada Lübnan’ı ve Lübnanlılığı mümkün kılan kurucu anlatıların popüler kültür alanında üretimi ve dolaşıma sokulması, Feyruz ve Rahbani Kardeşler’in müziği üzerinden incelenmektedir. Özellikle 1950’lerden itibaren Baalbek Festivali’nde sahnelenen müziklerde köy yaşamının idealleştirilmesi, birlikte yaşama geleneğinin kutsanması ve bireysel fedakarlık gibi temalar öne çıkmıştır. Kısa zamanda müzik sınırlarını aşarak ulusal bir sembol haline gelen Feyruz’un icrasıyla görünürlük kazanan ve adeta “gerçeğin yerini alan bir temsil” haline dönüşen kurucu motifler, Lübnanlılığın anlamının değiştiği dönemlerde de bu dönüşümlerin takip edilebileceği bir forma dönüşmüştür. Bu bağlamda öncelikle Baalbek Festivalleri boyunca Feyruz ve Rahbani Kardeşlerin performanslarında somutlaşan ideal Lübnanlılık imgesi üzerinde durulacaktır. Ardından 1960’lı yıllarda Lübnan’ın yaşadığı Şihabist dönem boyunca Feyruz’un müziği, Lübnanlılığın geçirdiği değişimler ekseninde yorumlanacaktır. Daha kapsamlı ve Hristiyan olmayan Lübnanlıların da dahil edilmeye çalışıldığı bu “modernleşme” sürecinde, Feyruz’un müziğindeki belli başlı temaların nasıl okunabileceği tartışılacaktır. Son olarak Feyruz’un ününün Lübnan sınırlarını aşıp Arapça konuşulan dünyada başlıca öncü bir fenomene dönüşmesi, yine onun eserlerindeki motifler vasıtasıyla ortaya koyulacak ve bunun da esasında Lübnanlılıkla alakalı bir gelenek olduğu ileri sürülecektir.

**Keywords:** Lübnan, Feyruz, Fenike miti, milliyetçilik, popüler kültür

## Görsel İktidar ve Pan-İslamizm: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Osmanlı Sanatında Ortadoğu İmgesi

*Ayşe Ersay (Ankara University, Türkiye)*

II. Abdülhamid dönemi (1876–1909), Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda sanat ve görsel kültürün siyasal iktidarın inşası ve meşrulaştırılmasında merkezi bir rol üstlendiği özgün bir tarihsel evreyi temsil eder. Bu çalışma, II. Abdülhamid'in Pan-İslamist politikaları çerçevesinde Osmanlı sanatında Ortadoğu imgesinin nasıl üretildiğini, yapılandırıldığını ve ideolojik bir araç olarak dolaşıma sokulduğunu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu dönemde Ortadoğu, yalnızca coğrafi bir bölge olarak değil; İslam dünyasının merkezi, halifelik makamının sembolik dayanağı ve Osmanlı imparatorluk kimliğinin görsel bir ifadesi olarak yeniden kurgulanmıştır.

Çalışma, görsel iktidar, temsil rejimleri ve mekânsal hâkimiyet kavramlarına dayanan kuramsal bir çerçeve içinde; fotoğraf, resim, mimarlık ve arkeoloji alanlarını kapsayan disiplinlerarası bir yöntem benimsemektedir. Yıldız Sarayı Fotoğraf Koleksiyonu, saray himayesinde üretilen resimler, mimari projeler ve arkeolojik faaliyetler üzerinden yapılan analizler, Osmanlı'nın Ortadoğu'yu düzenli, kutsal ve yönetilebilir bir alan olarak temsil ettiğini göstermektedir. Çalışma, bu görsel üretimlerin Batı merkezli Oryantalist temsillere alternatif bir imparatorluk görsel söylemi geliştirdiğini savunmaktadır.

**Keywords:** Görsel iktidar, Pan-İslamizm, Osmanlı sanatı, II. Abdülhamid, Ortadoğu temsili

## Çatışma Çözümünde Kadınların Rolü: “Peki Şimdi Nereye?” Filmi Örneği

*Gökçe Arslan (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

Dini ve kültürel kimlik, ahlaki değer farklılıkları, maddi kaynakların paylaşımı, siyasal güç elde etme, kendi kaderini tayin hakkı gibi nedenlerle uzun süren ve yapıcı çözümlere direnç gösteren *zorlu çatışmalar* zamanla siyasal alan dışında insanların gündelik yaşamlarını da etkilemeye başlar. Lübnan’ın mezhep temelli zorlu bir savaş örneği olduğundan yola çıkan bu çalışmanın amacı Lübnan’da geçen “Peki Şimdi Nereye?” film örneği üzerinden uluslararası çatışma çözümü disiplindeki kadın bakış açısının eksikliğini ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaçla eleştirel feminist teoriden yararlanmış ve nitel içerik analizinin yanı sıra görsel ve işitsel doküman analizi yapılmıştır. Kadınların çatışmaların yalnızca mağduru olmadığı aynı zamanda çatışmaları önlemek için mücadele ettikleri; ancak çözüm ve karar mekanizmalarında yer alamadıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Çatışmaların toplumsal cinsiyet boyutu, çatışan taraflar arasında kadınların rolü, çatışmalardan kadınların nasıl etkilendiği ve çatışmalar esnasında hayatta kalabilmek için geliştirdikleri yöntemlerin henüz çatışma çözümü literatüründe derinlemesine ortaya konmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Keywords:** Çatışma çözümü, kadın, feminist uluslararası ilişkiler teorisi, Lübnan, “Peki Şimdi Nereye?” filmi

THURSDAY MAY 7

11:15-12:15

SESSION 3, D3 HALL

### Session Program

**Djilali Maino and Ahmed Barkat**

الحماية الجنائية للسيادة الرقمية في عصر الذكاء الاصطناعي-دراسة في التشريعات الشرق أوسطية

**Selma Bouriah**

عنوان المداخلة: أثر التحولات الرقمية على قيم المواطنة في دول الشرق الأوسط

**Mohammed Senouci**

سياسات إدارة بؤر التوتر في الشرق الأوسط: ما بين الثابت والمتغير " قراءة في واقع صراع القوى الإقليمية ومساعي السلام

**Bouhania Goui**

إصلاح جامعة الدول العربية: تعزيزات قانونية ومؤسسية لتعزيز الفعالية في معالجة الأزمات المتصاعدة في الشرق الأوسط

**Mohamed Shaaban Abdelhamid**

من القطيعة إلى إدارة المصالح: التقارب المصري -التركي في ظل التحولات الإقليمية المتسارعة

## **Criminal Protection of Digital Sovereignty in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Study in Middle Eastern Legislation**

*Djillali Mainou (Tabri Mohamed University, Algeria) and Ahmed Barkat (Tabri Mohamed University, Algeria)*

In the age of artificial intelligence, sovereignty is no longer limited to geography and control of physical borders, but has extended to become a new kind of sovereignty, achieved through control of data and algorithms, as well as control of land and resources. Digital sovereignty represents the state's ability to control digital spaces and protect data and digital infrastructure. Artificial intelligence poses a direct challenge to digital sovereignty, as cyber threats are no longer just traditional intrusions, but have turned into self-learning attacks that cross borders and are capable of affecting the state's structure and information field. All the way to operations of digital influence and manipulation of sovereign decisions. These crimes have become an existential threat to the state, due to their ability to disrupt its institutions, hack its data, or direct its sovereign will. Therefore, criminal law intervention becomes a sovereign necessity and not a regulatory option, which poses multiple problems. To what extent can criminal law constitute an effective mechanism to protect a state's digital sovereignty in the face of threats resulting from artificial intelligence?

Can criminal law achieve a balance between leveraging artificial intelligence and protecting a state's digital sovereignty?

Criminal protection of digital sovereignty is of paramount importance to Middle Eastern countries, especially Arab countries, which are making significant efforts in this area

**Keywords:** Sovereignty, artificial intelligence, criminal law, digital age

## Selma Bouriah

*(Boumerdes University, Algeria)*

عصر التحولات الرقمية التي أثرت على جمع مناحي الحياة الاجتماعية والسياسية والاقتصادية والثقافية، حيث أعادت صياغة علاقة الفرد بالدولة وفق متغيرات جديدة فرضها التطور التكنولوجي والتحول الرقمي. بناء عليه تعالج الدراسة أثر التحولات الرقمية على قيم المواطنة في دول الشرق الأوسط خصوصاً مع بداية العقد الثاني للقرن الواحد والعشرين، بتحليل قيم المواطنة وتأثر التحول الرقمي عليها سواء بالإيجاب أو بالسلب ، ومن ثمة تقديم مقترحات لبناء مواطنة فاعلة .

### **Keywords:**

التحولات الرقمية؛ المواطنة؛ قيم المواطنة؛ دول الشرق الأوسط

## سياسات إدارة بؤر التوتر في الشرق الأوسط ما بين الثابت والمتغير " قراءة في واقع صراع القوى الإقليمية ومساعي السلام

*Mohammed Senouci (University of Algiers 3, Algeria)*

شهدت منطقة الشرق الأوسط في العقدین الأخيرین عدداً كبيراً من الأزمات والنزاعات، كان السبب الرئيسي هو التهديد الوجودي الذي يمثله الاحتلال الإسرائيلي، مما جعل المنطقة مركز بؤر التوتر الأكثر حركية. تركز الدراسة على دور مجلس الأمن وهيئة الأمم المتحدة في إدارة النزاعات، وقياس مدى فعاليتها وسبب تزايد المطالب بإصلاح الهيئة بما يتوافق مع حقوق الشعوب دون الانحياز للقوى العظمى. كما تتناول المداخلة التحولات الجيوسياسية والأمنية ما بعد 11 سبتمبر 2001 والحراك الشعبي العربي، وتأثير تنامي الظواهر اللاتماثلية والجماعات المسلحة في العراق وسوريا واليمن. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن مستقبل إدارة بؤر التوتر يرتبط بقدرة النظام الدولي على التكيف مع التحولات البنوية ودعم آليات التوازن الإقليمي والردع المتبادل.

### **Keywords:**

الشرق الأوسط، إدارة بؤر التوتر، صراع القوى الإقليمية، مساعي السلام، الأمم المتحدة، مجلس الأمن، الإصلاح المؤسس

## **Reforming the Arab League: Legal and Institutional Enhancements to Strengthen Effectiveness in Addressing Escalating Middle East Crises**

*Bouhania Goui (University of Ouargla, Algeria)*

The Arab League constitutes one of the earliest regional organizations in the contemporary international system. Established on 22 March 1945, it emerged within a global context characterized by the decline of colonial empires and the growing reliance on regional institutional frameworks as instruments for fostering peace, cooperation, and collective security among geographically and culturally proximate states. According to its founding Charter, the League was designed to strengthen inter-Arab relations, coordinate public policies, safeguard state sovereignty, and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Nevertheless, the historical evolution of the Arab League reveals a persistent discrepancy between its normative objectives and its actual performance in managing recurrent Arab crises. This gap has been particularly evident in situations involving Arab national security and complex regional and international conflicts. Over time, the League's limited capacity to translate resolutions into effective collective action has raised enduring questions about its institutional relevance and adaptability.

Major crises confronting the Arab world since the mid-twentieth century have thus served as critical tests of the League's effectiveness, simultaneously exposing the structural and legal constraints embedded within its institutional design. Despite the frequency of Arab summits and the proliferation of formal resolutions, the League's tangible influence on conflict trajectories and crisis outcomes has remained marginal. This reality underscores a deeper structural dilemma concerning the organization's ability to adjust to profound transformations in both regional and global orders.

## من القطيعة إلى إدارة المصالح

### التقارب المصري-التركي في ظل التحولات الإقليمية المتسارعة

*Mohamed Shaaban Abdelhamid (Kayseri University, Türkiye)*

شهدت العلاقات المصرية-التركية منذ عام 2013 حالة ممتدة من القطيعة السياسية والتوتر الدبلوماسي، جاءت انعكاسًا لتباينات عميقة في التصورات الأيديولوجية والمقاربات الإقليمية، ولا سيما فيما يتعلق بقضايا الحكم، وتوازنات شرق المتوسط، والملف الليبي، وموقف الطرفين من حركات الإسلام السياسي. غير أن هذا المسار الصدامي لم يظل ثابتًا إذ برز منذ عام 2021 تحولًا تدريجيًا ملحوظًا تمثل في إعادة فتح قنوات الاتصال الرسمية، وتبادل الزيارات الدبلوماسية رفيعة المستوى، والشروع في إعادة ضبط العلاقة على أسس براغماتية، تتجاوز منطق الاستقطاب الحاد الذي وسم المرحلة السابقة.

وتناقش الورقة أسباب التقارب المصري-التركي والتحديات التي تواجهه والرؤى والمصالح المشتركة التي أدت لتجاوز الجانبين للصعوبات التي واجهته منذ 2014 وحتى عام 2021 واستجابة الجانبين منذ عام 2021 وحتى اليوم لتحولات وأسباب ضخمة طرأت على البيئة الإقليمية والدولية؛ حيث أفضت هذه الأسباب إلى إعادة صياغة حسابات المصالح المشتركة بين البلدين، ودفعت بهما إلى مراجعة أولوياتهما في السياسة الخارجية، وفق مقارنة تركز على تقليل المخاطر وتعظيم المكاسب الممكنة في سياق إقليمي يتسم بقدر عالٍ من السيولة وعدم الاستقرار. وفي هذا الإطار تسعى الورقة البحثية المقترحة إلى تفكيك دوافع هذا التقارب، وتتبع مساراته التطبيقية، وتحليل حدوده السياسية، في ضوء مشهد إقليمي شديد الاضطراب والتعقيد.

#### Keywords:

تركيا، مصر، الإقليم، الشرق الأوسط، العلاقات المصرية التركية

**SECTION 2**

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**13:30-14:30**

**SESSION 4, DOCTORAL HALL**

**Session Program**

**Abdelilah Es-Satte**

*Role of Social Media in Shaping Western Public Opinion toward Middle East Issues: The Palestinian Question as a Case Study*

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**Soumaya Berjeb**

*International Media Discourse as Soft Power: Reframing Politics and Economics in the Middle East*

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**Micah Yinping Bavi Zing**

*Western Mainstream Media (WMM) Cliches on Russia and its Effects on Russia-Africa Diplomatic Dialogue*

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**Monalisa Dash and Asif Haseen**

*Politics of Piety: Women's Activism and Civil Society Networks in Türkiye*

## The Role of Social Media in Shaping Western Public Opinion toward Middle East Issues: The Palestinian Question as a Case Study

*Abdelilah Es-Satte (Ibn Zohr University, Morocco)*

Social media networks have increasingly become pivotal actors in shaping and framing public opinion, functioning as primary sources of information, news dissemination, and political interpretation. The control of algorithms and digital news distribution mechanisms enables a systematic and symbolic shaping of audiences, directing them toward specific narratives that are strategically mobilised. In the context of the Palestinian cause—particularly following the outbreak of the war on Gaza—the role of social media platforms has become evident on three interconnected levels. First, they contribute to the misrepresentation of realities on the ground in ways that align with dominant Israeli narratives. Second, they play a significant role in shaping and disciplining Western public opinion, weakening expressions of solidarity and empathy with Palestinians. Third, they contribute to the restriction and marginalisation of media voices and digital content that expose and condemn violations committed in the Gaza Strip.

Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to examine the ways in which digital networks—through major social media platforms such as Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and X (formerly Twitter)—are utilised to shape and discipline Western public opinion toward the Palestinian cause in general, and the violations committed in the Gaza Strip in particular. The paper highlights the structural biases embedded within these platforms, which tend to privilege narratives that legitimise Israeli military actions while marginalising alternative representations. These dominant narratives often rely on discursive strategies that justify extensive violence and normalise the ongoing war against Palestinians, thereby framing it as politically and morally acceptable within Western public discourse.

Building on this approach, the paper advances two central assumptions. First, it argues that control over digital platforms responsible for producing and disseminating news enables the programming of algorithms toward specific narratives, thereby constructing meanings and shaping public opinion in ways that serve the political and strategic interests of the Israeli occupying power. Second, it assumes that these platforms play an active role in limiting resistance to such narratives through mechanisms of censorship, misinformation, content suppression, and exclusion. These practices function to disrupt counter-mobilisation efforts that seek to challenge dominant representations and convey alternative, fact-based accounts of events in Gaza.

To examine these assumptions, the paper employs the media framing approach, which provides analytical tools for understanding how public opinion is shaped, disciplined, and framed within digital environments. From this perspective, social media platforms do not merely transmit information; rather, they actively construct interpretive frameworks by selecting specific angles, vocabularies, and visual cues through which audiences perceive events. These framing processes significantly influence how

recipients interpret, understand, and evaluate political developments. This approach intersects with the Epistemic Bubbles and Echo Chambers frameworks, which conceptualise digital media environments as algorithmically structured spaces that expose users predominantly to information and interpretations that reinforce a single dominant narrative while excluding alternative or dissenting perspectives.

Within this theoretical framework, the paper argues that Western public opinion regarding the Palestinian issue is increasingly confined within algorithmic environments that promote a singular narrative aligned with Israeli political interests. These algorithmic structures cultivate a sense of epistemic certainty among audiences, presenting a partial representation of reality as comprehensive and objective. Consequently, this perceived certainty contributes to the discursive legitimisation of violence against Palestinians, as alternative accounts and counter-narratives are systematically marginalised or rendered invisible within dominant digital spaces.

Accordingly, the paper is structured into three main sections. The first section examines the tools and mechanisms employed to shape public opinion on social media platforms, with particular attention to algorithmic governance, content moderation, and practices of digital censorship. It analyses narrative framing strategies, such as the portrayal of Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip as acts of “self-defence,” while Palestinian casualties are described using depoliticised terms such as “dead,” in contrast to Israeli casualties framed as “victims of terrorism.” The second section presents empirical examples and available statistics documenting restrictions, content suppression, and account removals affecting pro-Palestinian voices and content reporting war crimes against unarmed civilians. This analysis focuses on two major platforms: Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and X (formerly Twitter). The third section explores forms of digital resistance aimed at producing and disseminating counter-narratives that challenge dominant representations and mitigate the influence of these platforms on public opinion. It highlights initiatives such as Let’s Talk Palestine, as well as alternative digital platforms including Al Jazeera 360 and AJ+, examining their role in conveying counter-hegemonic narratives and restoring visibility to marginalised perspectives.

## International Media Discourse as Soft Power: Reframing Politics and Economics in the Middle East

*Soumaya Berjeb (University of Manouba, Tunisia)*

In an era of rapid information flow and information chaos, international media discourse—digital discourse in particular—is increasingly important in shaping geopolitical realities, rather than simply reporting and commenting on events. Based on Joseph Nye’s fundamental theory of soft power, which he defines as “the ability to achieve desired outcomes through attraction rather than coercion”, this study seeks to address the role of conflicting media discourses in constructing political and economic realities in the Middle East today.

Employing both media framing theory and comparative discourse analysis, this research paper analyzes the divergent perceptions of major regional crises, including the protracted and complex Gaza war, the 2025 Israeli-Iranian conflict, and the political transformations in post-Assad Syria. This highlights the broader social and economic challenges in the region (World Bank, OECD, and UNDP projections), disruptions in regional energy markets, and their impact on international news systems.

This research seeks to examine international media discourse and its manifestations as a soft power that reshapes realities in the Middle East, focusing on how media discourse addresses geopolitical tensions with tangible economic repercussions (oil price volatility and investor risk perceptions), reshaping the balance of power and adjusting regional influence dynamics. It explores the media's active role in shaping the geopolitical imagination and its power to influence the politics and economies of the Middle East today.

**Keywords:** Soft power, media discourse, Middle East, conflict, geopolitical challenges, economic repercussions

## Western Mainstream Media Cliches on Russia and its Effects on Russia-Africa Diplomatic Dialogue

*Micah Yinpang Bavi Zing (HSE University, Russia)*

This article examines the Western Mainstream Media (WMM) clichés on Russia and its effects on Russia-Africa diplomatic relations. Historically, Russia under the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) fostered a friendly relationship with Africa, characterized by solidarity and mutual respect. The collapse of the USSR, the WMM and Russia's own change of interest largely diminishes this friendship, until recently where Russia is beginning to rebuild its relationship with Africa. However, the WMM clichés and narratives about Russia using recent geopolitical crisis, has contributed negatively to shaping the African perception about Russia, thereby affecting the Russia-Africa relations. The author, therefore, comes to the conclusion that the diplomatic relations between Russia and Africa is not solely shaped by geopolitical interests but is also profoundly influenced by WMM. As a result, requires efforts (direct engagement, cultural exchange, and transparent communication) from both sides (Russia and Africa) aimed to counteract the negative media portrayals and to revitalise the friendship in honour of the historical ties between Russia and Africa while addressing contemporary challenges.

**Keywords:** Western Mainstream Media, clichés, media narratives, Russia, Africa, diplomatic relations

## Politics of Piety: Women's Activism and Civil Society Networks in Türkiye

*Monalisa Dash* (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India) and *Asif Haseen* (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)

Considered to be a vital element of democracy, civil society is voluntary organizations comprised of heterogeneous groups such as activists, interest groups, business organizations and foundations that compete or collaborate to achieve their particular interests. In the Republic of Türkiye, the development of democracy and civil society has seen constraints owing to the foundational ideology and interventionist nature of the state and frequent military coups in its modern history. However, since the 1990s and particularly following the advent of AKP to power in 2002, civil society has witnessed a new dawn due to the party's democratic and neoliberal outlook, which facilitated significant improvements in gender equality and increased the voice of women through the proliferation of women-led foundations. This article attempts to examine why Islamic women's activism has expanded under the AKP regime in alignment with, rather than in opposition to, state power and ideology. It sees Islamic women's activism through civil society not just as a cultural or religious expression but rather as a political phenomenon. The study traces the shifting fortune of Islamic women's activism from marginal, rights-based mobilization to its institutionalization through interconnected networks of NGOs, state institutions and religious actors. Moreover, the article argues that Islamic women's activism produces empowered female subjects who contribute to the reproduction of conservative political and social orders. Moving beyond feminist/anti-feminist binaries, the article conceptualizes piety as a political enterprise through which women engage in welfare provisions, moral discourse, and policy-oriented activism.

**Keywords:** AKP, civil society, gender, neoliberal, Islamic

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**13:30-14:30**

**SESSION 5, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Uğur Matıç**

*Şark Meselesi'nden Ortadoğu'ya: Kolonyal İnşanın Epistemolojik ve Jeopolitik Sürekliliği*

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**H. Burç Aka and Filiz Tozyılmaz Bulut**

*Geçici Koruma Statüsündeki Suriyelilerin Gönüllü Geri Dönüşüne İlişkin Türk Vatandaşlarının Tutumu*

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**A. Selcan Özdemirci-Cinal**

*Altyapısal Yeniden Üretim Rejimi: Ortadoğu'da İklimsel Zarar ve Kuşaksal Zamansallığın Siyasal Ekonomisi*

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**Selin Cengiz and Muharrem Hilmi Özev**

*Güç Asimetrisinde Zayıf Aktörün Varlığını Koruma Yolları*

## Şark Meselesi'nden Ortadoğu'ya: Kolonyal İnşanın Epistemolojik ve Jeopolitik Sürekliliği

*Uğur Matıç (Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, Türkiye)*

Bu çalışma, modern Ortadoğu'nun istikrarsızlık zeminini Şark Meselesi ve kolonyal süreçlerin epistemolojik ve jeopolitik sürekliliği bağlamında incelemektedir. Araştırmanın temel iddiası, "Ortadoğu" kavramının coğrafi bir realiteden ziyade, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun tasfiyesi sürecinde Batılı güçlerin nüfuz mücadelelerini rasyonalize eden kolonyal bir kurgu olduğudur. Tarihsel-betimsel analiz yöntemiyle hazırlanan çalışmada 19. yüzyıl kolonyalizminin bölgedeki mülksüzleştirme pratiği, "müstemlekecilik" kavramı üzerinden yapı söküme uğratılmaktadır. Bu çerçevede Siyonizm, Şark Meselesi'nin bir çıktısı ve yerleşimci kolonyal bir ideoloji olarak ele alınmaktadır. Birinci Dünya Savaşı dönemindeki Sykes-Picot ve Balfour Deklarasyonu gibi müdahalelerin, bölgeyi Batı merkezli çıkarlar doğrultusunda parçalı bir egemenlik yapısına mahkûm ettiği savunulmaktadır. Çalışmanın güncel boyutunda, 1917 tarihli stratejik iş birliklerinden bugünkü Gazze krizine uzanan süreçte kolonyal vekalet ilişkisinin sürekliliği vurgulanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak Ortadoğu'daki güncel çatışmaların 19. yüzyılda inşa edilen bu kolonyal zihniyetin ve jeopolitik mirasın bir devamı olduğu ortaya konmaktadır.

**Keywords:** Şark Meselesi, Ortadoğu, müstemlekecilik, yerleşimci kolonyalizm, jeopolitik

## Geçici Koruma Statüsündeki Suriyelilerin Gönüllü Geri Dönüşüne İlişkin Türk Vatandaşlarının Tutumu

*H. Burç Aka (Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Türkiye) and Filiz Tozyılmaz Bulut (Presidency of Migration Management, Türkiye)*

2011 yılında başlayan Suriye iç savaşı sonrası Türkiye'ye yönelen kitlesel göç, ülkeyi 3,5 milyonu aşkın Geçici Koruma Statüsü sahibi Suriyeliye ev sahipliği yapar hale getirmiştir. Türkiye, insani sorumluluklarını yerine getirme gayreti ile toplumsal hazmetme kapasitesinin sınırları arasında sıkışmış; bu durum güvenlik, ekonomi ve sosyo-kültürel uyum alanlarında ciddi sorunları beraberinde getirmiştir. Özellikle Suriye'deki rejim değişikliği ve değişen bölgesel konjonktür, "gönüllü, güvenli ve onurlu geri dönüş" seçeneğini hiç olmadığı kadar kritik bir politika aracı haline getirmiştir. Bu bağlamda araştırmanın temel amacı, değişen siyasal koşullar ışığında, Geçici Koruma Statüsü sahibi Suriyelilerin gönüllü geri dönüşüne ilişkin Türk vatandaşlarının tutumlarını analiz etmektir.

Literatürdeki çalışmaların çoğu mültecilerin entegrasyonuna veya geri dönüş eğilimlerine odaklanırken, ev sahibi toplumun geri dönüş sürecine dair algıları görece geri planda kalmıştır. Bu çalışma, Suriyelilerin değil, "ev sahibi" konumundaki Türk vatandaşlarının geri dönüşe dair tutumlarını ölçmesi bakımından özgündür. Ayrıca, çalışmanın kozmopolit yapısı, sanayi-tarım dengesi ve göç geçmişine ile Türkiye'nin bir özeti niteliğindeki Tekirdağ'da gerçekleştirilmesi, elde edilen bulguların temsil kabiliyetini artırmaktadır.

Nicel araştırma deseninde kurgulanan çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak anket tekniği kullanılmıştır. Tekirdağ genelinde ikamet eden, farklı sosyo-ekonomik ve demografik özelliklere sahip 715 katılımcıyla yüz yüze anket yapılmıştır (planlanan 500 sayısının üzerine çıkmıştır). Veriler SPSS programı kullanılarak Faktör Analizi, T-Testi, ANOVA, Korelasyon ve Ki-Kare testleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Katılımcıların demografik profili; eğitilmiş, üretken yaş grubunda yoğunlaşan ve orta gelir grubuna mensup bireylerden oluşmaktadır.

Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen çarpıcı bulgular şunlardır: Katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğu (%80 üzeri), Suriyelileri ulusal güvenlik, asayiş ve kültürel değerler açısından bir "tehdit" veya "yük" olarak algılamaktadır. Ekonomik katkı sağladıkları görüşüne katılım oldukça düşüktür. Ayrıca Suriyelilerle komşuluk, arkadaşlık veya evlilik gibi yakın sosyal ilişkiler kurma isteği son derece sınırlıdır. Toplumsal kabul düzeyi düşük seyretmekte, dışlayıcı tutumlar ön plana çıkmaktadır. Toplumun neredeyse tamamında Suriyelilerin kalıcılığına dair bir rıza yoktur. Geri dönüş, politik görüşten bağımsız olarak bir "zorunluluk" ve "temel beklenti" olarak görülmektedir. Eğitim seviyesi arttıkça "tehdit algısı" düşmekte ve konuya dair "farkındalık" artmaktadır. İleri yaş gruplarında Suriyelilere yönelik olumsuz tutum ve geri dönüş talebi gençlere göre daha keskindir.

Milliyetçi ve Sosyal Demokrat kesimlerde mesafeli tutum belirginken, Muhafazakâr katılımcılarda "din kardeşliği" eksenli kabul ile "güvenlik kaygısı" eksenli tehdit algısının çelişkili bir şekilde bir arada yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Suriyelilerin hukuki statüsü ve geliş nedenleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak, körü körüne reddedişi kırsa da genel olumsuz algıyı tamamen pozitif çevirmemektedir.

Sonuç olarak araştırma; Türk toplumunun Suriyelilerin varlığını "geçici" olarak kodladığını, toplumsal uyumun sağlanamadığını düşündüğünü ve çözümün odak noktası olarak "geri dönüşü" gördüğünü akademik verilerle ortaya koymaktadır.

## Altyapısal Yeniden Üretim Rejimi: Ortadoğu'da İklimsel Zarar ve Kuşaksal Zamansallığın Siyasal Ekonomisi

*A. Selcan Özdemirci-Cinal (Sakarya University, Türkiye)*

Ortadoğu'da savaşın doğrudan hedef aldığı altyapısal imha ile iklimsel zararın aşındırdığı kamusal hizmet ağları kesiştiğinde; yaşamın maddi sürekliliği teknik bir idari mesele olmaktan çıkarak, toplumsal düzenin mülksüzleştirme pratikleri üzerinden yeniden kurulduğu politik bir zemine dönüşür. Sosyal yeniden üretimin kamusal alandan hane içine doğru bu radikal yer değiştirmesi; kadınların ücretsiz bakım emeğini yoğunlaştırmakta ve çocukluğu belirsiz, kesintili ve "uyum" adı altında normalleştirilen bir zamansallık gaspı içinde yapılandırmaktadır. Mevcut iklim-çatışma literatürü kamusal hizmet ağlarını teknik bir kapasite sorunu olarak ele alsa da; çalışma, Filistin'deki askeri imha, Suriye'deki iç savaş kaynaklı tahribat ve Lübnan'daki kronik hizmet krizleri ile derinleşen siyasal kırılma hattını, yaşamın hangi koşullarda, kimler tarafından ve hangi zamansal bedellerle sürdürüleceğini belirleyen yapısal bir "altyapısal yeniden üretim rejimi" (infrastructural reproduction regime) olarak kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Eleştirel Yorumlayıcı Sentez (CIS) yöntemiyle uluslararası kurumsal raporları inceleyen bu analiz; teknik rasyonalitenin perdelediği yapısal krizi deşifre ederek, iklimsel zararı sosyal yeniden üretimin kuşaksal zamansallığını mülksüzleştiren kurucu bir iktidar alanı olarak yeniden tanımlamaktadır.

## Güç Asimetrisinde Zayıf Aktörün Varlığını Koruma Yolları: Filistin-İsrail Örneği

*Selin Cengiz (Istanbul University, Türkiye) and Muharrem Hilmi Özev (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

Bu çalışma asimetrik güç ilişkilerinde zayıf aktörlerin varlıklarını koruma ve sürdürme stratejilerini Filistin-İsrail örneği üzerinden analiz etmeyi hedeflemektedir. Uluslararası ilişkiler literatürü içerisinde yer alan çatışmaların çoğunlukla güçlü aktörlerinin kapasiteleri ile stratejileri üzerinden incelendiği ve zayıf aktörlerinin etkilerinin ikincil bir düzeyde değerlendirildiği gözlemlenmektedir. Zayıf aktörlerin askeri kapasitelerinin yetersizlikleri odağında ele alınması hususu uzun vadedeki varoluşsal stratejilerini açıklama konusunda analitik bir boşluk oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma zayıf aktörlerin sadece askeri alanda değil diplomatik, normatif ve toplumsal alanlarda geliştirmiş oldukları çok boyutlu stratejiler vasıtasıyla varlıklarını koruyup sürdürebilecekleri fikrini savunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel sorusu ise “Asimetrik güç ilişkileri çerçevesinde Filistin-İsrail çatışmasının zayıf aktörü Filistin’in varlığını hangi türdeki stratejiler üzerinden koruyabilmektedir?” olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın temel varsayımı ise çatışmalarda zayıf aktörlerin askeri boyuttaki dezavantajlı konumlarına rağmen etik boyutta, kültürel boyutta, meşruiyet boyutunda, toplumsal boyutta ve uluslararası hukuk boyutunda siyasi varoluşlarını koruyarak sürdürebilmeleridir. Çalışmanın kuramsal çerçevesi realist teori, eleştirel teori ve normatif yaklaşımın birlikte kullanılması ile oluşturulmuştur. Realist teorinin güçlü aktörleri açıklayıcı boyutu ile eleştirel teori ve normatif yaklaşımın zayıf aktörleri açıklayıcı boyutları kapsamında güç kavramı salt maddi kapasite üzerinden değil aynı zamanda dayanıklılık ve süreklilik kavramları bağlamında ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmanın yönetsel boyutu ise nitel araştırmaya dayanmaktadır. Vaka analizi kapsamında Filistin-İsrail çatışmasının davranışsal, kültürel ve yapısal boyutları analiz edilmektedir. Çalışma bulguları Filistin’in askeri boyutta sınırlı bir aktör olarak konumlanmakta olmasına rağmen temelde toplumsal direniş ve uluslararası görünürlük yöntemleri vasıtasıyla varoluşunu koruyarak sürdürebildiğini işaret etmektedir.

**Keywords:** Asimetrik güç, Filistin, İsrail, güçlü aktör, zayıf aktör

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**13:30-14:30**

**SESSION 6, D3 HALL**

**Session Program**

**Marta Sanseverino**

*The Middle East Projection of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy*

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**Adam Krzymowski**

*Gulf Cooperation Council - European Union Geoeconomics Strategic Partners in Challenging Geopolitics*

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**Bassem Rashed**

*EU Actorness in Eastern Mediterranean Maritime Disputes: Mediating Turkey-Greece-Cyprus Tensions (2019-2025)*

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**Enas Abdel Azim**

*Egypt as a Stabilizing Actor in Euro-Mediterranean Migration Governance: Externalization, Asymmetric Interdependence, and Policy Trade-Offs*

## The Middle East Projection of the EU's Foreign and Security Policy

*Marta Sanseverino (University of Naples Federico II, Italy)*

The institutional relationship between the European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) began in 1989, when the two parties signed a Cooperation Agreement aimed, among other things, at strengthening their commitment to regional integration and inter-regional cooperation. The 1989 Agreement provided a basis for inter-regional cooperation and the conditions for establishing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). To complement the agreement, the two sides also began a political dialogue aimed at intensifying their relations. Given the level of interdependence between Europe and the Gulf, both sides expressed strong hopes for closer regional integration and cooperation. Until a few years ago, relations between the GCC and the EU did not achieve much success in terms of inter-regional cooperation. Cooperation in almost all areas was quite irrelevant despite the strategic importance of the EU-GCC relationship and despite the high level of interdependence between the two regions. The development of cooperation was hampered by sectoral disputes, political obstacles and technical difficulties. The stalemate and delays in negotiations have had a negative impact on cooperation in other sectors and have almost led to a halt in all attempts at regional cooperation initiated to implement the Agreement. There has been no high-level energy dialogue, which was the main objective for which the report was created, and the political dialogue has stalled and has not been able to contribute to overcoming trade-related divergences and obstacles, let alone having an impact on regional and global issues. However, despite this impasse in inter-regional institutional cooperation, otherwise bilateral trade has progressed rapidly. The EU and the GCC are important trading partners, but this traditional relationship is now being challenged by regional and global changes. In dealing with cooperation between the EU and the GCC, this essay will provide an overview and perspective of the globalisation and regional development in which the report has been carried out. The recent economic development of the GCC will then be addressed and its spillover effects in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region will be considered. This essay will not fail to examine the important trade and investment relationship between the EU and the GCC. It will show that traditional trade relations and models have been influenced by the new forces of globalisation and the rise of Asia as a source of trade and investment. On the other hand, the enlargement of the EU has had a profound effect on the structure of the countries of the MENA area, i.e. its southern partners in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (PEM). European policy towards the MENA region will be dealt with in the context of enlargement and with a view to redefining the region to include the GCC states and other Arab states that are not part of either group. This could be achieved by linking both the PEM and policies towards the GCC into a framework that would encompass the whole, perhaps by means of a renewed role of the Arab League which would not only have a profound effect in strengthening South-South cooperation through the help it would give to the integration of Arab economies, but would also be of great importance to both the

GCC and the EU who could extend their cooperation to bring peace and security, stability and prosperity to the entire region. France, Germany and Italy are now the main EU countries competing to strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with the GCC. France plays a leading role: in 2024, bilateral trade with the Gulf exceeded €21 billion, supported by a network of more than 17,000 exporters and a consolidated presence in sectors such as energy, aerospace, infrastructure and technology. Germany, while facing increasing competition from China and Asian countries, remains a traditional and strategic industrial partner, with significant investments in technology, machinery and infrastructure in the region. Italy, for its part, is taking advantage of Prime Minister Meloni's diplomatic initiative and the direct presence of companies to increase its competitiveness in the industrial, energy and infrastructure sectors. In parallel with the efforts of individual states, the European Union has adopted a "Gulf Strategy" to strengthen cooperation on energy, climate, innovation, digitalization, security and trade. Particularly, the endorsement of the Joint Communication on a strategic Partnerships with the Gulf of 18th March 2022 and the Joint Programme 2022/2027 in its updated version (2023), profoundly reshaped and intensified the cooperation between the EU and the GCC. In 2025, negotiations began between the EU and the United Arab Emirates for a free trade agreement aimed at liberalizing trade, investment and cooperation in strategic sectors such as renewable energy, green hydrogen and critical raw materials. These initiatives show how the GCC represents both a collective economic opportunity and a competitive challenge for European countries to obtain the largest share of the Gulf market. By analyzing the latest development of this strategic partnership, this paper aims to highlight the evolution of the European Foreign Policy towards the Gulf Region by taking into account the geopolitical and economic challenges faced by both parties in the last few years.

**Keywords:** European foreign policy, strategic partnership, EU-GCC relations

## Gulf Cooperation Council - European Union Geoeconomics Strategic Partners in Challenging Geopolitics

*Adam Krzymowski (Zayed University, UAE)*

This paper examines the Middle East from the perspective of strengthening relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council, which pursues “smart neutrality,” and the European Union, which is building strategic autonomy. This issue highlights the significance of these regional international organisations in light of geostrategic challenges and global perspectives. The research problem is the development of initiatives and infrastructure that will contribute to the implementation of both organisations’ strategies and the interests of their member states. The aim is to answer the research question: “How can a strategic GCC-EU partnership contribute to the development of sustainable infrastructure and initiatives related to new trade routes, promote peace and security, and enhance the strategic autonomy of both entities?” To answer this question, qualitative and quantitative methods, including case studies, were applied. The author’s direct observation in the Middle East, including as an ambassador, was also important, supported by over 20 years of research and analysis. The adopted measures and methods contributed to answering the research question, which emphasises that for the GCC-EU partnership to strengthen its role and importance effectively, new initiatives must involve all member states of both organisations and their key international partners, including Turkey. The answer to the research question and the obtained results both fill a gap in the literature and contribute to a deeper discussion among experts and decision-makers.

**Keywords:** European Union, Gulf Cooperation Council, geoeconomics, strategic partnership, economic corridors

## EU Actorness in Eastern Mediterranean Maritime Disputes: Mediating Turkey-Greece-Cyprus Tensions (2019-2025)

*Bassem Rashed (Cairo University, Egypt)*

Eastern Mediterranean maritime disputes intensified since hydrocarbon discoveries, as Turkey's "Blue Homeland" doctrine and drillship deployments like Yavuz and Oruç Reis challenged Greece and Cyprus's UNCLOS-based EEZs, sparking the controversial 2019 Turkey-Libya MoU, naval standoffs such as the 2020 Oruç Reis crisis, and Aegean airspace violations. This study evaluates EU actorness, which is defined as autonomous, coherent action across normative, market, and diplomatic dimensions, in mediating tensions from 2019-2025, asking how sanctions and dialogues drove de-escalation, whether internal divisions like France-Germany rifts constrained coherence, and if economic tools enhanced normative leverage. Process tracing of Council conclusions, EEAS statements, and EP resolutions uncovers hybrid efficacy: 2019 normative condemnations progressed through 2020 sanctions prompting vessel withdrawals, to 2024-2025 "calibrated engagement" via trilateral talks and Global Gateway energy funding, reducing incidents despite weak UNCLOS enforcement amid Turkey's migration pressures and EMGF incentives countering Russian gas dominance. While EU multilateralism achieved incremental stability over Barents Sea-style bilateralism, Cyprus vetoes and Turkish defiance prevented delimitation, marking a maturation from reactive solidarity to proactive strategies bolstering strategic autonomy amid energy crises, however full normative goals remain elusive.

**Keywords:** EU actorness, Eastern Mediterranean, maritime disputes, UNCLOS, sanctions diplomacy, Blue Homeland

## Egypt as a Stabilizing Actor in Euro–Mediterranean Migration Governance: Externalization, Asymmetric Interdependence, and Policy Trade-Offs

*Enas Abdel Azim (Cairo University, Egypt)*

This study examines EU-Egypt migration cooperation, focusing on the impact of EU externalization strategies on Egypt’s migration policies and governance. Grounded in migration governance theory and critical international relations approaches, it explores how asymmetric interdependence, securitization, and transactional support affect burden sharing, refugee protection, and host-country development. The paper highlights Egypt's role as a stabilizing actor in the region, hosting millions of migrants, while EU financial and policy support remains limited relative to the fiscal, social, and administrative costs Egypt bears. The case of Syrian refugees illustrates the pressures on domestic policy and societal tolerance, showing how external policy incentives can shape national responses. Findings underscore the need for equitable, sustainable, and rights-based mechanisms in international migration governance.

**Keywords:** Migration governance, EU-Egypt cooperation, externalization, burden sharing, Syrian refugees, asymmetric interdependence, securitization

**SECTION 3**

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**14.45-15.45**

**SESSION 7, DOCTORAL HALL**

**Necmettin Acar**

*Şii Toplulukların Sessizliđi: İnan'ın Orta Dođu'daki Yumuşak Güç Kaybı*

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**Büşra Erimli**

*Meşrutiyet'ten İslam Devrimi'ne İnan'da Cumhuriyet ve Halk Egemenliđi*

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**Macide Başlamışlı**

*İnan Devrimi Sonrası ABD'nin Türkiye Üzerinden Gerçekleştirdiđi Tahliye Operasyonları (1979-1980)*

## Şii Toplulukların Sessizliđi: İnan'ın Orta Dođu'daki Yumuşak Güç Kaybı

*Necmettin Acar (Mardin Artuklu University, Türkiye)*

Bu bildiri, 1979 Devrimi sonrasında İnan'ın Körfez'deki Şii topluluklar üzerindeki ideolojik ve politik nüfuzunun nasıl inşa edildiđini ve 7 Ekim sonrası dönemde neden belirgin biçimde zayıfladıđını incelemektedir. İnan, uzun yıllar boyunca mezhepsel aidiyeti dış politika aracı olarak kullanarak Ortad Dođu bölgesinde önemli bir jeopolitik kaldıraç elde etmiş, özellikle Suudi Arabistan, Bahreyn ve Irak gibi ülkelerdeki Şii nüfus üzerinden bu devletlerin iç dengelerine dolaylı müdahale imkânı bulmuştur. Ancak son yıllarda yaşanan gelişmeler İnan'ın bölgedeki Şii toplulukları mobilize etme kapasitesinin ciddi biçimde gerilediđini göstermektedir. İsrail'in doğrudan İnan'a ve onun bölgesel vekillerine yönelik saldırılarına rağmen Şii kitlelerin kayda değer bir tepki vermemesi, İnan'ın yumuşak güç kapasitesinin aşınmasına işaret etmektedir. Bu dönüşümün üç temel nedeni bulunmaktadır: İnan-Suudi Arabistan yakınlaşması, Hizbullah ve diğer vekil aktörlerin askeri kayıplarının İnan'ın prestijini zayıflatması ve Körfez ülkelerinin uyguladıđı sert güvenlik politikalarının toplumsal mobilizasyonu caydırması. Sonuç olarak 7 Ekim sonrası süreç, İnan'ın Şii dünyadaki ideolojik merkez olma iddiasının ve mobilizasyon kabiliyetinin belirgin biçimde gerilediđini ortaya koymaktadır. İnan'ın dış politkada yaşadığı bu yumuşak güç kaybı içeride rejimin toplumsal meşruiyet tabanındaki önemli aşınmanın da bir göstergesidir.

**Keywords:** İnan dış politikası, Körfez Şiiliđi, jeopolitik mobilizasyon, direniş eksen

## Meşrutiyet'ten İslam Devrimi'ne İran'da Cumhuriyet ve Halk Egemenliği

*Büşra Erimli (Atatürk University, Türkiye)*

Meşrutiyet'ten İslam Devrimi'ne kadar geçen dönemde İran siyasal düşüncesi, cumhuriyet tasavvurunun geçirdiği sancılı dönüşümlere tanıklık etmiştir. Meşrutiyet yıllarında ulema, demokratlar ve sosyalistleri aynı safta buluşturan temel motivasyon, cumhuriyetin Rıza Han (Pehlevi) eliyle otoriter bir rejimin inşasına hizmet edeceği korkusuydu. Pehlevi dönemine gelindiğinde ise roller değişmiş; monarşinin baskıcı yapısı karşısında cumhuriyet, muhalif gruplar için bir nevi kurtuluş yolu olarak görülmüştür. Ancak 1979 Devrimi ile monarşi yıkılsa da cumhuriyet ideali bu defa teokratik bir çerçeveye sınırlandırılmıştır. Çalışma, Meşrutiyet Dönemi'nden İslam Devrimi'ne İran'da cumhuriyet söyleminin halk egemenliği ilkesiyle sorunlu ilişkisini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın verileri Meşrutiyet ve Pehlevi dönemine ait meclis zabıtları, dönemin matbuatı ve hatıratlardan elde edilerek karşılaştırmalı tarihsel yöntem ve söylem analiziyle tahlil edilmiştir. Analizler sonucunda, cumhuriyetin İran'da "halkın kendi kendini yönetmesi" ilkesinden ziyade, farklı dönemlerde iktidar mücadelesinde başvurulan araçsal bir söylem olduğu görülmüştür. İran'daki cumhuriyet pratiğinin, halk egemenliğini kurumsallaştırmak yerine otoriteyi meşrulaştıran bir mekanizmaya dönüştüğü ve bu durumun modern İran siyasetinin temel çelişkilerinden birini oluşturduğu tespit edilmiştir.

**Keywords:** Cumhuriyet, halk egemenliği, Pehlevi, Meşrutiyet, İslam Devrimi

## İran Devrimi Sonrası ABD'nin Türkiye Üzerinden Gerçekleştirdiği Tahliye Operasyonları (1979-1980)

*Macide Başlamışlı (Kabramanmaraş İstiklal University, Türkiye)*

1978'den itibaren İran'da Şah rejimine karşı giderek yaygınlaşan toplumsal protestolar, grevler ve rejim karşıtı hareketlilik, devlet otoritesini hızla aşındırmış ve ülkeyi derin bir siyasi krizin içine sürüklemiştir. Bunun sonucu gerçekleşen devrim sürecinin ilerlemesiyle birlikte güvenlik koşullarının belirsizleşmesi ve kamusal düzenin bozulması, ABD açısından İran'daki diplomatik personelin, kendi ülke vatandaşlarının ve bazı müttefik ülke unsurlarının güvenliğini yeniden değerlendirmesini zorunlu kılmıştır. Nitekim bu durum, Washington yönetimini kısa sürede kapsamlı tahliye planları geliştirmeye zorlamıştır. Bu çalışma, İran Devrimi sonrasında ABD'nin İran'dan yürüttüğü tahliye faaliyetlerini tarihi bir bakış açısından ele almakta ve bu sürecin büyük ölçüde Türkiye üzerinden nasıl yürütüldüğünü ABD arşiv belgeleri ışığında incelenmektedir. ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı'na ait diplomatik yazışmalar ile gizliliği kaldırılmış Amerikan istihbarat raporları temel alınarak, tahliye planlarının nasıl hazırlandığı, sahada nasıl uygulandığı ve bölgesel düzeyde nasıl bir eşgüdüm sağlandığı ortaya konulmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, Türkiye'nin bu süreçte üstlendiği geçiş ve kolaylaştırıcı rolü, dönemin diplomatik ilişkileri ve güvenlik koşulları bağlamında değerlendirmektedir. Bu bağlamda, İran Devrimi'nin ardından ABD'nin bölgesel kriz karşısındaki tutumu ve Orta Doğu'daki geçici konumlanma arayışları, tahliye faaliyetlerinin seyri üzerinden görünür hâle gelmektedir.

**Keywords:** İran Devrimi, tahliye faaliyetleri, ABD dış politikası, Türkiye, diplomatik kriz, ABD arşiv belgeleri, Soğuk Savaş

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**14:45-15:45**

**SESSION 8, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Saranjam Baig and Omran Alabri**

*Connectivity, Containment, and Hedging: The New Geoeconomics of Global South*

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**Muhammed Affan**

*Survival or Decline? The Prospects for Political Islam Movements After the Al-Aqsa Flood*

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**Onur Demir**

*A Quantitative Study Examining Terrorism and Radicalization through the MENA Region in the Context of the Arab Spring and New Terrorism*

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**Muhammet Salih Kahraman**

*Libya's Negative Peace and the Quest for Transformation*

## Connectivity, Containment, and Hedging: The New Geoeconomics of Global South

*Saranjam Baig* (Sultan Qaboos University, Oman) and *Omran Alabri* (Sultan Qaboos University, Oman)

This study examines the evolving geopolitics of global connectivity through the lens of competing economic corridor initiatives, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and the Iraq Development Road. Rather than treating these initiatives as purely developmental infrastructure projects, the paper conceptualizes them as instruments of geoeconomic strategy embedded within an era of fragmented globalization. The central argument is that contemporary connectivity projects operate simultaneously as mechanisms of economic integration and as tools of strategic containment. While corridors promise trade facilitation, logistics efficiency, and regional development, they are also embedded in broader geopolitical competition among major powers. The analysis positions middle powers in the Global South as strategic actors pursuing hedging strategies by engaging multiple corridor frameworks to diversify partnerships and mitigate dependency risks. By situating corridor politics within debates on geoeconomics, dependency, and strategic agency, the paper contributes to understanding how connectivity reshapes patterns of interdependence across South Asia and the Middle East.

The contemporary international order is increasingly shaped by the strategic deployment of infrastructure and connectivity projects. Economic corridors have emerged as central instruments of geoeconomic statecraft, linking trade, logistics, energy, and digital networks across regions. Initiatives such as the BRI, IMEC, INSTC, and the Iraq Development Road are often framed in developmental terms; however, their political significance extends beyond economic modernization. These corridors operate within a context of supply-chain disruption, rising geopolitical rivalry, and the reconfiguration of globalization into more fragmented and regionally anchored forms.

This paper advances an analytical argument rather than an empirical findings-based study. It proposes a dual-logic framework to interpret corridor politics. First, corridors function as platforms of integration, enhancing trade efficiency, port connectivity, and logistics performance. Second, they operate as mechanisms of selective alignment and containment, where infrastructure becomes embedded within strategic competition. The coexistence of these logics generates a paradox of connectivity: deeper economic interdependence occurs alongside intensifying geopolitical rivalry. The analysis further situates middle powers within this contested geoeconomic landscape. States in the Gulf and South Asia are not passive recipients of external investment but active participants who pursue hedging strategies. By engaging in multiple corridor frameworks simultaneously, they diversify economic partnerships while maintaining strategic flexibility. This pattern reflects a broader shift in Global South agency, where infrastructure diplomacy is leveraged to enhance bargaining power rather than to accept

unilateral dependency. Methodologically, the paper employs qualitative content analysis of policy documents, strategic agreements, and secondary academic literature. It synthesizes existing research on development finance, corridor governance, and geoeconomic competition to construct a conceptual interpretation of corridor politics. The focus remains analytical, emphasizing structural transformation rather than project-level outcomes.

**Keywords:** Geoeconomics, economic corridors, BRI, IMEC, strategic hedging, Global South, connectivity, containment

## The Prospects for Political Islam Movements After the Al-Aqsa Flood

*Muhammed Affan (Ibn Haldun University, Türkiye)*

In January 2026, the United States designated the Muslim Brotherhood branches in Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon as terrorist organizations. This decision, formalized through an executive order issued by President Trump, was justified by the alleged direct involvement of these branches in the Gaza war through providing military and financial support for Hamas. The decision was welcomed by several regional powers—including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel—which have long pursued coordinated policies aimed at curbing political Islam.

In light of this significant development, this paper examines the implications of the Al-Aqsa Flood battle for political Islam movements in the bordering countries of Israel. Drawing on social movement theories, particularly the political opportunity structure, it explores how the geopolitical shifts triggered by the war on Gaza have posed substantial challenges to already strained Islamist movements and assesses the options available for their adaptation to this new political environment.

**Keywords:** The Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, *Al-Jama'a Al-Islamiyya*, the Al-Aqsa Flood, political Islam

## **A Quantitative Study Examining Terrorism and Radicalization through the MENA Region in the Context of the Arab Spring and New Terrorism**

*Onur Demir (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

Discussions surrounding the new terrorism that emerged after September 11 have become more visible due to the global spread of radicalism and its increased resonance. This study examines the evolution of attacks in the MENA region by analyzing 58,252 attacks included in the GTD. According to the study, lethality has increased since the Arab Spring, and violence is not distributed homogeneously across countries. Syria stands out in terms of lethality, while Iraq stands out in terms of attack frequency. Furthermore, the perpetrators of more than half of the attacks are unknown, and terrorist organizations are concentrated in specific countries. The findings reveal the national, temporal, and geographical differences in the dynamics of terrorism.

**Keywords:** MENA, GTD, international terror, radicalization, terrorism

## Libya's Negative Peace and the Quest for Transformation

*Muhammet Salih Kahraman (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

The October 2020 ceasefire in Libya reduced large-scale hostilities and introduced a period of relative calm. This interval has failed to evolve into an enduring settlement, leaving the country trapped in a negative peace lock. Direct violence remains constrained, yet the structural conditions reproducing conflict persist, hindering any transition toward positive peace. Three primary mechanisms sustain this ongoing deadlock by preserving deep-rooted incentives for political and social instability. First, an entrenched conflict economy intertwines informal markets, patronage networks, and illicit smuggling, preventing equitable economic growth. Armed groups continue to offer the most accessible job market for young Libyans lacking predictable daily livelihoods. Second, severe institutional fragmentation and gridlock fatally undermine vital state cohesion across the political, fiscal, and public security sectors. Competing authorities constantly contest core budget allocations and administrative control, turning state institutions into highly active arenas of contestation. Third, contested legitimacy thrives within a complex hybrid governance environment where the official state presence remains highly limited. Local order is largely mediated through tribal networks and municipal arrangements. This creates a gap between top-down UN designs and bottom-up local acceptance. Within this highly fragmented landscape, this paper evaluates Türkiye as a conditional facilitator. Its diplomatic contribution depends on expanding inclusive negotiation channels, providing tangible peace dividends, and structuring security cooperation to strictly respect local legitimacy. Methodologically, the research employs a single-case design spanning 2020 to 2025, applying triangulation via interviews, document analysis, and OSINT tracking.

**Keywords:** Libya, negative peace, conflict economy, hybrid governance, conflict transformation

**SECTION 4**

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**16:00-17:00**

**SESSION 9, DOCTORAL HALL**

**Session Program**

**Bünyamin Esen**

*Demographic Fragility and Sustainability of Welfare Regimes in the Middle East*

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**Ayşe Nur Kanlı-Çınar and Emine Kaya**

*Hydro-Hegemony and Realism: The Role of the US in the Israel-Palestine Water Dispute*

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**Abdullah Hemmet and Hisham S. A. Almeghari**

*Sovereignty under Prolonged Occupation and the Rule-Of-Law Enforcement Gap: Effective Control, Third-State Duties, and Institutional Integrity after the ICJ's 2024 Opt Advisory Opinion*

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## Demographic Fragility and Sustainability of Welfare Regimes in the Middle East

*Bünyamin Esen (Istanbul Topkapı University, Türkiye)*

The Middle East, has long been associated with “youth bulges” and associated unemployment challenges, is currently on the threshold of a profound demographic shift and aging trend. As addressing the conference's sub-theme of “Demographic trends and security,” the paper examines the demographic transformation in Middle Eastern countries and impact of this transformation over welfare regimes. The paper focuses on Turkey, Iran, Lebanon and the Gulf states for analysing this transformation. In conclusion, considering the unique socio-political dynamics of the region, the study proposes a “hybrid regional welfare model” involving the state, market, and civil society. This model advocates for a rights-based framework that ensures not only economic sustainability but also the preservation of human dignity for the aging population, as well as for the sustainability of the development trend in the region.

**Keywords:** Social policy, Middle East, demographic transition, aging, social security, welfare regimes

## Hydro-Hegemony and Realism: The Role of the US in the Israel-Palestine Water Dispute

*Ayşe Nur Kanlı-Çınar* (Marmara University, Türkiye) and *Emine Kaya* (Marmara University, Türkiye)

This study analyses the politics of water resources, particularly the water dispute between Israel and Palestine, from the standpoint of US foreign policy. The theoretical frameworks of realism and hydro-hegemony are used to critically examine the pragmatic calculus of US foreign policy and Israel's usage of resources to establish its control and dominance in the hydrological domain. With regards to this, the United States is seen to be the most critical actor enabling Israel's role as a hydro-hegemon by providing technological assistance, financial support, and diplomatic partnership to not only maintain the status quo in the region but also to safeguard its interests. Research shows that international agreements and infrastructure projects between Israel and the US have made Palestine completely dependent on Israel for water supply, deepening the existing inequality. Consequently, in order to protect its own strategic interests in the region, the US is consolidating Israel's dominance over transboundary river basins and transforming the water issue into a political mechanism that perpetuates the existing power hierarchy rather than promoting fair sharing.

**Keywords:** Hydro-hegemony, Israel, Palestine, United States, water conflict

## Sovereignty under Prolonged Occupation and the Rule-of-Law Enforcement Gap: Effective Control, Third-State Duties, and Institutional Integrity after the ICJ’s 2024 Opt Advisory Opinion

*Abdullah Hemmet Abdullah* (Islamic University of Minnesota, USA; Islamic University Gaza, Palestine) and *Hisham S. A. Almeghari* (Islamic University Gaza, Palestine)

Prolonged occupation has become a rule-of-law stress test for international governance. This extended abstract examines how the law of occupation—built on the premise of temporariness—struggles to regulate entrenched situations where an external actor exercises decisive authority without sovereign title. Using the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) as a doctrinal case study, the paper argues that prolonged occupation produces a “sovereignty gap”: self-determination and sovereign title remain legally vested in the territorial people, while governance powers are exercised through effective control. Building on the Hague Regulations, Geneva Convention IV, and the secondary rules of state responsibility, and drawing on the International Court of Justice (ICJ)’s 2024 OPT Advisory Opinion, the paper clarifies (i) how effective control may persist through functional mechanisms, including where physical presence is reduced, and (ii) how the ICJ’s consequences analysis translates into third-state duties of non-recognition, non-assistance, and cooperation. The contribution is practical: it proposes an enforcement matrix that turns legal categories into implementable modalities—territorial differentiation, procurement and financial integrity controls, calibrated sanctions screening with due process and humanitarian carve-outs, and strengthened corporate due diligence—while identifying doctrinal limits grounded in the UN Charter, proportionality, and civilian protection.

**Keywords:** Occupation, effective control, self-determination, non-recognition, institutional integrity

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**16:00-17:00**

**SESSION 10, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Trodi Linda**

الشرق الأوسط بين المعرفة والسلطة: مقارنة إستراتيجية لفهم السياسات الإقليمية

**Labed Naila**

جدلية الأمانة والأمننة في إدارة اللجوء والهجرة غير النظامية بالشرق الأوسط

**Badriya Rawy**

التداعيات السياسية والأمنية للتواجد السوري في لبنان ما بعد نظام بشار الأسد

**Rokaya Selim**

العنوان: الأقليات بوصفها أزمات مصطنعة: نقد الخطاب المهيمن حول أكراد سوريا

## الشرق الأوسط بين المعرفة والسلطة مقارنة إبستمولوجية لفهم السياسات الإقليمية

*Trodi Linda (University of Constantine 3, Algeria)*

تهتم جل الأبحاث العلمية على منطقة الشرق الأوسط من خلال زوايا اقتصادية، سياسية أمنية وغيرها من المنطلقات التي نادرا ما تركز على الجانب المنهجي المعرفي كونه موضوع البحث وليس فقط طريقة للعمل. على هذا الأساس سنحاول في هذه المداخلة التطرق لقراءة إبستمولوجية للسياسات الإقليمية في الشرق الأوسط من خلال تحليل العلاقة التفاعلية بين المعرفة والسلطة، وكذا دور الخطاب باعتباره الوسيط الذي يحدد جوهر هذه العلاقة. تهدف الدراسة إلى تفكيك شروط إنتاج المعرفة وفهم كيف تراكمت المعرفة حول وجودية الشرق الأوسط بعيداً عن منطق المصلحة والقوة الصرف.

### **Keywords:**

الشرق الأوسط، المعرفة، السلطة، الإبستمولوجيا، الخطاب، السياسات الإقليمية

## جدلية الأمنة والأنسنة في إدارة اللجوء والهجرة غير النظامية بالشرق الأوسط

*Labed Naila (University of Constantine 3, Algeria)*

تشهد منطقة الشرق الأوسط تدفقات سكانية معقدة تجمع بين اللجوء والهجرة غير النظامية المُحفّزة بدوافع وعوامل متعددة ووجهات مختلفة . تُدار هذه التحركات عبر مقاربتين أساسيتين لارتباطها بأمن الدول و أمن الأفراد، وذلك عبر خطاب أمني يصعد من تمثيلها كتهديد وجودي في مقابل خطاب إنساني يركّز على كرامة الفرد وحقوقه. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الثنائية الجدلية بين "الأمننة (Securitization)" و"الأنسنة" (Humanization) في مواجهة هذه القضايا بين من ينادي بإعطاء الأولوية للمصلحة القومية وعسكرة السياسات الشرق أوسطية وبين من ينادي بإضفاء البعد الإنساني على استراتيجيات وإجراءات التعامل مع اللاجئين و المهاجرين غير النظاميين . يناقش هذا البحث مدى قدرة دول الشرق الأوسط على خلق معادلة تحقق التوازن بين السيادة والالتزامات الإنسانية .

يعتمد البحث على مجموعة من المناهج والأدوات والتقنيات العلمية المتبعة في دراسة العلاقات الدولية عموماً من أجل ضبط عناصر الخطة وفق ترتيب منطقي بالانتقال من مستوى أكثر عمومية إلى مستوى أكثر تحديداً . و قد استدعى ذلك استخدام توليفة منهجية تتضمن المنهج الوصفي ، المنهج التاريخي منهج دراسة حالة . كما تم من جانب آخر استخدام الاقتراب النسقي ، اقتراب صنع القرار ، مقرب علاقة الدولة بالمجتمع وأسلوب الإحصاء و تحليل المضمون .

وقد انتهى التحليل إلى أن سياسات الهجرة واللجوء في العديد من دول الشرق الأوسط لا تزال تميل إلى تغليب منطق السيادة والأمن القومي على حساب المقاربة الإنسانية، وهو ما انعكس سلباً على أوضاع اللاجئين والمهاجرين غير النظاميين وعلى مستوى الالتزام بالمعايير الدولية لحقوق الإنسان. ولا يعود تبني هذا التوجه إلى غياب إرادة سياسية فقط بل يرتبط كذلك بغياب أطر وآليات للتعاون الإقليمي الفعال في ظل ضعف الأطر التشريعية للدول ومحدودية الموارد لدى كثير منها ، لذلك فتبني مقاربة إنسانية خالصة دون مراعاة الهواجس الأمنية والسيادية للدول يظل خياراً غير واقعي في السياق الشرق أوسطي، مما يجعل مسألة تحقيق التوازن بين البعدين أمراً ضرورياً لا مفر منه.

### Keywords:

أمننة، أنسنة، لجوء، هجرة غير نظامية، شرق أوسط، حوكمة

## **The Political and Security Impacts of Syrian Presence in Lebanon after the Overthrow of Assad's Regime**

*Badriya Rawy (Sakarya University, Türkiye)*

After the outbreak of the Syrian revolution in 2011, hundreds of thousands of Syrians fled to Lebanon. Following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime, tens of thousands more entered Lebanon, including security personnel and members of the former Syrian army, according to official Syrian and Lebanese reports. In both cases, Lebanon's official and security response was varied and contradictory, reflecting the chronic political division in Lebanon. This paper seeks to determine the legal status of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. It then examines the political, security, demographic, and geopolitical implications of the Syrian presence in Lebanon after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime.

**Keywords:** Syrian refugees, migration, demographic change, Lebanon, Syria

## الأقليات بوصفها أزمات مصطنعة: نقد الخطاب المهيمن حول أكراد سوريا

*Rokaya Selim (Cairo University, Egypt)*

تسعى هذه الورقة إلى نقد وتحليل الخطاب السياسي المهيمن في سوريا حول الأكراد والذي تعامل معهم على أنهم تهديد أمني على سيادة دولة سوريا، وتبدأ الدراسة بتفكيك وتحليل مفهوم "الأقلية"، ومن ثم إعادة بناءه وفقاً لنظرية التعددية الثقافية، وبناءً على هذا المفهوم المستخلص سننظر إلى الأكراد في سوريا، ونرى كيف يصورهم الخطاب السياسي وكيف يتعامل معهم النظام السوري، وسنقوم بذلك عن طريق عرض لسياسات السلطة تجاه الأكراد، ودورها في تشكيل الخطاب المصوّر للأكراد في شكل مقارنة بين فترتين زمنيّتين هما قبل الثورة -بدايةً من حكم حافظ الأسد- وبعد الثورة، وبالتالي سنرى إلى أي مدى يصح وصفهم بالتهديد الأمني على سوريا، وبناءً على ذلك سنشكل رؤية مغايرة لقضية الأكراد من حيث كونهم أقلية كغيرها من الأقليات لا تشكل تهديداً على الدولة بأي طريقة، بل هي تنوع ثقافي طبيعي وقد يكون هذا التنوع سبب في تعزيز هوية الدولة بدلاً من كونه مهدداً لها، وخلال تلك المقارنة سيتم عرض الخطاب بشكل نقدي، والعمل على تحليل دور السلطة السياسية في إنشاء هذا الخطاب، فضلاً عن محاولة إيجاد أسباب تفسّر هذه السياسات، أمّلين بذلك توضيح دور الدولة في تسييس أزمة الأكراد، وتحويل تواجد الأكراد والاعتراف بهم إلى معضلة سياسية وأمنية.

### **Keywords:**

الأقلية، الأكراد، نقد الخطاب، تهديد أمني، تعددية ثقافية، الخطاب والسلطة

**THURSDAY MAY 7**

**16:00-17:00**

**SESSION 11, D3 HALL**

**Session Program**

**Md. Ataur Rahman**

*Threatening the State Sovereignty of the Palestinian Territory under Arbitrary Annexation:  
An Issue Related to the Legality of Israel's Breaking of International Law*

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**Saranya Antony and Ashok Sadasivan**

*The Great Power Politics in the Palestine State*

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**Saqer Jabali**

*The Change in the Israeli Legislative Elite and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*

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**Marcin Styszyński**

*Distinctive Discourse of the Far-Right in Poland Towards the Middle East*

## **Threatening the State Sovereignty of the Palestinian Territory under Arbitrary Annexation: An Issue Related to the Legality of Israel's Breaking of International Law**

*Md. Ataur Rahman (Lemkin Institute, Bangladesh)*

Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory poses a threat and is an egregious breach of international law caused by decades of distorting global mapping. The issue of Palestinian territory and the principle of state sovereignty are literally all but a pragmatically black and white dictum. Indeed, Palestinians have been driven from their own land by Israel's unlawful annexation and violation of state sovereignty, making them stateless and causing a global humanitarian crisis. Besides, Israel has been violating the IV Geneva Convention of 1949 by occupying Palestinian territory for decades. Meanwhile, the International Court of Justice calls on Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to respect the Palestinian right to self-determination, cease all annexation, abide by the SC resolution declaring annexation, and refrain from altering the demographic position through the construction of illegal settlements. According to international law, any polar behaviour will be "Null and Void." Despite that Israel's annexation is a flagrant transgression of international law. Moreover, the annexation act has been encouraged by the carelessness and partiality of dominant geopolitical and international forces based on hegemonic interest, which has resulted in an extensive breach of the state sovereignty and victimization of the concerned territorial population through statelessness. This essay mainly examines why the state of Israel has to adhere to international law and why the law of state sovereignty failed to prevent Israel's unlawful takeover of Palestinian territory. This paper also examines the difficulties associated with these problems and suggests ways to prevent Israel from violating international law through Annexation.

**Keywords:** State sovereignty, illegal annexation, the violation of international law

## The Great Power Politics in the Palestine State

*Saranya Antony A* (SRM University AP, India) and *Ashok Sadasivan* (Amity University, India)

This research paper explores the role of “great powers” in shaping Palestinian statehood through a conceptual consideration of territory, government, sovereignty, and people. Great powers such as the US, China and Russia are deeply involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict and its aftermath. The international system, in a normative sense, is characterised by competition and power struggles among the great powers for dominance or hegemony. These great powers, possessing substantial military capabilities within their respective spheres of interest, which extend from the regional to the global level, maintain and advance their interests through significant economic power. They are involved in Palestine in different ways, with varying ways of exercising power and engaging with one another. This paper asks how great powers exploit the insecurities prevalent in Palestine within the broader context of systemic competition, and to what extent structural rivalry among them enables or constrains the prospects of Palestinian statehood. The novelty of this study lies in mapping great powers’ involvement since 2023 by tracing their political leadership rhetoric, official statements, policy positions, official stances at the UN, and lobbying in international forums to assess whether their interventions have enabled or constrained the prospects of a Palestinian state.

**Keywords:** Great powers, Palestine, UNO, US, China, Russia

## **The Change in the Israeli Legislative Elite and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process**

*Saqer Jabali (An-Najah National University, Palestine)*

This study seeks to examine the change in the partisan political stance of the Israeli legislative elite (the Knesset) and analyze its social and economic characteristics, as well as its impact on the Arab-Israeli peace process. This study considers the importance of the individual socio-economic components of this elite and their influence on the political behavior of its members, using an elite approach.

The problem of the study lies in identifying the impact of change in the Israeli legislative elite on members' adoption of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, and the impact of change in the composition of the Israeli legislative elite on this. This is achieved by examining the impact of party affiliation and the socio-economic characteristics of members of the legislative elite on members' adoption of the Arab-Israeli peace process. It also examines the extent to which changes in the recruitment sources of members of the legislative elite affect members' adoption of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The study hypothesizes a relationship between change in the political stance of members of the Israeli legislative elite and the socio-economic characteristics (average age, gender, religion, place of birth, place of residence, occupation, educational level, place of study, and specialization) of the Israeli legislative elite and members' adoption of the Arab-Israeli peace process. This study is even more important after the arrival of President Trump, whom the Israeli Prime Minister described as Israel's best ally. He recognized Jerusalem as Greater Israel and moved the US embassy there. He approved the annexation of the Golan Heights to Israel, where a settlement bearing his name was established. His unlimited support from Israel, partly withheld by the Biden administration, increased in the war of extermination waged today by the right-wing government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, which includes Ben-Gvir, head of the "Jewish Power" party, and Bezalel Smotrich, head of the "Religious Zionism" party.

The change in the political stance of the political parties was a significant factor in the shift in the elite's position on the Arab-Israeli peace process. 65.9% of members of the ruling Likud party supported the 1978 Camp David Accords, while 93% opposed the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles (Oslo I). The Ma'arach list (the Labor Party is part of the list) supported the Camp David Accords from 78.1% to 100% of Labor Party members supporting the Oslo Accords.

Since Netanyahu assumed power in 1996, he has been the longest-serving Israeli prime minister for nearly a quarter of a century, followed by Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, who served for 13 years.

The study, through a gender analysis, showed that the legislative elite does not reflect the level of representation between men and women in Israel, with women's

representation in the elite reaching only 8.3%. There was also a decline in the level of support for male Knesset members, which was higher than for female members.

An analysis of the religious affiliation of the elite revealed a decline in the support of Jewish members from 66.7% for the Camp David Accords to 43.3% for the Oslo Accords. Meanwhile, the position of Christian members shifted from opposition to support at 100%, while the position of Muslim members on the Arab-Israeli peace process remained unchanged at 100%. By analyzing the place of birth variable, the study revealed an increase in the percentage of members born in Israel from 49.16% in 1978 to 71.66% in 1993. Their support for the Camp David Accords declined from 74.8% to 51.6%, compared to their support for the Oslo I Accords.

By analyzing the educational qualification variable, the study indicates a rise in the level of education among elite members, particularly those with doctoral and master's degrees. Support for the Arab-Israeli peace process declined among those with bachelor's degrees, followed by those with master's degrees. There was a decline in the representation of elite members studying at universities and religious institutes, while there was an increase in the representation of elite members studying at foreign universities and institutes.

The study revealed a significant shift in the recruitment sources for members of the legislative elite. Official military positions accounted for 37.5% of the recruitment sources for members of the legislative elite when voting on the Camp David Accords, while civilian positions accounted for 53.31%. A major shift occurred in the sources of recruitment for the Israeli legislative elite in 1993, with military positions accounting for 76.67% of the legislative elite's recruitment, while civilian positions accounted for only 3.33%.

There was a decline in the support of those in military positions for the peace process. 86.66% of them supported the 1978 Camp David Accords, while 47.83% supported the Oslo Accords. Support among civilian positions rose from 59.37% for the 1978 Camp David Accords to 75% of the elite with military positions for the Oslo Accords.

**Keywords:** Change, elite, Knesset, peace process, Camp David Accords, Oslo Accords

## Distinctive Discourse of the Far-Right in Poland towards the Middle East

*Marcin Styszyński (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland)*

The article deals with distinctive discourse narrative of opposition conservative and far-right groups and parties in Poland towards the Arab-Muslim world, including migration crisis and the ongoing conflict between the Gaza Strip and Israel. The study is based on different statements and speeches released by far-right activists since the appointment of the new government in 2023. The analysis reflects the discourse of Konfederacja party (Confederation) or Konfederacja Korony Polskiej (Confederation of the Polish Crown) headed by Grzegorz Braun, as well as extreme far-right activists from the group Rodacy Kamraci (Compatriots Comrades).

The research argues that the narrative of these groups distinguishes from the official stand of the government and the main opposition party PIS (Law and Justice party). This stance usually remains distant or neutral, and it often follows foreign policy of the EU and other Western allies. In contrast, radical activists and leaders demonstrate on the one hand their harsh criticism towards Israel, migration crisis in Europe and Islam, and on the other they support Palestine or certain governments in the Middle East. However, their policy varies from conservative counterparts in the UK or France. The research also argues that the narrative of the statements reflect emotional and explicit reactions to the ongoing situation in the Middle East. Moreover, the study refers to various contexts and complex social, political and economic conditions that affect the narrative of the far-right in Poland.

**Keywords:** Middle East conflict, migration crisis, propaganda, far-right

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**10.40-11.40**

**SESSION 12, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**M. Cüneyt Yenigün and Hayrunnisa Sağlam**

*Rising of Türkiye as the Middle East Leader*

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**Kouki Mariem**

*The Future of Middle Eastern Alignments: A Forward-Looking Vision of Turkey–Egypt–Saudi Arabia Rapprochement*

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**Serdar Taşçı**

*What is the “Middle East”? What is it not?*

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**Ahmed Elobeidy**

*Islam as a Sterile Problem for the West*

## Rising of Türkiye as the Middle East Leader

*M. Cüneyt Yenigün (Istanbul University, Türkiye) and Hayrunnisa Sağlam (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

According to almost all international relations theory scholars, the unipolar system is changing to a multipolar system, and the hegemonic power, the United States, has been declining in the last decade. In the mid-90s, realist school theorists started to claim that China is the “challenger power” to the United States with its tangible and intangible power components and it will catch the US around 2032-2035. The US will not wait for China to seize its place and will initiate a pre-emptive attack and preventive war on China and its allies if necessary.

It is seen that North Korea, Iran, Russia, and China have been together, especially after 2000, Putin’s government, and on the same side in the last two decades. According to many IR scholars, China is the real antagonistic actor and is still using its soft power at the moment and does not show the hard side towards the US. The realist school hit its prediction; the US did not wait until China came and launched the proxy war, the Ukraine-US war, to keep Russia busy and exhaust its energy there, and later, a direct attack on Iran using the fake reason of Iran’s nuclear enrichment will be done within two months. Those wars are seen as separate wars; however, those are the US’ preventive war steps for weakening China. Actually, those are the slowing effects of the declining US from the hegemon position but won’t stop China’s challenging.

While the US has been declining and China is the challenger rising, the US should yield the regional leadership to the natural leaders in many regions. Among the others, the Middle East region may be the most important region, and Türkiye is the natural regional leader and the challenger to be a great power, according to its rising ratio and the scholars. The debate point is whether the US is willing or will accept Türkiye as a Middle East leader. The international system is transforming to a multipolar system or bipolar system, but a new regional power, Türkiye, is coming, whether the US accepts it or not. If the US accepts it, the US can have access and reach the Middle East region in the new international system. So, the article’s main focus and discussion point is, although the Israel lobby, will the US accept and support Türkiye’s regional leadership or not?

**Keywords:** Middle East leadership, rise and fall realism, hegemon power, power transition, power politics

## The Future of Middle Eastern Alignments: A Forward-Looking Vision of Turkey–Egypt–Saudi Arabia Rapprochement

*Kouki Mariem (Shanghai International Studies University, China)*

The Middle East region has witnessed profound and complex geopolitical transformations that have drawn an unpredictable map of competition and cooperation among regional powers, in this context, an emerging trilateral alignment between Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt is based on a set of common motivations and visions amidst a current regional and international environment characterized by shifting sands in the regional multipolar era. This study aims to analyze the core common motivations that drive the alignments of the three countries in this trilateral framework by assessing internal factors, including national policies, economic pressures, leadership priorities, and regional factors related to security stability and local and regional wars, alongside international factors linked to great power competition in the region. The study also aims to review the current developments of this rapprochement and to identify the challenges that may face its continuity. The study ends by providing a foresight of scenarios of this rapprochement and its potential impacts on the region.

**Keywords:** Saudi Arabia-Egypt-Turkey, rapprochement, motivations, obstacles, strategic scenarios

## What is the “Middle East”? What is It Not?

*Serdar Taşçı (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

We construct, govern, and sometimes destroy the world through concepts. Concepts are not neutral descriptors of reality; they are instruments that classify, hierarchize, and orient perception. “The Middle East” is one such concept. It appears geographical, but it is also historical, political, and epistemological. To ask what the Middle East is requires asking what it is not—and who has had the authority to define it.

The term “Middle East” is not an indigenous name emerging from within the societies it designates. It is a relational term, coined from a European vantage point. “Middle” and “East” in relation to what? To Europe. The expression presupposes a center—implicitly Europe—and defines other regions by their distance and direction from that center. Like earlier designations such as “Near East” and “Far East,” the term encodes a cartographic hierarchy. It situates Europe as the norm and reference point, while others become peripheral spaces to be mapped, studied, and administered.

History provides many examples of how naming produces hierarchy. In ancient Greece, those who did not speak Greek were labeled barbaroi—“barbarians”—a term that imitated the sound of incomprehensible speech. What began as a linguistic distinction became a civilizational judgment. The “barbarian” was not merely different but inferior, irrational, or uncultured. This distinction endured for centuries in various forms. Even modern discourses of human rights and democracy, though normatively committed to equality, have not entirely erased the structural impulse to classify and rank civilizations. The concept of the Middle East must be read within this longer genealogy of differentiation. As scholars in linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and political theory have shown, geographical labels often function as political technologies. They do not merely describe space; they help organize power. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as European empires expanded, the region now called the Middle East became an object of strategic and scholarly attention. Philologists, historians, colonial administrators, and travelers produced vast bodies of knowledge about its languages, religions, and societies. This knowledge was rarely innocent.

The French thinker Ernest Renan, for example, drew sharp distinctions between “Semitic” and “Aryan” civilizations, often attributing stagnation or irrationality to the former. Oswald Spengler’s civilizational morphology described cultures as organic wholes with predetermined destinies, reinforcing a sense of Western dynamism against Eastern decline. In the late twentieth century, Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” thesis reframed global politics as a conflict between coherent cultural blocs, again solidifying the idea of a distinct and internally unified “Islamic civilization.” Each of these frameworks, in different ways, contributed to imagining the Middle East as a singular, essentialized entity.

No critique of this tradition can ignore Edward Said’s Orientalism. Said argued that the “Orient” was not simply discovered but produced through discourse—a system of representation that depicted Eastern societies as exotic, backward, irrational, and static.

Orientalism, in his account, was intertwined with imperial power. By representing the Orient as incapable of self-government, European powers justified intervention, administration, and control. The Middle East, in this sense, was not only mapped; it was narrated into being.

Thus, what is the Middle East? It is a region with real histories, languages, cultures, and political formations. But it is not a homogeneous civilizational essence. It is not inherently despotic, irrational, or resistant to modernity. Nor is it a timeless cultural block defined solely by religion. The term “Middle East” obscures as much as it reveals: it flattens differences between Istanbul and Sana’a, Tehran and Cairo, Beirut and Riyadh. It compresses plural histories into a single geopolitical abstraction.

Moreover, the term has often functioned within global power structures shaped by energy politics, strategic interests, and economic dependency. The region’s vast oil and gas reserves have intensified external interventions and reinforced the strategic utility of viewing it as a manageable, divisible space. In this context, conceptualization becomes governance: to define is, in part, to control.

To rethink the Middle East, therefore, is not merely to adjust a map. It is to interrogate the epistemological frameworks through which we organize the world. Concepts can illuminate, but they can also dominate. If we are to move beyond hierarchical and Eurocentric paradigms, we must recognize that the Middle East is not an object awaiting Western interpretation. It is a multiplicity of societies with their own intellectual traditions, political struggles, and internal diversities. The challenge is not simply to rename the region, but to dismantle the hierarchies embedded in the act of naming itself.

## Islam as a Sterile Problem for the West

*Ahmed Elobeidy (Academic and International Consultant, Türkiye)*

Today, the controversies over the West's relationship with Islam are startling and increasingly complex. It is claimed that the current conflict between the West and Islam is caused by Islamic violence and terrorism, religious dispute, cultural contradictions, democratic incompatibility, opposing to modernization, or a clash of civilizations. This article refutes these claims and sheds light on the real reason for the current conflict between the West and Islam. It has become evident that the Islamic means of solving Capitalism's problems of financial crises, poverty, injustice, class polarization and environmental unsustainability are clear and applicable, making Islam a viable alternative ideology to Western Capitalism. However, the existence of this powerful ideology that rivals Capitalism frightens the West and corporations, causing the current conflict between the West and Islam. The rise of neoliberalism and political Islam has fueled the conflict between them. Neoliberalism policies have produced a variety of negative impacts on society and the planet, and have had increasingly dire consequences for most people. On the other hand, political Islam stands out as an alternative that offers a comprehensive system and presents a sociopolitical ideology capable of overcoming all the shortcomings of Capitalism by solving financial, social and environmental problems. Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western scholars replaced Communism with Islam as the enemy, alarming about Islam as a new ideological threat to the West. The cold war against Communism was replaced with a relentless war on Islam.

**Keywords:** Islam, the West, conflict, ideology

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**10.40-11.40**

**SESSION 13, HALL M2**

### **Session Program**

**Shaymaa Badran**

*İsrail-Filistin Çatışması ve Abraham Anlaşmaları: Eleştirel Ekonomi Politik Perspektiften Hegemonya Analizi*

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**Deniz İstikbal**

*Çin ve Ortadoğu: Enerji, Yatırım, Ticaret (2005-2025)*

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**Sibel Elif Özdilek**

*Ortadoğu'da AB, ABD, Rusya ve Çin: Politikalar ve Sonuçları?*

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**Özlem Acar**

*Radikalleşme, Terör ve Terör Eylemleri Bağlamında Kitle Kaynaklı İstihbarat (Crowdsourced Intelligence)'ın Güvenlikte Kullanımı*

## **İsrail-Filistin Çatışması ve Abraham Anlaşmaları: Eleştirel Ekonomi Politik Perspektiften Hegemonya Analizi**

*Shaymaa Badran (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

Bu çalışma, Arap-Filistin çatışmasını ekonomik bakış açısıyla ele almayı ve özellikle İsrail'in Batı ile ABD ilişkilerine odaklanmayı amaçlamaktadır. Yaklaşım, eleştirel uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinden yararlanır; Andrew Linklater ve Robert Cox'un katkıları özellikle vurgulanır. Ayrıca, Michel Foucault'nun söylem ve anlatı üzerine düşüncelerinden beslenen postmodern perspektifler kullanılarak, İsrail'e dair dinî veya milliyetçi söylemler eleştirel bir gözle sorgulanır. Çalışma, çatışmayı dinî veya etnik bir olgu olarak görmek yerine, Orta Doğu'daki emperyal düzeni yeniden yapılandırmayı ve ekonomik hedeflere hizmet etmeyi amaçlayan bir yerleşimci-sömürgeci proje olarak değerlendirir. Tezin temel varsayımı, İsrail yerleşimci sömürgeciliğinin Avrupa, ABD ve İsrail arasındaki ortak ekonomik çıkarları ilerletmek üzere kurulduğudur. Bu çerçevede İsrail'in Batı Şeria politikaları ve Gazze'ye yönelik savaşlar, özellikle Trump döneminde, söz konusu varsayımla ilişkilendirilir. Metodolojik olarak çalışma; eleştirel söylem analizi, vaka incelemeleri ve tarihsel analiz yöntemlerini kullanarak ekonomik faktörlerin İsrail politikaları ve ittifakları üzerindeki rolünü araştırır.

## Çin ve Ortadoğu: Enerji, Yatırım, Ticaret (2005-2025)

*Deniz İstikbal (Istanbul Medipol University, Türkiye)*

Dünyanın en büyük imalat sanayi gücü olan Çin, yıllık ortalama 500 milyar doların üzerinde enerji ithalatı gerçekleştirmektedir. En büyük enerji ithal ettiği bölge ise yüzde 40'la Ortadoğu'dur. Taraflar arasındaki ticaret hacmi 2005-2025 döneminde 60 milyar dolardan 485 milyar dolara yükselmiştir. Aynı tarihler arasında Çin bölge ülkelerine 161 milyar dolarlık enerji yatırımı yapmıştır. Enerji yatırımlarını ulaşım, altyapı ve liman yatırımları izlemiş ve Çin bölgenin en büyük ticaret partneri haline gelmiştir. Bu perspektiften hareketle çalışmada 2005-2025 döneminde Çin-Ortadoğu ilişkilerinde enerji, yatırım ve ticaret gibi alanlar değerlendirilip Çin'in enerji güvenliğinde bölgenin önemini ortaya konulmaya çalışılacaktır.

**Keywords:** Çin, Ortadoğu, enerji, yatırım, dış ticaret

## Ortadoğu'da AB, ABD, Rusya ve Çin: Politikalar ve Sonuçları

*Sibel Elif Özdilek (Ufuk University, Türkiye)*

Ortadoğu, tarih boyunca stratejik konumu, zengin enerji kaynakları ve jeopolitik önemi nedeniyle küresel güçlerin odağında olmuştur. Bölge, sadece yerel aktörler arasındaki güç mücadelesine sahne olmamakta, aynı zamanda ABD, AB, Rusya ve Çin gibi uluslararası aktörlerin stratejik ve ekonomik çıkarlarını maksimize etme çabalarına da ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Enerji rezervlerinin güvenliği, sınır sorunları, mezhepsel farklılıklar ve tarihsel çatışmalar, Ortadoğu'yu hem bölgesel hem de küresel aktörler açısından kritik bir merkez hâline getirmektedir. Bölgedeki güç ve çıkar mücadelesi, yalnızca askeri veya ekonomik alanla sınırlı kalmamakta; diplomasi, kültürel etki ve uluslararası örgütler aracılığıyla yürütülen politikaları da içermektedir. Ortadoğu'nun sahip olduğu stratejik önemi ve kaynak zenginliği, bu bölgede yaşanan çatışmaları ve bölgesel istikrarsızlığı, uluslararası güçler açısından da doğrudan bir sorun hâline getirmektedir. Bu bağlamda Ortadoğu, hem bölgesel aktörlerin hem de küresel güçlerin çıkarlarını dengelemeye çalıştığı ve zaman zaman çatıştığı bir sahne olarak ön plana çıkmaktadır. Bölgedeki bu yoğun güç mücadelesi, Ortadoğu'nun küresel jeopolitik sistemde merkezi bir konumda olmasının temel nedenidir.

**Keywords:** AB, ABD, Rusya, Çin, Ortadoğu

## Radikalleşme, Terör ve Terör Eylemleri Bağlamında Kitle Kaynaklı İstihbarat (Crowdsourced Intelligence)’ın Güvenlikte Kullanımı

*Özlem Acar (Polis Akademisi, Türkiye)*

Terör ve şiddete varan aşırılıkçılık olgusu, son on yıldan bu yana, katı örgütsel hiyerarşilere dayalı klasik yapılardan uzaklaşmış ve daha parçalı, büyük ölçüde bireyselleşmiş ve keskin biçimde dijitalleşmiş bir karakter kazanmıştır. Bu dönüşüm, güvenlik ve istihbarat faaliyetlerinde, radikalleşmenin yalnızca örgütsel yapılar, ideolojik bağlılıklar veya fiziki temas gibi nedenlerle açıklanmasının git gide yetersiz kaldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle Ortadoğu coğrafyasında terör eylemleri ile sonuçlanan süreçlerin, çoğunlukla istihbarat ve güvenlik kurumlarının dikkatini çekmeden önce dijital platformlarda görünür hâle geldiği gözlemlenmektedir. Bu durum, crowdsourced intelligence (kitle kaynaklı istihbarat) yaklaşımını terörle mücadele ve önleyici güvenlik politikaları açısından önemli bir analiz aracı hâline getirmektedir.

Kitle kaynaklı istihbarat, çevrim içi kullanıcılar ve dijital kalabalıklar tarafından üretilen açık ve yarı-açık verilerin sistematik biçimde analiz edilmesine dayanmaktadır. Anlık olarak bilgilerin girilerek konumların işaretlenebildiği web siteleri, sosyal medya paylaşımları, çevrim içi yorumlar, kapalı mesajlaşma gruplarındaki söylemler ile görsel içerikler; radikalleşme süreçlerinin erken evrelerine ilişkin önemli ipuçları sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, radikalleşmeden başlayarak terörizme uzanan süreçte kitle kaynaklı istihbaratın geliştirmekte olan bir alan olarak yakından izlenmesinin istihbarat çalışmalarına ve güvenlik yönetimine katkı sağlayacağını; günümüzde ise ağırlıklı olarak teknik tespit yöntemlerine odaklandığını, buna karşın terör eylemlerinin önlenmesi açısından kritik olan erken uyarı evresinin görece ihmal edildiğini savunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, yeni gelişen kitle kaynaklı istihbarat yaklaşımının etik, hukuki ve operasyonel sınırlarının henüz belirginleşmediği göz önünde bulundurularak bu alanlarda çalışmalara ağırlık verilmesi gerektiğine vurgu yapmaktadır.

**Keywords:** Radikalleşme, terörizm, crowdsourced intelligence, kitle kaynaklı istihbarat, istihbarat

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**10.40-11.40**

**SESSION 14, D3 HALL**

**Session Program**

**Amirreza Nemati**

*The Geopolitics of the Red Sea and Its Implications for the Islamic Republic of Iran's Regional Policy*

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**Debasish Das**

*The Paradox of Escalation and Control in Iran's Political Imagination: Assessing Iranian Acquiescence beyond Spatial Contestation*

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**Roxana Niknami**

*Green Hydrogen as a New Pillar of EU-GCC Economic Relations: Investment Trends and Cooperation Dynamics (2018-2024)*

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**Mohammed Wafeeq Alagha**

*Beyond Hydrocarbons: How Regional Energy Infrastructure Reshapes Decarbonization Politics in the GCC*

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**Orkun Arslan**

*From the Aegean to the Eastern Mediterranean: Maritime Boundary Disputes Between Turkey and Greece and the Blue Homeland Doctrine*

## The Geopolitics of the Red Sea and Its Implications for the Islamic Republic of Iran's Regional Policy

*Amirreza Nemati (Imam Sadiq University, Iran)*

The Red Sea has increasingly become a focal point in the evolving security and political landscape of the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) has no direct coastline along this strategic waterway, developments in the region increasingly shape the broader environment in which Iran defines its regional policies. Once viewed primarily as a commercial passage linking the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean, the Red Sea has transformed into a contested security space where regional rivalries, maritime threats, shifting alliances, and political tensions surrounding Gaza now intersect. Nevertheless, the Red Sea receives far less scholarly attention compared to regions such as the Persian Gulf, Iraq, or the Levant. In this research, the Red Sea is examined as a security space whose changing dynamics indirectly affect Iran's strategic behaviour and regional posture. Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) forms the theoretical foundation of this study. RSCT argues that security is structured within regional systems rather than at the global or individual state level. States located within the same regional complex are bound together by patterns of rivalry, alignment, and geographical proximity, meaning that security shifts in one part of the region can quickly influence other parts. Applying RSCT to the Red Sea allows us to understand the basin as an interconnected security environment in which Middle Eastern and East African actors shape one another's threat perceptions and policy decisions. This framework provides a clear and accessible way to analyse how maritime insecurity, evolving alliances, and the presence of Israel, the countries Arab of the Persian Gulf, Turkey, and East African states indirectly shape the Islamic Republic of Iran's calculations, even in the absence of territorial proximity. This research is guided by a central question: in what ways do current geopolitical and security developments in the Red Sea shape the Islamic Republic of Iran's broader regional policy? Methodologically, this research adopts a qualitative and interpretive approach. It draws on a combination of statements by Iranian, regional, and international officials; academic publications; open-source military and maritime assessments; and policy documents that outline official positions and emerging strategic priorities. This triangulation allows for a grounded understanding of how Iran interprets developments in the Red Sea and how these interpretations influence Tehran's regional behaviour. Rather than producing deterministic causal models, the method identifies patterns in Iranian strategic communication, regional threat assessment, and shifting diplomatic orientations. Preliminary findings show that Iran's political and security engagement in Yemen forms its most direct linkage to the Red Sea. Yemeni actors aligned with Iran are not subordinate instruments, but their trajectories intersect with Tehran's broader regional outlook. Their evolving military capabilities, particularly in missile and drone operations, have increasingly extended toward the Red Sea. Recent actions targeting Israeli-linked vessels or assets underscore how the Yemen conflict has become connected to wider regional rivalries, adding a maritime dimension to Iran's deterrence environment. These developments matter for the Islamic Republic of Iran because they demonstrate how aligned actors can influence a strategic maritime corridor that is vital for global trade and that shapes the strategic

calculations of states hostile or rival to Iran. Second, the expanding presence of Israel in the Red Sea is a major factor shaping Iran's interests. Israel treats the basin as part of its extended security environment and has strengthened cooperation with several littoral states in areas such as naval surveillance and intelligence sharing. From Tehran's perspective, the expansion of Israeli-linked security initiatives raises concerns about containment and the consolidation of defence arrangements that may restrict Iran's strategic room for manoeuvre. As a result, part of Iran's interest in the Red Sea is driven by the need to prevent security structures that overwhelmingly favour Israel or undermine Iran's influence. Third, the policies of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf significantly shape the regional context. The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have expanded their political, economic, and military engagement in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa through port projects, security partnerships, and diplomatic initiatives. Their involvement influences alignment patterns among coastal African states and contributes to new forms of regional institutionalization. These developments can constrain Iran by strengthening rival coalitions, yet shifting regional politics may also create diplomatic openings for Tehran. Fourth, Turkey has become another influential regional actor. Over the past decade, Ankara has expanded its political, military, and economic presence in Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey do not directly confront each other in the Red Sea, their broader regional competition means that Turkish engagement indirectly affects the environment in which Iran formulates its policies. The presence of additional active regional powers contributes to a more fluid and crowded geopolitical landscape. Finally, developments within East African states, such as Sudan's political transitions, Egypt's concerns over Suez Canal security, and Ethiopia's regional aspirations, play a crucial role in shaping the Red Sea's security dynamics. These states are not passive arenas of external competition but active agents that influence the policies of Middle Eastern actors and external powers. Their decisions indirectly affect Iran's strategic environment, particularly in relation to maritime stability and regional institutional arrangements. Overall, the Red Sea functions as a transregional security complex in which maritime threats, evolving alliances, and interconnected political conflicts shape the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic behaviour. Although Iran lacks a territorial presence in the basin, developments in the Red Sea influence its deterrence posture, its responses to Israeli activity, its assessment of the policies of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, and the strategic value of its relationships with Yemeni actors, especially during periods linked to Gaza. Understanding these dynamics is essential for analysing Iran's broader regional strategy and for assessing how Red Sea geopolitics contribute to the wider security architecture of the Middle East and the Horn of Africa.

**Keywords:** Red Sea, Islamic Republic of Iran, regional security complex, maritime security, Middle East

## **The Paradox of Escalation and Control in Iran’s Political Imagination: Assessing Iranian Acquiescence beyond Spatial Contestation**

*Debasish Das (Amity University, India)*

The article deals with Iran’s political connotations around a sluggish regional reconditioning owing to the undercurrents of reconciliation with Saudi Arabia vis-à-vis the erratic Western adventurism (in Gaza), exuding a reaffirmation of an expanding vacuum extricated by the regressive American security overtures. It augments a widening scope for Iran to park its rekindled regional ambitions with greater prominence. The oscillating nature of Western negotiations between compunction and perpetuation in the Middle East stimulates a metamorphosis in Iran’s regional positioning, shifting from an anarchist to a defender of regional integrity, which contributes to a customized narrative of the Iranian response tailored to project sporadic yet limited retaliatory actions. The development brings about four crucial points to assess the plausibility of the alteration. First, how effectively the much-anticipated broadening of international engagement can reconfigure Iran’s posture over the regional security context; second, if such an expansionary process can parallelly insulate revitalization of its lapsed potential of facilitating the north-south connectivity; third, how well the constructs of the altered escalation paradigm conceived if at all it is aiming to override the pervasive western maneuver; and finally, whether the doctrinal reconditioning is conducive to Iran’s shifting focus on Asian partners away from the west.

**Keywords:** Controlled escalation, Iranian politics, Iran’s foreign policy, Iran in West Asia

## Green Hydrogen as a New Pillar of EU-GCC Economic Relations: Investment Trends and Cooperation Dynamics (2018-2024)

*Roxana Niknami (University of Tebran, Iran)*

The global energy transition has fundamentally reshaped international economic partnerships, with green hydrogen emerging as a pivotal component of future energy systems. This research examines the evolving relationship between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council through the lens of green hydrogen development between 2018 and 2024. While traditional EU-GCC ties have predominantly centered on hydrocarbon trade, recent years suggest a significant transformation toward clean energy collaboration. By employing quantitative trend analysis of investment flows, bilateral agreements, and renewable energy capacity expansion, this study reveals how green hydrogen is becoming a cornerstone of renewed economic engagement between these regions. The findings demonstrate a marked acceleration in cooperation following the EU's 2020 Hydrogen Strategy, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE leading regional initiatives. Data indicates substantial growth in joint ventures, technology transfers, and infrastructure projects designed to position the Gulf as a major supplier of green hydrogen to European markets. However, several challenges persist, including technical barriers in transportation, production costs, and geopolitical complexities. The research contributes to understanding how energy transition dynamics are restructuring inter-regional economic relationships and offers policy implications for both EU member states and GCC countries navigating the post-hydrocarbon era.

**Keywords:** Green hydrogen, European Union, Gulf Cooperation Council, energy transition, investment trends

## **Beyond Hydrocarbons: How Regional Energy Infrastructure Reshapes Decarbonization Politics in the GCC**

*Mohammed Wafeeq Alagha (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar)*

The GCC states are among the world's most hydrocarbon-dependent economies, yet they have simultaneously adopted ambitious national decarbonization targets. This paper examines the political economy of this contradiction by analysing how regional energy infrastructure — specifically the Dolphin Gas Pipeline and the GCC Interconnection Grid — functions as both an enabler and a constraint on post-hydrocarbon transition. Drawing on comparative policy analysis across four GCC states (Qatar, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait), this study argues that regional energy integration does not automatically advance decarbonization. Instead, it operates as a dual-edged instrument: it creates technical pathways for renewable energy sharing while simultaneously reinforcing hydrocarbon interdependencies that sustain existing political-economic arrangements. The findings reveal a structural tension between national climate commitments and regional energy governance that existing literature has largely overlooked.

**Keywords:** GCC, energy transition, Dolphin Pipeline, regional integration, decarbonization, political economy, hydrocarbon lock-in

## From the Aegean to the Eastern Mediterranean: Maritime Boundary Disputes between Turkey and Greece and the Blue Homeland Doctrine

*Orkun Arslan (University of Vienna, Austria)*

This study analyzes the enduring maritime boundary disputes between Turkey and Greece, with a specific focus on the strategic and political implications of Turkey’s “Blue Homeland” (*Mavi Vatan*) doctrine. The research examines the historical evolution of these conflicts, ranging from the sovereignty of islets and rocks to the delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and continental shelves. By contrasting Greece’s legal arguments based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), with Turkey’s approach which advocates for “equitable principles” and mutual agreement in semi-enclosed seas, the paper analyzes the deadlock in the Aegean Sea. The study further argues that the “Blue Homeland” doctrine serves a dual purpose. First, it proposes a geopolitical roadmap for Turkish maritime sovereignty. Second, it serves as a rhetorical instrument in domestic politics to consolidate national sentiment, even as the official state stance remains ambiguous. Finally, the paper assesses how these bilateral tensions spill over into the Eastern Mediterranean, exacerbated by hydrocarbon discoveries and shifting regional alliances, thereby challenging stability in the broader region.

**Keywords:** Aegean Sea, Eastern Mediterranean, Blue Homeland Doctrine, Turkey-Greece Relations

**SECTION 2**

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**11:50-12:50**

**SESSION 15, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Elshahid Elmokhtar Ahmed**

*Operationalizing Alethocide: Actors, Disinformation, and Harm in Israel's War On Gaza*

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**Abdulsalam Muala**

*Revisiting Balance of Power in Asymmetric Conflicts: The Palestine–Israel Case (2006-2025)*

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**Farouk Ghazi and Halima Mallaoui**

*The Dilemma of the International Justice Roll in the Rule of International Law in the Middle East: Palestine-A Case Study*

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**Emine İlik**

*The Post-October 7 Transatlantic Divide: How Gaza Has Become the Epicenter of US–EU Foreign Policy Divergence*

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## Operationalizing Alethocide: Actors, Disinformation, and Harm in Israel's War on Gaza

*Elshahid Elmokhtar Ahmed (Ibn Haldun University, Türkiye)*

This paper examines Israeli state-sponsored disinformation during the war on Gaza since 7 October 2023 through Marc Owen Jones's concept of alethocide, understood as the systematic destruction of truth. Primarily it operationalizes alethocide, by focusing on how identifiable officials and institutional voices disseminate and circulate claims that are then mobilized to legitimize military action, generate ambiguity over responsibility, and delegitimize humanitarian infrastructures, thereby shaping conditions of international permissibility and weakening accountability.

Methodologically, the study combines systematic collection, incident-based categorization, triangulation, and critical discourse analysis, to offer a concrete framework for making alethocide empirically traceable in wartime information practices.

**Keywords:** Disinformation, alethocide, Gaza War

## **Revisiting Balance of Power in Asymmetric Conflicts: The Palestinian–Israeli Case (2006-2025)**

*Abdulsalam Muala (Palestine)*

This paper aims to shed further light on the theory of balance of power by examining its applicability in the context of asymmetric conflicts. The concept of balance of power is theoretically ambiguous and flexible, and these complexities become more pronounced when the theory is applied to situations involving a sharp imbalance of power. Nevertheless, this paper tests the theory's ability to explain the dynamics of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict drawing on its empirical realities. The paper begins with the premise that, according to some prevailing approaches, the theory of balance of power fails to explain the dynamics of competition between major and minor powers, limiting its effectiveness to interactions between major powers only. Against this backdrop, the paper seeks to scrutinize this assumption, pinpoint its limitations, and bolster the theoretical underpinnings of the concept of balance of power. The research employs a qualitative analytical–interpretive approach with a critical dimension, following a methodological path that draws on the theoretical aspects of central concepts such as balance of power and power in its various dimensions and forms. The aim is to test their validity in explaining the real-world dynamics of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. The conflict is used as a case study not merely for descriptive purposes, but to enrich specific theoretical dimensions of the balance of power concept through an analysis of the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice. This approach uses the empirical case to reveal the limitations of the classical theoretical framework and to propose avenues for its development.

## **The Dilemma of the of International Justice Role in the Rule of International Law in the Middle East: Palestine – A Case Study**

*Farouk Ghazi (Badji Mokhtar Annaba University, Algeria) and Halima Mallaoui (Badji Mokhtar Annaba University, Algeria)*

The article focuses on the Palestinian case as a central model for testing the effectiveness of international judicial mechanisms. The study is based on the premise that activating international courts constitutes a key legal tool to curb impunity and ensure respect for collective international obligations.

The ICJ is distinguished by its broad deliberation system involving all judges and its ability to issue urgent provisional measures that obligate states to halt actions potentially constituting international crimes, as seen in the cases of Bosnia, Myanmar, and the 2024 measures regarding Gaza. Its procedures are also relatively faster than those of the ICC. The article concludes that the Palestinian case offers multiple legal pathways, whether through the ICJ based on erga omnes obligations or through the ICC via different referral mechanisms, emphasizing the necessity of utilizing all available legal avenues to strengthen international justice and protect human dignity.

**Keywords:** International justice, ICC, ICJ, Palestine, Middle East

## **The Post-October 7 Transatlantic Divide: How Gaza Has Become the Epicenter of US–EU Foreign Policy Divergence**

*Emine İlik (Hacettepe University, Türkiye)*

The war in Gaza following the October 7, 2023 attacks has exposed a critical breach in transatlantic foreign policy, marking a shift from long-standing patterns of U.S.–EU alignment toward visible divergence. Rather than functioning as a site of coordinated crisis management, Gaza has become an arena in which contrasting strategic priorities, normative frameworks, and political constraints are openly articulated. This paper argues that the post–October 7 period represents a qualitative turningpoint in transatlantic relations, with Gaza emerging as the epicenter of U.S.–EU foreign policy divergence in the Middle East. The paper demonstrates that U.S. policy has been shaped primarily by security-centered logic, alliance solidarity with Israel, and deterrence concerns, while the European Union has increasingly framed the conflict through humanitarian principles, international law, and calls for restraint despite deep internal divisions among member states. This divergence is not merely rhetorical or situational, but reflects deeper structural differences in strategic culture and decisionmaking capacity on both sides of the Atlantic. Methodologically, the study employs qualitative discourse analysis of official statements, policy documents, and diplomatic actions to trace how Gaza has become a symbolic and geopolitical focal point through which broader tensions over leadership, legitimacy, and regional order are negotiated. By situating the Gaza war within debates on transatlantic relations and regional politics, this paper contributes to understanding the limits of foreign policy convergence in moments of acute crisis and the implications of this divergence for Middle East stability and global governance.

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**11:50-12:50**

**SESSION 16, HALL M2**

**Session Program**

**Ahmed Abozaid**

*Clash of 'Aṣabiyyāt: A Neo-Khaldunian Perspective on Regional Power Competition and Alliances in Post-October 2023 SWANA*

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**Pausali Guha**

*Relationality and Civilisational Signalling: A Non-Western Critique of Israel's Post-2023 Public Diplomacy*

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**Amjad Z. Taama and Nawar Jaleel Hashim**

*Energy Diplomacy: A Study of China's Approach to Iraq*

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## Clash of ‘Aṣabiyyāt: A Neo-Khaldunian Perspective on Regional Power Competition and Alliances in Post-October 2023 SWANA

*Ahmed Abozaid (University of Cambridge, UK)*

‘Asabiyyat’ (an analytical concept encompassing social forces, national and ethnic solidarity, and dominant elites with tribal, ethnic, or ideological affiliations) remains markedly neglected in mainstream international relations and security studies. This paper highlights the enduring influence of tribal solidarity and ethnic stratification logics, showing how civilizational identity continues to offer explanatory power for understanding contemporary intra- and inter-state conflicts. I argue that identity-based ‘asabiyyat persists as a force majeure in political dynamics and power shifts across both domestic and external arenas, including the SWANA region. Drawing on the political thought of Ibn Khaldūn, Amy Chua, and Samuel Huntington, I examine intersecting themes of tribalism, conflict, and alliance, situating them as focal points for analyzing regional and global transformations in power and political competition. Using a Khaldūnian lens, I analyze the post-2025 Iran-Israel War and the Israeli attack on Qatar, moving beyond state-centric approaches to assess the implications for SWANA security arrangements, alliance formations, and internal sociopolitical configurations. This approach highlights how tribal, ethnic, and identity-based solidarities shape regional key actors responses to regional crises, influence defense priorities, and interact with shifting great power dynamics. By bridging identity-driven analyses with contemporary security studies, this paper provides a framework for understanding how longstanding sociopolitical forces intersect with immediate shocks, such as the Iran-Israel confrontation, to reshape both external alignments and internal politics across the SWANA region.

**Keywords:** Ibn Khaldūn, tribalism, ‘asabiyyat, alliance, regional power competition, SWANA, security, Iran, Israel, Qatar, post-2025 conflict

## Relationality and Civilisational Signalling: A Non-Western Critique of Israel's Post-2023 Public Diplomacy

*Pausali Guha (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)*

In the geopolitical aftermath of October 2023, the Israeli state has occupied a precarious position within the international order, compelled to navigate intensifying scrutiny, polarisation, and shifting alignments. In this context, it has increasingly relied upon a strategy of civilisational signalling, a discursive and diplomatic practice through which it frames its actions not merely in strategic or security terms, but as embedded within a broader narrative of belonging to, and defending, a particular conception of “the West” and liberal modernity. This proposed paper seeks to look at this from the lens of relational turn in international relations, where the state is understood as an “actor-in-relation”, whose identity is not fixed but is constantly negotiated through its interactions with others. While Western media narratives generally rely on an individualist ontology that evaluates state actors through discrete, atomistic “liberal signals”, a relational approach reveals these signals as a form of relational management. The central aspect that this paper seeks to explore is how the state of Israel employs “pinkwashing” as a strategic signal to maintain its relation of alignment with the Western-centric “Standard of Civilization”.

Utilizing the concept of relationality, this paper argues that the “pink” signals emitted by the state, such as the hyper-visibility of LGBTQ+ soldiers in combat zones, are “civilizational markers” designed to secure a specific status. In a relational framework, power is not merely material; it is derived from the “rightfulness” of one’s relations within a hierarchy. In this regard, the state of Israel repeatedly and extensively uses pinkwashing” as a primary tool of public diplomacy (*Hasbara*). By signaling adherence to Western norms, the state attempts to validate its membership in the “civilized” bloc, thereby justifying its actions through a logic of shared values. Through civilizational signaling, the Israeli state and Western media co-produce a narrative where the Palestinian population is rendered “un-relatable.” Because they do not perform the specific westernized signaling required by the Standard of Civilization, their social and historical relations are deemed irrelevant to the “modern” world. This process creates a “relation of exclusion” toward those who do not, cannot, or do not wish to, emit the same signals, effectively placing the “other” outside the sphere of relational ethics and recognition.

To explore this, the paper will employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a method, to look at Western media narratives (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Economist among others*) from late 2023 to early 2026. The analysis will focus on the intertextuality of gendered signaling and military legitimacy. By examining how mainstream Western outlets reproduce these signals, the paper will explore how media acts as a conduit for civilizational alignment. Through CDA, this paper would identify the linguistic and visual strategies used to frame the Israel’s actions as a defense of western modernity. By doing this, the paper also seeks to highlight the relational erasure inherent in these narratives, where the historical and communal ties of the marginalized population are stripped away.

The paper's tentative conclusion is that civilizational signaling in the post-2023 era by Israel is a desperate attempt to sustain a Western-centric relational order that is increasingly under pressure. By foregrounding the relational constitution of state identity, the paper would like to put forth that such signalling ultimately exposes the fragility of the order it seeks to preserve rather than securing its legitimacy. It concludes that a more durable international ethics must move beyond civilisational hierarchies towards forms of recognition grounded in plurality and shared historical responsibility.

**Keywords:** Relationality, global IR, civilisational signalling, Israel, public diplomacy, pinkwashing

## Energy Diplomacy: A Study of China's Approach to Iraq

*Amjad Z. Taama (Mustansiriyah University, Iraq) and Nawar Jaleel Hashim (Mustansiriyah University, Iraq)*

This study aims to shed light on the potential for China to employ energy diplomacy to enhance its foreign policy performance toward Iraq, and the impact this has had on strengthening the presence of its energy-focused companies. It also attempts to highlight the goals China has achieved or could achieve in the coming period through this type of diplomacy.

The research topic stems from the problematic emergence of a new pattern of diplomatic performance related to the energy sector and its use to achieve certain foreign policy objectives, particularly in China, which has adopted this approach within its diplomacy toward Iraq. This raises the question of the extent to which this type of diplomacy can have positive future repercussions on the effectiveness of Chinese performance, towards achieving strategic gains in the Iraqi energy sector and strengthening the presence of Chinese companies operating in this sector.

The study will argue from the following theory: "Many countries are turning to energy in their diplomacy directed towards strategic regions, making it a key pillar of foreign policy. China represents one of the most successful models in this diplomatic vein, particularly in its performance towards Iraq, which is reflected in achieving its economic goals and strengthening the active presence of its companies in the Iraqi energy sector."

**Keywords:** Energy diplomacy, China, Iraq, oil, national security

**SECTION 3**

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**14:50-15:50**

**SESSION 17, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Gubara Said Hassan**

*The Return of the Russian Bear to a Hot Middle East: Opportunities and Challenges*

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**Hanadi Sala**

*Selective Human Rights and International Law: A Comparative Analysis of Gaza And Ukraine*

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**Raed Debiy and Mohammed Rajoub**

*Gaza as a Moral and Structural Benchmark in the Modern Middle East: Sovereignty, Colonial Modernity, and the Crisis of International Legitimacy*

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## The Return of the Russian Bear to a Hot Middle East: Opportunities and Challenges

*Gubara Said Hassan (Sultan Qaboos University, Oman)*

This paper analyzes Russia's renewed engagement in the Middle East and evaluates the opportunities and challenges linked to its re-emergence as a major regional actor. It mainly argues that Russia's return is driven by a pragmatic realist strategy aimed at enhancing international great-power status and strategic influence within an increasingly multipolar international system, rather than seeking regional hegemony. The study is guided by the fundamental question of what inspires Russia's renewed involvement in the Middle East and what factors shape the sustainability of its regional influence.

The research pursues three objectives: identifying the strategic drivers behind Russia's Middle East policy, examining the main instruments of influence—military intervention, diplomacy, energy cooperation, and arms sales—and assessing the opportunities and constraints affecting long-term engagement in a volatile region. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative approach based on academic literature, document analysis of official Russian policy statements, and selected case studies, with particular emphasis on Russia's military intervention in Syria and its diplomacy with rival regional actors. The analysis is informed by realist and multi-polarity perspectives in International Relations theory. The findings show that Russia has successfully exploited regional instability and perceived Western retrenchment to reassert itself as an indispensable security actor. However, economic constraints and imposed sanctions, risks of military overextension, and the challenge of balancing competing regional relationships limit the durability of such reassertion.

**Keywords:** Russia, Middle East; great power politics, opportunities and challenges, multi-polarity, Syrian conflict, military intervention, security

## Selective Human Rights and International Law: A Comparative Analysis of Gaza and Ukraine

*Hanadi Salah (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar)*

The world was transformed in just two years, not by one war, but by two: one of which was seen as a blatant assault on sovereignty and a cry for international justice. The others were viewed as a "security exception," despite the unprecedented scale of killing and destruction. The literature on the Russian war on Ukraine and the Israeli occupation's "genocidal" war on the Gaza Strip points to a stark contrast in international responses to the two conflicts. This contrast reveals not only a contradiction in political positions, but also a deeper gap in the structure of international law itself, which has come to employ the international human rights system as a tool to justify the policies of the Zionist project and dismantle any resistance against it, in addition to its reliance on its traditional military and political tools. Radoslav Ivančik argues that political and legal support was not the result of a mere moral obligation, but rather a reflection of European national security interests. Although they highlight the duality but without a deep examination of the legal structure that produces this inequality. This is what Sergei Vasiliev saw in the fast response of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the Russian case. But it has obstructed the process of accountability in other files, such as Palestine. The United States even intervened by imposing international sanctions on two judges and prosecutors at the ICC for their participation in efforts to prosecute American and Israeli citizens. So, this paper argues that the post-colonial international order practices selective justice that reproduces the colonial hierarchy within the structure of international law. This is an indicator of a qualitative shift in the strategies of the Zionist project, as it seeks to reshape its position not only regionally, but also within the global system, by harnessing universal concepts such as justice and sovereignty to serve its goals. So, the main question is: How does the Zionist project, in its contemporary phase, employ international human rights discourse in a dual and contradictory manner in the Gaza and Ukraine crises, and what does this employment reveal about the nature of the transformations in its strategies for global hegemony?

This paper will rely on a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework, combining socio-legal approaches, legal realism, and empirical criticism, along with the conceptual contributions of critics of colonialism and international law, to deconstruct the concepts of justice, sovereignty, humanity, and legitimacy in international discourse. In terms of methodology, the paper will adopt a comparative critical approach, integrating legal analysis with political and contextual analysis.

The paper demonstrates how selective enforcement of human rights norms undermines the credibility and universality of international law. The comparative analysis reveals that sovereignty, civilian protection, and accountability are framed and operationalized differently depending on political alignment and strategic interests. This selectivity not only weakens international legal institutions but also reproduces structural inequalities within the global order. The paper concludes by calling for a critical re-evaluation of

human rights discourse beyond formal legalism toward addressing its structural and political limitations.

This paper contributes to constructing a more comprehensive and in-depth Palestinian narrative. It not only addresses "violations" within the existing regime, but also how the regime itself (including its human rights discourse) has become part of the structure of oppression. It places the Zionist project at the heart of this analysis as a strategic actor, not merely a rogue state. This opens new cognitive and political resistance strategies that go beyond demanding the implementation of international law to questioning its foundations and structural biases.

**Keywords:** Zionist Project, sovereignty, human rights discourse, double standards, Gaza Strip

## **Gaza as a Moral and Structural Benchmark in the Modern Middle East: Sovereignty, Colonial Modernity, and the Crisis of International Legitimacy**

*Raed Debiy* (An-Najah National University, Palestine) and *Mohammed Rajoub* (Seeds Association for Development and Culture, Palestine)

Gaza has transcended its status as a simple territory. It has evolved into an inquiry. An inquiry regarding the definition of sovereignty. An inquiry into the boundaries of ethics within the realm of politics. A query regarding the legitimacy of an international system that asserts universality yet engages in selection. Characterizing Gaza as a “humanitarian catastrophe” restricts it to the domain of emergency assistance and ethical considerations. Characterizing it as a “security crisis” diminishes it to mere strategic assessment. However, the situation in Gaza transcends both classifications. It is not merely a location of suffering or a battleground; it is a realm where the fundamental tensions of contemporary political order are rendered manifest. Gaza signifies a revelation—a disclosure of the fissures inherent in liberal modernity. It necessitates an examination of the persistent disparity between the normative commitments of international law and the geopolitical dynamics of power.

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**14:50-15:50**

**SESSION 18, HALL M2**

**Session Program**

**Muharrem Hilmi Özev and Eliz Yüksel**

*Artificial Intelligence in Conflict Early Warning: Where It Is Used and Why It Matters*

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**Sana Ahmed and Anum Ahmed**

*Regime Durability and Constitutional Change in Iran: A Political Development Perspective*

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**Lina Chawaf**

*Female Leadership in Conflict*

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**Ahmed Abozaid and Salma El-Harrak**

*Domestic Transformations, Societal Security, and Regional Security Architecture in the Gulf Region: Intersectional Analysis from the Bottom Up*

## Artificial Intelligence in Conflict Early Warning: Where It Is Used and Why It Matters

*Muharrem Hilmi Özev (Istanbul University, Türkiye) and Eliz Yüksel (Istanbul University, Türkiye)*

Conflict early warning has shifted from low frequency structural indicators and manually coded event datasets toward AI enabled pipelines that can process large volumes of information and generate forecasts at shorter horizons. This paper provides a literature and methodology driven account of this shift by asking three questions. Why has AI become central to conflict early warning? Where is AI used in the forecasting pipeline? For what purposes is it used? Drawing on the forecasting turn that treats out of sample performance as a key benchmark, the study examines AI applications in data collection and integration, automated event coding and text analysis, and predictive modelling and risk scoring.

Early warning today depends on scale, speed, and automation. This context has increased the relevance of AI, which is illustrated through infrastructures such as GDELT that extract event based and text based signals at high frequency. Rule based and parsing based coders such as TABARI and PETRARCH2 translate news text into structured event records and support reproducible coding at scale. In forecasting, machine learning supports the prediction of rare onset events and the integration of text as data signals. Mueller and Rauh use topic models to derive interpretable conflict relevant patterns from large newspaper corpora, while the ConflictForecast project develops forecast related datasets and tools. Random Forests and spatiotemporal neural networks further expand predictive capacity under out of sample evaluation.

Overall, AI contributes to early warning by strengthening pattern detection, data integration and forecast evaluation. These contributions, however, remain constrained by challenges such as bias, limited interpretability, and the persistent gap between warning and actionable response.

**Keywords:** Conflict early warning, artificial intelligence, event data, conflict prediction, international security

## Regime Durability and Constitutional Change in Iran: A Political Development Perspective

*Sana Ahmed* (Indira Gandhi National Open University, India) and *Anum Ahmed* (St Joseph's University, India)

Iran's constitutional transition began with the amendment of its first-ever constitution, known as the Fundamental Law of Persia of 1906, which was influenced by both the Belgian model and the Quran, establishing an authoritarian rule under the Shahs of the Pahlavi Dynasty. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adopted in December 1979, replaced the Pahlavi Dynasty and set a precedent for the Ideological Islamic regime, which catered to the people of Iran's sense of national security after years of anti-colonial movements. The role of leadership taken by the religious militant leaders played a significant part in these movements and eventually led to the beginning of a new leadership under the eminent Ayatollah al-'Uzma Imam Khomeini ending the Ruling monarch of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, aiming to fulfil the desire of an Islamic state and erasing the deep-rooted insecurities with the growing modernisation and westernisation, seen as a threat to Iran's cultural identity. The fundamental tenet of Khomeini foreign policy was the total rejection of the Shah's pro-Western stance and the embrace of an unwavering animosity towards the two superpowers, the US and the USSR. Iran also attempted to disseminate its brand of Islamic revivalism to neighbouring Muslim nations, especially to their Shi'i communities. The seizure of the American embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, and the hostage-taking of American diplomats for over a year by Iranian militants were sanctioned by Khomeini. Under Khomeini's rule, Iran's economic growth stalled, and his attempts to win the Iran-Iraq War ultimately collapsed. However, he managed to maintain his charismatic influence over Iran's Shi'ah, and up until his death, he was the nation's highest political and religious authority. His admirers turned his gold-domed tomb in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra' cemetery into a shrine. The Iranian people remained in their unwavering struggle for self-determination after the 1979 Iranian revolution and the rise of Islamist forces. Through influence, the Islamic Republic of Iran became deeply involved in a continuous conflict with other nations. The concept of self-determination against Western powers was reinforced by Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1981, which was supported by foreign governments and perceived threats from the US military presence in the Middle East and stringent Western economic sanctions.

However, in recent years Iranian system is exposed to severe structural pressures that will continue to inspire the opposition, notwithstanding changes in public opinion brought about by the recent crisis between Iran and Israel.

This is caused by the intersections of cultural complaints, economic unhappiness, excessive unemployment and inflation, and a lack of growth. In addition to this, cultural complaints can quickly turn into economic unhappiness. The public interprets the regime's low infrastructure investment, high rates of inflation, and unemployment as the outcome of authoritarian rule and a deprivation of civil liberties since the regime is inattentive to public demands. The Iranian government might revert to dictatorship if

these demonstrations turned violent. Additionally, it would raise the possibility of transitions from one autocrat to another.

The Iranian government has relied on fostering divisions between various ethnic groups in order to stifle ethnic resistance. The aforementioned Kurdish and Azeri groups are pitted against one another by the administration. The authorities described the demonstrations in Kurdistan, Sistan, and Baluchestan in 2022 after Mahsa Amini's death as separatist rather than democratic. This undermined their unity and deterred more widespread involvement. However, this approach to preserving regime stability is unjust. To conclude, This paper thus aims to analyse Iran's numerous regimes and history of rulers, making a comparative analysis of its historical conquests, political shifts, and ideologies, to understand the correlation between nationalism & ideologies.

**Keywords:** Authoritarianism, Arab Spring, constitutional reform, political stability and West Asia

## Female Leadership in Conflict

*Lina Chawaf (Harvard University, USA)*

This paper examines female leadership in the Middle East within religiously conservative and conflict-affected communities, focusing on the media, civil society, and public life like (Syria-Yemen-Sudan-Palestine- Tunisia, etc.). It analyzes how women leaders navigate socio-political environments shaped by entrenched gender norms, religious interpretations, and traditional value systems. Situated at the intersection of gender studies, media studies, and leadership theory, the research adopts an interdisciplinary framework to assess patterns of representation, participation, and influence in sectors historically dominated by men.

The study interrogates the structural and cultural constraints that shape women's leadership trajectories, including stereotypes, social taboos, and stigmatization. Particular attention is given to how religion and tradition inform public perception, institutional access, and professional legitimacy. In parallel, the paper identifies adaptive leadership strategies employed by women to negotiate authority, build credibility, and drive institutional or social change in restrictive contexts.

Drawing in part on professional experience, the research evaluates the impact of societal narratives on career progression and public image. Finally, it situates Arab female leadership within a comparative global perspective, referencing figures to highlight transferable strategies for resilience and ethical leadership under pressure. The paper contributes to regional political discourse by reframing female leadership as both a site of contestation and transformative potential.

**Keywords:** Women's studies, women leadership, conflict, human rights, peacebuilding

## **Domestic Transformations, Societal Security, and Regional Security Architecture in the Gulf Region: Intersectional Analysis from the Bottom Up**

*Ahmed Abozaid (University of Cambridge, UK) and Salma El-Harrak (Doha Graduate  
Institute, Qatar)*

How do domestic policies affect the regional balance of power, especially in light of the shifting dynamics following the Gaza War and the broader regional conflict involving Iran, Israel, and other Middle Eastern actors? This paper investigates how political regimes' capacities to withstand frequent unrest and turbulence, along with their economic, social, and development policies, shape their ability to pursue effective foreign policies and influence the strategic neighborhood. By acknowledging the complexity of these elements, the paper argues that it is not possible to consider security in the Gulf region—particularly amid ongoing U.S. engagement and the changing global balance of power—without addressing these fundamentally domestic transformations. Hence, the paper seeks to dismantle the intersection between domestic politics and foreign policy in the Gulf region between 2011 and 2025, focusing on the repercussions of domestic transformations on regional policies and regional balance arrangements. To that end, it examines two cases: the Arab Uprisings of 2011 and their aftermath, and the Iranian-Israeli War of 2025, including the U.S.–Israeli attacks on Iran. The paper argues that a comprehensive conception of hard security in the Gulf region must comprise an intersectional analysis that simultaneously accounts for systemic and regional levels, highlighting the ways in which Gulf actors exercise agency within and beyond traditional “spheres of influence.” The paper demonstrates that regional security and foreign policy behavior are intertwined with and informed by complex domestic economic, political, social, and cultural concerns. Moreover, as a product of strategic and political transformations in both the international and regional environments (system level), the paper argues that security policies (both hard and soft alike) in the Gulf region are mainly socially constructed and the outcome of sociopolitical and socioeconomic transformations at home (unit level). In doing so, it contributes to understanding how domestic change conditions the Gulf states' regional roles and their interaction with U.S. policy and the evolving regional order after October 2023.

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**14:50-15:50**

**SESSION 19, D3 HALL**

**Session Program**

**Rahana Sherin K.V.**

*Hybrid Sovereignty and the Obstacles to Peace: A Study of Fragmentation in Yemen*

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**Ashok Sadasivan and Saranya Antony A**

*The Iris as Digital Tether: Biometric Governance and Humanitarian-Security Convergence in Jordan*

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**Salma Thani and Dana Alloh**

*From Majlis to Diwan: Everyday Legitimacy and Governance Beyond Formal Institutions in the UAE*

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**Atallah Al Sarhan and Omar Al-Adamat**

*From War to Adaptation: A Study on the Psychological Adaptation of Syrian Refugees in Jordan from Their Perspective*

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**Mohammed Afsal K.H.**

*Infrastructure and the Reconfiguration of Regional Order in the Middle East*

## **Hybrid Sovereignty and the Obstacles to Peace: A Study of Fragmentation in Yemen**

*Rahana Sherin K.V. (MMAJ Academy of International Studies in Jamia Millia Islamia, India)*

The conflict in Yemen is frequently described as a confusing, perplexing and bitterly complicated situation based on decades of internal fault lines. The state of Yemen, formally unified in 1990, remains a union of separate political entities with distinct historical trajectories, primarily the Zaidi Imamate in the North and the former British colony in the South. The 2011 Arab Spring and the subsequent transition from President Ali Abdullah Saleh to Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi failed to resolve deep-seated tensions between the central government and tribal peripheries. This has resulted in a multi-layered civil war involving the northern Houthi rebels (Ansar Allah), an internationally recognised but exiled government, southern separatists and extremist groups. Compounding these internal divisions is the intervention of foreign states which is turning the country into a theatre for regional power struggles particularly between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

This study examines how hybrid sovereignty has become embedded in Yemen's political order. It argues that any viable peace process must recognise and incorporate this fragmented reality rather than attempt to restore a centralized state model that no longer reflects conditions on the ground.

## The Iris as Digital Tether: Biometric Governance and Humanitarian-Security Convergence in Jordan

*Ashok Sadasivan (Amity University, India) and Saranya Antony A (SRM University AP, India)*

Jordan hosts one of the most extensively institutionalised biometric refugee governance systems globally, centred on UNHCR's use of IrisGuard EyeCloud, a proprietary iris-recognition network for identity verification. This article examines how biometric infrastructures have reconfigured the relationship between humanitarian protection and state security. It advances the concept of *humanitarian-security convergence* to describe a process in which aid delivery and migration control are co-produced through shared digital identity architectures.

Drawing on securitisation theory and critical border studies, the study employs qualitative analysis of policy documents, institutional reports and national digital transformation strategies to examine how interoperability has expanded across state databases, embedding refugee data within national digital infrastructure. This convergence produces a state of continuous verifiability in which refugee protection is embedded in persistent, updatable digital identities. Consent operates within conditions of material dependency, limiting meaningful refusal. Biometric identity systems are durable and interoperable, making refugees traceable across institutions. This reduces the ambiguities that have historically shielded individuals from refolement. At the same time, bureaucratic discretion and institutional friction mean that these systems do not operate uniformly or without contestation.

By situating Jordan as a formative site of algorithmic bordering, with similar architectures emerging in other host states, the article contributes to debates on data authority and the infrastructural transformation of contemporary refugee governance.

**Keywords:** refugee governance, biometrics, humanitarian–security convergence, algorithmic bordering, Jordan, securitisation

## From Majlis to Diwan: Everyday Legitimacy and Governance Beyond Formal Institutions in the UAE

*Salma Thani* (American University in Sharjah, UAE) and *Dana Alloh* (American University in Sharjah, UAE)

Governance in the Gulf is commonly examined through formal institutions such as ministries, laws, courts, and bureaucratic procedures. These are essential for understanding modern states, yet this institutional focus can obscure how legitimacy and authority are experienced in everyday life and how governance operated historically, prior to the rise of modern state structures in the Gulf. In everyday practice, authority becomes believable, approachable, and morally grounded. This paper argues that in the pre-union UAE, governance was not an institutional absence, but a relational political order rooted in direct access, consultation, and the moral responsibilities expected of rulers. Drawing on thirty oral history interviews conducted in Sharjah in 2025 with Emirati men and women aged 63–89, the paper treats memory as political knowledge; authority, legitimacy, and expectations of the ruler predate modern bureaucratic governance. By placing oral testimony at the center of analysis, the paper contributes to debates on state-society relations and modes of governance in the Gulf by framing legitimacy as lived practice rather than solely a legal-rational structure. It further argues that contemporary petitioning spaces, such as the diwan, royal court, or councils, should be understood not as a breakdown of governance but as the continuation and reconfiguration of an older moral relationship between ruler and society.

**Keywords:** Legitimacy, oral history, governance, Majlis, UAE, state-society relations

## **From War to Adaptation: A Study on the Psychological Adaptation of Syrian Refugees in Jordan from Their Perspective**

*Atallah S. Al Sarhan (The Hashemite University, Jordan) and Omar Al-Adamat (The Hashemite University, Jordan)*

This study aims to explore the psychological adaptation of Syrian refugees in Jordan from their perspective, and to examine whether differences in adaptation levels are associated with gender, educational level, marital status, and duration of displacement. A standardized psychological adaptation scale was used, and data were collected from 324 Syrian refugees residing in Mafraq Governorate, one of Jordan's main refugee-hosting areas. The findings indicate that the overall level of psychological adaptation among the refugees was high. Statistically significant differences were found in relation to gender, favoring males, and educational level, favoring postgraduate respondents. In contrast, no significant differences were observed with respect to marital status or duration of displacement. These results suggest that psychological adaptation is influenced not only by individual factors but also by social and educational contexts. The study highlights the importance of gender-sensitive and education-focused support mechanisms, as well as the role of host-community conditions, in fostering refugees' resilience and successful integration.

**Keywords:** Syrian refugees, psychological adaptation, gender differences, refugee policy, Jordan

## Infrastructure and the Reconfiguration of Regional Order in the Middle East

*Mohammed Afsal K. H. (Indian Institute of Technology Madras, India)*

Existing interpretations of China's role in the Middle East frame Beijing as a mercantilist actor focused on energy security under the U.S. security umbrella. Recent developments, however, point toward a shift that this paper conceptualizes as normative wedging, defined as the use of technological and financial ecosystems to create institutional alternatives that operate with reduced dependence on Western conditionality. While scholars note China's effort to shape international norms through sovereignty-centered initiatives, less attention has been paid to how infrastructure itself can function as a vehicle of order formation. Drawing on project-level data from 2024 to 2026, the study identifies a mechanism of infrastructural interdependence that affords regional actors functional optionality. This mechanism is visible in the institutionalization of non-dollar liquidity via the mBridge platform, which processed over \$55 billion by early 2026, and in the diffusion of alternative technical standards through BeiDou architectures. The paper argues that Beijing is embedding the region within a parallel infrastructural ecosystem operating within existing security architectures. The structural implication is a transition toward an order mediated through platform architecture, where sovereignty is negotiated through technical systems as much as through territorial defense. Infrastructure is therefore theorized as a primary order-producing mechanism through which influence becomes institutionalized without reliance on traditional hard-power guarantees.

**Keywords:** China, infrastructure, regional order, digital sovereignty, Middle East, normative wedging

**SECTION 4**

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**16:00-17:00**

**SESSION 20, HALL MAVI SALON**

**Session Program**

**Nabil Zegaoui**

وفيات المهاجرين غير النظاميين على عتبات أوروبا: حوادث عرضية أم ضحايا سياسات حدودية؟

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**Khadidja Bouamer**

المركب الهيدروسياسي لحوض دجلة – الفرات: إعادة تشكيل الأمن الإقليمي في الشرق الأوسط في ظل التغيرات المناخية

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**Asma Hemaïdia**

أزمة المناخ بين الخطاب السياسي المهيمن والواقع العملي: مقارنة نقدية

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## وفيات المهاجرين غير النظاميين على عتبات أوروبا: حوادث عرضية أم ضحايا سياسات حدودية؟

*Nabil Zegaoui (Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Morocco)*

شهدت دراسات الحدود خلال العقود الأخيرة توسعًا ملحوظًا، حيث أصبحت الحدود موضوعًا متعدد الأبعاد يتقاطع فيه القانون والسياسة والعلاقات الدولية وعلم الاجتماع وعلم الإجرام. وفي قلب هذا الحقل البحثي برزت الهجرة بوصفها ممارسة حدودية بامتياز، تتحدد من خلالها علاقات القوة بين الشمال والجنوب، وتُعاد عبرها صياغة مفاهيم السيادة، والأمن، والاستبعاد. في هذا السياق، تطرح هذه الورقة سؤالًا تحليليًا وأخلاقيًا وقانونيًا بالغ الحساسية: هل تمثل وفيات المهاجرين غير النظاميين على عتبات أوروبا حوادث عرضية فرضتها المخاطر الطبيعية للعبور، أم أنها نتيجة متوقعة ومُنظمة لسياسات حدودية تقييدية تُنتج الموت بوصفه أثرًا بنيويًا لمنطق الردع؟

تنطلق الورقة من ملاحظة أن الاهتمام الإعلامي بقضية وفيات المهاجرين غالبًا ما يبقى رهين الصور الصادمة للجثث التي تُلغظها أمواج البحر الأبيض المتوسط، في حين أن "الوفيات المرتبطة بالحدود" لا تقتصر على المجال البحري، بل تمتد إلى الحدود البرية، ومسارات العبور، وظروف الاحتجاز، وأثناء عمليات الترحيل، وحتى في مناطق بعيدة عن الحدود الأوروبية بفعل سياسات "تصدير الحدود" نحو دول الجنوب. وعليه، تهدف الورقة إلى تفكيك العلاقة بين سياسات مراقبة الحدود الأوروبية وتفاقم المخاطر المميتة التي تواجه المهاجرين غير النظاميين، وتحديد أوجه المسؤولية التي يمكن أن تتحملها هذه السياسات بوصفها فاعلاً غير مرئي لكنه حاسم في إنتاج العنف الحدودي.

وتفترض الورقة أن وفيات المهاجرين غير النظاميين ليست وقائع عشوائية، بل هي في كثير من الأحيان وفيات متوقعة يمكن أن تحدث عبر الفعل أو الإغفال المتعمد، ضمن سياق سياسات الردع التي تجعل العبور أكثر صعوبة وكلفة وخطورة.

على المستوى المنهجي، تعتمد الورقة مقارنة تحليلية متعددة التخصصات، توظف أدوات علم الإجرام النقدي وربطها بحقول العلاقات الدولية والهجرة والقانون الدولي. وتُحلل الورقة الموضوع عبر ثلاثة محاور مترابطة: (1) بيان العلاقة البنوية بين الهجرة والحدود، (2) عرض طبيعة الحدود المعاصرة وما ينتج عنها من مخاطر وارتفاع في الوفيات، (3) مناقشة مسؤولية السياسات الحدودية الأوروبية وتكييفها ضمن أطر سياسية وأخلاقية وربما جنائية.

في المحور الأول، تُبرز الورقة أن الحدود ليست مجرد خطوط جغرافية، بل هي عمليات اجتماعية وسياسية تُنتج أنماطًا من الاستبعاد والتمييز. فالحدود تعمل كـ"مرشحات" تميز بين فئات المهاجرين: إذ تُفتح نسبيًا أمام السياح والنخب الاقتصادية والكفاءات، بينما تُغلق أمام الفئات غير المرغوب فيها، خصوصًا المهاجرين غير النظاميين القادمين من الجنوب العالمي. ويظهر هنا أن الهجرة والحدود في علاقة جدلية: فالهجرة تصبح مرئية عبر الحدود، والحدود لا تُفهم إلا عبر فعل العبور. كما تتناول الورقة التحول المعاصر نحو "الحدود المرنة" التي لم تعد ثابتة عند النقاط الجغرافية، بل امتدت خارج المجال الأوروبي عبر سياسات الإضفاء الخارجي، مثل التعاون الأمني، وضباط الاتصال، وتشديد التأشيرات، وإنشاء مراكز استقبال/احتجاز في دول العبور. ويُنتج هذا الامتداد وضعًا تصبح فيه دول مثل المغرب "غرفة انتظار" تُحوّل المهاجرين من عابرين إلى مقيمين قسرًا، في إطار استراتيجية تُبعد الهجرة عن المجال القانوني الأوروبي.

أما المحور الثاني، فيستعرض "حقائق ووقائع" عن المخاطر المميتة التي تصنعها الحدود المعاصرة. إذ تؤكد الورقة أن تعزيز إنفاذ الحدود لا يوقف الهجرة، بل يدفعها إلى مسارات أشد فتكًا. فالمنع من خلال الردع يؤدي إلى تفتيت طرق الهجرة وتحويلها نحو مناطق نائية جبلية وصحرائية، بحيث تتحول التضاريس نفسها إلى أداة ضمن آليات الردع. كما تُبرز الورقة أن البحر الأبيض المتوسط أصبح الطريق الأكثر فتكًا بالمهاجرين في العالم، حيث سجلت آلاف الوفيات سنويًا، وبلغ عدد الضحايا ما يفوق 21200 بين 2014 و2020. ويُظهر هذا الواقع أن غياب المسارات القانونية للهجرة يوسع سوق التهريب ويُجبر المهاجرين على الاعتماد على شبكات غير رسمية، ما يضاعف احتمالات الغرق أو الهلاك نتيجة الاكتظاظ، أو رداءة القوارب، أو نقص الوقود والإمدادات.

وتشير الورقة إلى أن الخطر لا ينتهي عند الوصول، بل يمتد إلى سياسات الاستقبال والاحتجاز والترحيل. ففي إطار "نهج النقاط الساخنة" تُحتجز أعداد كبيرة من المهاجرين في ظروف سيئة لعدة أشهر، ما يجعل مراكز

الاحتجاز فضاءات للاستثناء والحرمان من الحقوق الأساسية. وتستشهد الورقة بحادثة حريق مركز احتجاز شخبيل في هولندا (2005) الذي أدى إلى وفاة 11 مهاجرًا كانوا في انتظار الترحيل، بوصفه مثالاً على أن المهاجر قد ينجو من البحر لكنه قد يموت داخل منظومة الاحتجاز. كما تبرز الورقة الطابع البنيوي للعنف في الأنظمة الحدودية، ليس فقط عبر القوة المباشرة، بل كذلك عبر الإذلال والترهيب والانتظار الطويل وعدم اليقين، فضلاً عن استخدام تقنيات المراقبة والوسم الإلكتروني التي تنتج أثرًا نفسيًا وجسديًا شديدًا.

في المحور الثالث، تناقش الورقة مسؤولية السياسات الحدودية الأوروبية عن هذه الوفيات، في ظل توجه متزايد نحو الأمانة والعسكرة وتجريم الهجرة. وتُظهر أن "تصدير الحدود" يتم عبر تمويل ودعم أمني لدول خارج الاتحاد، ما يجعل الوفيات الواقعة في الجنوب جزءًا من كلفة إنفاذ السياسة الأوروبية نفسها، رغم وقوعها خارج المجال الإقليمي الرسمي. كما تحلل الورقة "المنعطف التقييدي" في سياسات الهجرة، الذي يرافقه خطاب سياسي محافظ يضيف الشرعية على الممارسات العنيفة ضد المهاجرين. وتتناول كذلك دور وكالة فرونتكس في تنسيق العمليات الحدودية، وإشكالية المسؤولية القانونية عن الأحداث المميتة أثناء العمليات المشتركة. وتعالج الورقة بوضوح مسألة "عدم تقديم المساعدة" في البحر، باعتبارها أحد آليات إنتاج الموت، مستشهدة بحادثة 2011 التي تُرك فيها مهاجرون ينجرفون لأيام رغم وجود سفن حربية عديدة في المنطقة، ما أدى إلى وفاة أغلبهم. كما تبرز أن تجريم الإنقاذ الإنساني من طرف بعض الدول الأوروبية أصبح عاملاً مثبطًا لعمليات المساعدة، سواء من الصيادين أو منظمات المجتمع المدني.

وتخلص الورقة إلى أن وفيات المهاجرين غير النظاميين ليست مجرد حوادث طبيعية، بل هي نتاج تفاعل بين البنية السياسية للحدود (الضبط، الردع، الإقصاء، العسكرة) وبين خيارات العبور الفردية التي تُفرض عليها المخاطرة بفعل غياب البدائل القانونية. لذلك، ترى الورقة أن مسؤولية الدول الأوروبية لا تقتصر على بعد أخلاقي، بل يمكن التفكير فيها ضمن نطاقات أوسع تشمل المسؤولية السياسية عن النتائج، وصولاً إلى المسؤولية القانونية/الجنايية في بعض الحالات، خاصة حين تستمر السياسات رغم توفر الأدلة على آثارها المميتة. وفي ضوء ذلك، ندعو الورقة إلى تبني مقاربة حقوقية قائمة على الأمن الإنساني للحد من التكلفة البشرية للضوابط الحدودية، عبر فتح مسارات قانونية للهجرة، وتطوير استراتيجيات استباقية للإنقاذ، وتقييد وسائل الردع التي تدفع المهاجرين نحو الخطر، وإعادة الاعتبار لمبدأ المساواة في قيمة الحياة البشرية عند إنفاذ السياسات الحدودية. فالحدود قد تكون حقًا سياديًا للدول، لكنها لا يمكن أن تُدار بمنطق يجعل موت المهاجر "أضرارًا جانبية" مقبولة.

## المركب الهيدروسياسي لحوض دجلة - الفرات :إعادة تشكيل الأمن الإقليمي في الشرق الأوسط في ظل التغيرات المناخية

*Khadija Bouamer (University M'hamed Bongara of Boumerdes, Algeria)*

يمثل حوض دجلة الفرات مركباً هيدروسياسياً حاسماً في إعادة تشكيل الأمن الإقليمي في الشرق الأوسط، حيث تتقاطع الموارد المائية مع السياسات الجيوسياسية والبنية التحتية المؤسسية والهشاشة البيئية. تتجاوز هذه الدراسة المقاربات التقنية التقليدية لإدارة المياه معتبرة الحوض فضاءً للاعتماد المتبادل بين تركيا، سوريا، والعراق. وتعتمد الورقة على إطار المركب الهيدروسياسي ونظرية الهيمنة المائية لتحليل كيفية استخدام تركيا لمشروع جنوب شرق الأناضول (GAP) لإعادة تشكيل موازين التفاوض وخطابات السيادة وأنماط التفاعل الإقليمي. كما تستكشف الدراسة تأثير التغيرات المناخية، موجات الجفاف، الضغوط الديموغرافية، والهشاشة ما بعد النزاع على مستويات الضعف داخل الحوض. وتشير النتائج إلى أن ديناميات الأمن الإقليمي تتسم بطابع هجين حيث تتعابش المنافسة والضغط السياسي مع أشكال من التعاون الانتقائي ما يحول حوكمة المياه إلى أداة استراتيجية لإعادة إنتاج العلاقات بين الدول. تبرز الدراسة أهمية المياه كعنصر مركزي في فهم الاستقرار الإقليمي واستراتيجيات التكيف مع ندرة الموارد.

### Keywords:

المركب الهيدروسياسي، الهيمنة المائية، حوض دجلة الفرات، الأمن المائي، الأمن الإقليمي، مشروع جنوب شرق الأناضول

## أزمة المناخ بين الخطاب السياسي المهيم والواقع العملي: مقاربة نقدية

*Asma Hemaïdia (Boumerdes University, Algeria)*

بعد التغير المناخي أحد أبرز التحديات العالمية التي تواجه البشرية في القرن الحادي والعشرين، نظراً لتشابك أبعاده البيئية والاقتصادية والسياسية والاجتماعية. ورغم الإجماع العلمي والدولي حول أسبابه البشرية، فإن الخطابات المتعلقة به غالباً ما تتسم بالتناقض والغموض بين ما يُعلن من التزامات دولية وما يُنفذ على أرض الواقع. يهدف هذا المقال إلى تحليل هذا التناقض انطلاقاً من فرضية مفادها أنّ النظام الرأسمالي النيوليبرالي، القائم على التوسع غير المحدود في الإنتاج والاستهلاك، هو المسؤول عن تفاقم الأزمة وفي الوقت ذاته المنتج للخطاب المناخي السائد. يعتمد البحث على المقاربة مابعد بنويوية و الاقتصاد السياسي للبيئة لفحص كيفية توظيف شعارات مثل "الاقتصاد الأخضر" و"الحياد الكربوني" كأدوات إيديولوجية تُعيد إنتاج الأزمة بدل معالجتها. وتُظهر النتائج أنّ الفجوة بين الخطاب والواقع ليست عرضية، بل تعبير عن تناقض بنيوي يرتبط بمصالح النظام النيوليبرالي وآلياته، مع ما يترتب عن ذلك من تكريس لانعدام العدالة المناخية بين الشمال والجنوب. ويخلص المقال إلى أنّ تجاوز هذه الإشكالية يتطلب تحولاً جذرياً في السياسات الاقتصادية والبيئية، وتعزيز العدالة المناخية، وتمكين المجتمعات المحلية من صياغة وتنفيذ الحلول لضمان فعاليتها واستدامتها.

**Keywords:** أزمة المناخ، الخطاب المناخي، العدالة المناخية، النيوليبرالية، مقاربة ما بعد بنوي

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**16:00-17:00**

**SESSION 21, HALL M2**

**Session Program**

**M. Cüneyt Yenigün and Zeinab Hussein**

*Power Theory and the Road Towards Regional Hegemony in the Middle East*

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**Najmiyeh Pouresmaili and Tahmores Gholami**

*The Regional Order in the Middle East after October 7th*

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**Shiv Sundaram**

*The Rise of Minilateralism in the Middle East: Regional Challenges and Conflict-Resilient Diplomacy*

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**Prasanta Kumar Pradhan**

*Collective Action and Institutionalism: Analysing GCC's Multi-Layered Response to the Israel-Hamas War*

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## **Power Theory and the Road Towards Regional Hegemony in the Middle East**

*M. Cüneyt Yenigün (Istanbul University, Türkiye) and Zeinab Hussein (Sultan Qaboos University, Oman)*

In the midst of a dynamic region vibrant with clashes and conflicts, the need for a regional leader and local hegemonic power is inevitable. The Middle East since decades, more specifically since the drawing of its artificial borders through Sykes-Picot agreement, following by the establishment of the occupied state of Israel in 1948, following by the opening of Pandora's Box as a result of the Iraq Invasion in 2003 by the USA, following by the flourish of populous uprisings since the Arab Spring of 2011, all have deepened the political, security, economic and social problems. Since then, the region has been facing different challenges that need to be urgently addressed. However, the current regional structure has proved on many different occasions its failure to solve such enduring problems or to contribute to stabilizing the region, which clearly indicates the inability of external powers to lead the Middle East. Since the withdrawal of Great Britain in 1971 and its replacement by the USA, an imported security structure was architected by foreign actors within the region in order to serve their own interests, neglecting the regional benefits. This paper assumes that the country that will be able to solve the enduring issues of the Middle East and propose solution alternatives to its problems, either sectarian, economic, political, or security-related issues, would be the future regional leader of the Middle East. However, for a state to be capable of doing so, it first needs to consolidate its various power components, considering the nine main components of power theory, including both tangible and intangible factors.

**Keywords:** Power theory, the Middle East, leadership competition, regional hegemony

## The Regional Order in the Middle East After October 7<sup>th</sup>

*Najmīyeh PourEsmāeili (Tarbiat Modares Univeristy, Iran) and Tahmores Gholami (Allameh Tabatabaei University, Iran)*

The Middle East region has experienced profound and pivotal transformations in the aftermath of October 7<sup>th</sup>. The political-military elimination of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli attack on southern Lebanon and the escalation of pressure to disarm Hezbollah, Israeli strikes on Yemen, the fall of Bashar al-Assad, ongoing Israeli attacks on Syria, the joint Israeli-American strike on Iran, and finally, the Israeli attack on Qatar are among the critical developments that have reshaped the countenance of the Middle East. It appears that the trajectory of post-October 7<sup>th</sup> developments is ongoing, necessitating anticipation for further changes, such as the expansion of the Abraham Accords. The fundamental research question this paper seeks to address is: What impact have the collective past and ongoing developments had on the power equations and the regional order in the Middle East?" In response to this question, the working hypothesis to be examined is that recent developments have eroded the Middle East regional system's status as an independent entity, rendering it a dependent regional system subordinate to the United States as an extra-regional power. This shift carries serious consequences for the member states of the Middle East regional system.

## **The Rise Of Minilateralism in The Middle East: Regional Challenges and Conflict-Resilient Diplomacy**

*Shiv Sundaram (Jawaharlal Nebru University, India)*

The growing minilateral arrangements in the Middle East highlight a noticeable shift from traditional multilateral organisations, which are constrained by a lack of consensus and slow decision-making. While minilaterals, small, flexible and issue-specific coalitions is suitable for regional and external actors to respond effectively on the technological, economic and security challenges. There are many factors which accelerated the rise of minilateralism in the Middle East. For instance, the strategic rivalry between China and the United States, the financial needs of post-oil diversification, Iran's assertive regional posture, and the recalibration of U.S. regional commitments have all combined to change regional considerations. At the same time, the inefficacy of traditional regional organizations, such as the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council, has encouraged states to pursue smaller, pragmatic coalitions capable of delivering concrete outcomes. In this case, minilateralism serves as a strategic response to concerns about fragmentation, power diffusion, and regime survival rather than just being a diplomatic preference.

The arrangements like the Abraham Accords, the I2U2 grouping, and the Negev Forum highlight the efforts of regional powers to maintain strategic autonomy, diversifying their relations with multiple powers in an uncertain global order. In this trend, Saudi Arabia could play a crucial role in shaping the regional politics in the Middle East. By joining minilateral arrangements, Riyadh's geopolitical influence significantly strengthens regional security mechanisms, such as integrated air defense networks, formalisation of collective defense arrangements, and its political stability through geostrategic importance and religious authority.

Apart from regional security, minilateralism allows transcontinental frameworks which aim to enhance economic cooperation and connectivity. The I2U2 grouping, and the France-UAE-India trilateral reflects the motivation to build an alternative infrastructure and development models that counter the existing hegemonic system. However, I2U2 currently prioritizes food, energy, and technological cooperation, its long-term credibility as a counterweight to China's Belt and Road Initiative depends on its capacity to integrate Indian industrial capabilities, Israeli innovation, Emirati investment, and U.S. strategic backing. Likewise, the France-UAE-India framework is expanding into a broader Indo-Middle East strategic architecture, emphasizing maritime domain awareness, clean energy, and sustainable infrastructure. Additionally, these programs strive to offer regional states an alternate option that avoids overdependence on either US or China-led economic models, albeit competing with the magnitude and financial reach of Chinese capital remains a substantial restriction.

This study seeks to interrogate the strategic logic, institutional dynamics, and geopolitical implications of emerging Middle Eastern minilateralism. It addresses the questions; to what extent does minilateralism enhance institutional efficiency and policy coordination

in a fragmented regional order? How do power asymmetries, external engagements, and domestic political constraints shape the durability of these small-group alignments? Can transcontinental frameworks such as I2U2 and the France-UAE-India trilateral evolve into credible alternatives to China-led infrastructure and development models? By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to broader theoretical debates on minilateralism, regional order-building, and the transformation of alliance politics in the emerging multipolar world.

## **Collective Action and Institutionalism: Analysing GCC's Multi-Layered Response to the Israel-Hamas War**

*Prasanta Kumar Pradhan (Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India)*

The war between Israel and Hamas that erupted on October 7, 2023, was one of the most intense and sustained of wars in the Middle East in decades. The War resulted in more than 70,000 casualties and thousands wounded. There has been large-scale destruction and a lingering humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) emerged as a significant, regional bloc who played a significant role in de-escalating the situation by indulging in diplomacy, mediation, humanitarian aid and unified political pressure. They have engaged in diplomatic engagement and mediation, humanitarian aid, and applying collective pressure for a ceasefire. In sum, the GCC's role in the de-escalation of the Israel-Gaza conflict since 2023 can be termed as a multi-layered engagement encompassing regional diplomacy and mediation, coordinated humanitarian assistance, collective political pressure and emerging reconstruction initiatives.

**Keywords:** GCC, Gulf, Israel, Hamas, Gaza, Palestine

**FRIDAY MAY 8**

**16:00-17:00**

**SESSION 22, D3 HALL**

**Session Program**

**Ebtihaj Ahmed Al A'ali and Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi**

*Women, Leadership, and Political Visibility in the Middle East: An Impression Management Perspective*

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**Settimio Stallone**

*The American Foreign Policy and the Evolution of the US Military Power in the Middle East*

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**Arif Darmawan, Zedriansyah Zedriansyah and Arivina Ratih Yulihar Taher**

*Guns or Growth? Military Expenditure, Inflation, and Regional Development in Conflict-Affected Middle Eastern Economies*

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**Ilaha Chiragova**

*The Legislative Response to Technological Development: A Review of Incentives, Regulatory Frameworks and Challenges in the Republic Of Armenia*

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**Heba Abu Eyadah and Anas Adnan Odaibat**

*Forward-Looking Visions for the Next Generation in the Middle East: Between Diplomacy And Technology*

## Women, Leadership, and Political Visibility in the Middle East: An Impression Management Perspective

*Ebtihaj Ahmed Al A'ali (University of Bahrain, Bahrain) and Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)*

Women's political participation and leadership in the Middle East remain limited despite gradual institutional reforms, quota systems, and increased international attention to gender equality. While existing scholarship has extensively documented structural, legal, and cultural barriers facing women in politics, less attention has been paid to the micro-level strategies women deploy to navigate political visibility, legitimacy, and authority within male-dominated political environments. This extended abstract examines women's political leadership in the Middle East through the lens of impression management, arguing that political visibility is not merely a function of formal access to office but is actively constructed, negotiated, and constrained through gendered expectations and social norms.

Drawing on impression management theory, the paper conceptualizes women politicians as strategic actors who continuously manage public images, behaviors, and communication to reconcile competing demands of leadership, credibility, and gender conformity. The analysis highlights how women leaders engage in selective self-presentation to gain legitimacy, reduce resistance, and maintain political survival in contexts where leadership remains strongly masculinized. At the same time, these strategies impose psychological and political costs, reinforcing unequal standards of evaluation and limiting the transformative potential of women's political inclusion.

Situating the discussion within broader debates on political representation and gendered power structures in the Middle East, the paper argues that women's visibility in politics is shaped by the interaction between institutional frameworks, socio-cultural norms, and informal expectations governing leadership behavior. By reframing political participation as a process of visibility management rather than simple representation, the paper contributes to regional politics literature and offers new insights into the conditional nature of women's political empowerment in the Middle East.

**Keywords:** Women in politics, political leadership, impression management, political visibility, Middle East

## **The American Foreign Policy and the Evolution of the US Military Power in the Middle East: A Comparative Study Based on Diplomatic and Military Sources**

*Settimio Stallone (University of Naples Federico II, Italy)*

The current American military presence in the Middle East is impressive. According to data provided by the Council for Foreign Relations, updated to June 2025, the United States has a military apparatus in the region that consists of 22 bases in 11 countries, not considering the periodic deployment of naval units in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. This deployment has been significantly strengthened during the last three presidencies (Trump, Biden and, again, Trump), and – even more so – in the last two years, when Washington has taken a particularly aggressive posture towards Iran and its network of regional proxies, such as Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and various militant groups based in Iraq and Syria. It is well known that, after the British disengagement from the Middle East following the end of the Second World War, the United States have constantly, although not always effectively, worked to maintain the balance of power in the region, also to operate in defense of some of their strategic interests, such as the containment of Soviet political, economic, military and ideological expansionism (until 1991), the security of maritime routes, energy supply, and finally the fight against terrorism (especially after 2001). In recent years, in addition to the defense of the State of Israel, Washington, after the rupture of the alliance with Iran following the Islamic revolution of 1979, has identified the Arab-Sunni axis constituted by Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia as a stable interlocutor, gradually adding to this axis the Emirates of the Persian Gulf, starting with Kuwait, freed in 1991 at the end of the First Gulf War, which represented a fundamental moment for the strengthening of the American military apparatus in the Middle East. After the costly and debated invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), justified by the War on Terror that politically monopolized the presidency of George W. Bush, the Obama administration (see the speech given in 2009 at al-Azhar University in Cairo) tried to change Washington's policy in the Middle East, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the Arab Spring and distancing itself from the unilateralism that had characterized the previous presidency, based on the ideological course supported by the “neocon” current, using conciliatory tones with all the souls of the Islamic world. While continuing to rely mainly on the fight against terrorism, thanks to the active collaboration with the regimes in the area, especially in the Gulf (it should be remembered that the US 5th Fleet is stationed in Bahrain), the United States in that period showed that it also wanted to dialogue with traditionally hostile countries, such as Assad's Syria (to defeat the threat posed by the Islamic State) and the ayatollahs' Iran itself (the JCPOA Treaty dates back to 2015). Despite the failure of attempts to resume negotiations between the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), thwarted by the extremist positions of the executive led by Benjamin Netanyahu, the United States tried to work for a stabilization of the region, starting from the assumption that this is impossible without an improvement in relations between Israel and the Arab states: the

Abraham Accords of 2020 were part of this perspective, thwarted – in their general political significance – by the events of 7 October 2023. The speech at the conference, and the subsequent paper, will focus on the reconstruction from a historical-political point of view of the process of consolidation of the American military component in the Middle East, starting from the Eisenhower Doctrine up to the present day, highlighting how military power has been progressively modeled on the directives of the American foreign policy in the region. These are today profoundly changed compared to the early 2000s, as the United States abandoned the idea of "building" new states in the region, focusing, on the contrary, on targeted operations aimed at guaranteeing regional security. The aim of the research is to compare the evolution of this American military presence in the Middle East with the strategic doctrines put in place by the different presidential administrations, with particular reference to the period between the seventies and the new millennium, when the United States has started to balance its presence in the region with the potential strategic threat represented by the People's Republic Chinese. The study will be based on American diplomatic documentation and on documents collected in the NATO archives. The possibility to study on recently declassified primary sources will also give a high grade of originality to the research and the paper will surely have a positive impact on the understanding of the evolution of American policies towards the Middle East (also considering the important events that the region has recently experienced) and may be useful for the drafting of future studies by the international scientific community.

**Keywords:** US foreign policy, military presence and bases, deterrence and balance of power

## **Guns or Growth? Military Expenditure, Inflation, and Regional Development in Conflict-Affected Middle Eastern Economies**

*Arif Darmawan (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye), Zedriansyah Zedriansyah (Lampung University, Indonesia), and Arivina Ratih Yulihar Taher (Lampung University, Indonesia)*

Geopolitical conflict generates far-reaching economic consequences by disrupting trade, discouraging investment, and increasing macroeconomic uncertainty at both regional and global levels. In the Middle East, prolonged instability has intensified the policy dilemma between allocating resources to security needs and sustaining economic growth. This study examines the growth implications of military expenditure and inflation in conflict-affected Middle Eastern economies, addressing the question of whether higher security spending constrains regional development.

The analysis employs a panel data approach using annual data from 2014–2024 for Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. GDP growth is modeled as a function of military expenditure (% of GDP) and inflation, with controls for foreign direct investment inflows, trade openness, and international tourism expenditure. Fixed-effects estimations are applied to control for unobserved country-specific characteristics and common time shocks, with robustness checks using alternative specifications.

The expected results suggest that higher military expenditure is negatively associated with economic growth, particularly when accompanied by elevated inflation. Inflation is anticipated to exacerbate the growth-reducing effects of military spending by amplifying fiscal pressure and economic uncertainty. Conversely, trade openness, tourism activity, and FDI inflows are expected to partially mitigate these adverse effects. Despite its contributions, the study faces limitations related to data availability, potential endogeneity between growth and military spending, and the heterogeneity of conflict intensity across countries. Nonetheless, the findings aim to inform policy debates on balancing security priorities with sustainable economic development in conflict-prone regions.

**Keywords:** Conflict, economic growth, inflation, military expenditure, panel data

## The Legislative Response to Technological Development: A Review of Incentives, Regulatory Frameworks and Challenges in the Republic of Armenia

*Ilaha Chiragova (Khazar University, Azerbaijan)*

Armenia's strategic shift toward an IT sector is currently hindered by a fragmented and deficient legal infrastructure that fails to support its technological expansion. While state policies like the 2021–2026 Government Program aim to attract global investment and talent, they are undermined by a regulatory obstacles in critical areas such as AI governance, data protection, and cybersecurity. Therefore, the methodology employed in this inquiry to reveal the incentives, regulatory frameworks and the prevailed challenges, is a qualitative research design centered on a systematic documentary and legal analytical approach. The findings indicate that current regulations offer minimal actionable guidance and lack the clarity necessary for judicial enforcement. Furthermore, the study highlights systemic risks to foreign investment, including judicial bias, the absence of specialized courts, and concerns regarding digital freedom of expression. Issues such as real-time facial recognition surveillance and the potential for internet shutdowns during martial law suggest a tension between national security and civil liberties. Ultimately, the paper concludes that Armenia's high-tech sovereignty is undermined by institutional corruption and a lack of clear, actionable IT regulations, necessitating a comprehensive legal overhaul to secure long-term digital resilience and investor trust.

**Keywords:** Technological development, Armenia, regulatory frameworks, digitalization, legislature

## Forward-Looking Visions for the Next Generation in The Middle East: Between Diplomacy and Technology

*Heba Tawfiq Ebu Eyadah (University of Jordan, Jordan) and Anas Adnan Odaibat (Islamic University, Jordan)*

This study aims to develop and propose future visions for the next generation in the Middle East, linking the diplomatic challenges and obstacles in ongoing conflicts, escalating wars, and emerging crises within the context of digital openness and smart technology in the era of globalization. It also explores the role of educational institutions in promoting and consolidating the principles of diplomacy and intellectual openness to others, spreading tolerance, respecting beliefs, establishing peaceful coexistence, accepting diverse opinions, engaging in constructive debate, and respectful dialogue. The study employs an inductive analytical approach, through a comprehensive analysis and compilation of current educational research, studies, and literature covering the period from 2023 to 2026. The objective is to formulate an independent and practical vision for developing communication and respect skills within the context of smart technology and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. What distinguishes this study from previous research is its methodology, which focuses on an analytical perspective based on the findings of previous studies. A proposed practical future vision was developed based on this analysis, and its effectiveness was evaluated by specialists and experts.

**Keywords:** Forward-looking visions, generation in the Middle East, diplomacy, technology

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