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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

**TITOLO/TITLE:** The time and space of “transnational ad-hocracy” in the SWANA region

**PROPONENTE/I – PROPONENT/S:** CHIARA MARITATO (UNIVERSITY OF TURIN) E ROSITA DI PERI (UNIVERSITY OF TURIN)

**ABSTRACT (1500 parole/words):**

Elaborated in studies of bureaucracy and public policy as either an intentional institutional set-up or an unintentional outcome of policy implementation (Miller 1986), “ad-hocracy” appears particularly useful in framing the growing reliance on flexibility, pragmatism and informality as a ruling technique. According to Natter, “ad-hocracy can be an intentionally ambiguous governance strategy to secure state power.” Moreover, it speaks to those measures that at various levels reflect the flexibility of executive politics; the pragmatism of exemption regimes; and the informality of case-by-case arrangements (Natter 2023).

Recently, scholars have employed the notion of ad-hocracy to investigate states’ margins of manoeuvre in navigating domestic and foreign policy interests, multilevel migration governance as well as measures that at various levels are taken when identity becomes temporarily dominant (or marginal) in political decision-making processes. Concepts like Egypt’s “policy of ambivalence” towards refugees (Norman 2017) or Jordan’s and Lebanon’s “politics of uncertainty” over Syrian and Palestinian refugees (Nassar and Stel 2019), Turkey’s “informal tolerance” of irregularized migrants (Karadağ and Sert 2023) clearly illuminate this process. Beyond migration studies, the literature has investigated how governance is exerted outside states’ territories towards the domestic abroad (Adamson 2012; Bauböck 2010; Varadarajan 2010; Ragazzi 2009). In this vein, transnational ad-hocratic governance is thus a lens to assess ad hoc institutions, agencies, policies, cultural diplomacy and bureaucratic apparatuses through which nation-states maintain and enhance political, economic, and identity ties with diasporas and kin communities (Waterbury 2020; Gamlen 2014).

The panel aims to explore the many facets and challenges that the transnational ad-hocratic governance poses in the SWANA region. In doing so, the concept of ad-hocracy will be stretched and used to frame many different

debates in time and space crossing the study of the region. How and to what extent transnational ad-hocratic governance impacts communities and groups at national and non-national level? Is transnational ad-hocracy a “technique” able shaping identities and borders’ control? How national policies and local strategies are used to substantiate (or contrast) the transnational ad-hocratic governance?

We welcome papers with theoretical contribution as well as original empirical data informed by the methodological and multidisciplinary challenges to this debate covering (e.g.):

- transnational ad-hocratic governance and its role in shaping identities across history in the region;
- the role of minorities, kin communities and diasporic groups in contrasting or including transnational ad-hocratic practices (and policies);
- transnational ad-hocracy vs. states’ ad-hocracy;
- the role of transnational networks in shaping transnational ad-hocracy;
- transnational ad-hocracy and cultural diplomacy tools;
- the foreign policy implication of the transnational ad-hocracy;
- transnational ad-hocracy and migration processes.

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#### Papers:

##### **Regimes of fear in Lebanon: perspectives from the borderlands**

Daniel Meier, Dr. HDR political science, Sciences Po Grenoble

What are the current dominant threats and fears in Lebanon? What are the perceptions of these threats among the borderland communities and how are they impacting their identity construction? This paper unpacks the articulation between identity, borders and fear by proposing to explore three regimes of fear that are dominant narratives provided by the state institutions and also by Hezbollah: the threat posed by Israel, by the Salafis-jihadists and by the Syrian refugees. These regimes of fear are echoing differently in the Northern, Eastern or Southern borderlands and interviews with local residents tend to unveil a common unnamed fear of marginalization while showing an alternative identity construction in each of the borderland regions.

##### **Ethnic or political cleansing? Identity, cultural heritage and demographic engineering in the Turkish-occupied territories of northern Syria**

Davide Grasso, Research Chair, Institut of Advanced Study Iméra, Aix Marseille Université Faculty, International University College of Turin

Using data extracted from the relevant literature, ethnographic research and international reports produced by non-governmental organisations, the paper will try to answer the following question: what geopolitical context explains the rationale of ad-hocratic policies implemented by Turkey towards Syrian refugees (multiple arbitrary repatriations)? The Turkish government seems unable to implement the demographic engineering underway since 2018 and 2019 in the occupied Syrian regions of Afrin, Ras al-Ayn and Tell Abyad with the desired speed. The paper will summarize the roots of such a transnational endeavor throughout the last phase of the Syrian war (2018-2024). It will try to explain the conflict between Turkey and the Autonomous democratic administration of north and East Syria relying on identification bundles detected through processual-relational thinking (pr-t). Two decisive identification layers will emerge, the “ethnic” and the “political”. The first can be defined by normative horizons referred to language, customs and religious beliefs. The second by the adherence to specific policies, governance programs, and attached value to specific sources of law. Both identity bundles will be presented as relevant, but the second will appear to play a preponderant role.

### **Transnational Ad-hocratic Governance and Migration Routes: A Case Study from Northern Lebanon**

Lorenzo Trombetta, AnsaMed

This research empirically examines the dynamics of transnational ad-hocratic governance in the context of clandestine and forced migration from Syria to Lebanon and onward to Italy's northern coast. Based on extensive fieldwork conducted between 2021 and 2024 in Lebanon's border regions of Wadi Khaled and Arsal, as well as along the northern Lebanese coastline, the study investigates how Lebanese and Syrian state authorities, alongside various transnational actors entrenched in these territories, collaboratively shape physical migration routes. Through comprehensive field explorations and first-hand Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in Arsal, Wadi Khaled, Tripoli, Bebnine, Abde, Nahr al-Bared, and Shekka, the study also includes interviews with Syrian and Lebanese migrants who have reached Europe and potential Syrian migrants still in Syria. The investigation reveals the significant impact of the social, economic, and political ecosystem in northern and eastern Lebanon. This ecosystem is notably characterized by a high adaptability of actors who govern the clandestine migration market, effectively responding to both internal and external contingencies. The findings underscore the complexity and fluidity of transnational ad-hocratic governance, highlighting its role in navigating and shaping migration pathways. This study contributes to understanding how local and transnational actors' interactions and strategies foster a dynamic governance framework that influences migration processes and outcomes not only in the SWANA region but also lays the foundation for exploring power dynamics across the broader southern and southeastern Mediterranean basin through the lens of ad-hocracy.

### **The Israeli adhocratic governance of the Gaza Strip's borders (1967-2007)**

Arturo Marzano, University of Pisa

In my paper I intend to reconstruct the policies implemented by the various Israeli governments in regulating access/exit to/from the Gaza Strip between 1967, when there was a total opening, to 2007, when a complete shutdown began. More specifically, I want to highlight some turning points of this policy: 1971, when a security fence was erected around the Strip; 1991, when Israel introduced for the first time the system of exit permits for the population of the Strip; 1994, when the partial withdrawal of the army from Gaza was accompanied by the birth of the Palestinian Authority but also by the system of checkpoints within the Strip; 2000, when the outbreak of the Second Intifada saw the beginning of a policy of progressive closure; 2005, when the Israeli disengagement, instead of improving the situation, further diminished the possibility of the Palestinian population leaving Gaza; 2007, with the total closure of the Strip after the Hamas "coup d'état".

A 40-year analysis allows to better understand whether and to what extent was the politics implemented by the Israeli government and more in general its administration a coherent strategy or a series of arrangements based on "flexibility, pragmatism and informality" as ad-hocracy suggests.

In terms of questions, I aim at addressing the following ones: What were the reasons that led the Israeli government to act in this way? What objectives did this aim to achieve? What consequences did these choices have on the relations between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority? What impact did this politics have on the living condition of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip as well as the Israeli population living in the surrounding areas?

In addition to the existing bibliography, I will mainly use two types of primary sources: reports by UN agencies, and international and local NGOs, as well as press (Israeli, Palestinian and international).

### **Transnational identities in practice: Lebanese Turkmens between Turkey's adhocratic governance and Lebanese disinvestment**

Rosita Di Peri, Chiara Maritato, University of Turin

The article explores the transnational dimension of adhocratic governance through the case study of the Turkmen community in Lebanon, a marginal and apparently insignificant group (especially from a demographic point of view). It investigates how Turkey's and Lebanon's governance of Turkmen communities has evolved over the past decades, and what this reveals about how Turkmens' transnational identities operate in practice. Drawing on extensive fieldwork conducted by the authors in both Lebanon and Turkey the paper contends that over the past few decades, Turkey has implemented ad hoc strategies towards Turkmen communities and that these practices have influenced Turkmen communities' transnational identification practices. While Lebanon has disengaged from the management of a population living in marginal yet strategically relevant areas, Turkey

has framed its foreign policy in terms of cultural-religious kinship and pragmatism. Both political processes are continually characterized by competing bundles of identifications, which temporarily and incompletely acquire a privileged status in (foreign policy) decision-making.

#### **PROFILO ACCADEMICO DEL/DELLA/DEI/DELLE PROPONENTE/I – SHORT BIO OF PROPONENTS**

Rosita Di Peri is associate professor at the Department of Culture, Politics and Society at the University of Turin, Italy where she teaches 'Politics, Institutions and Cultures of Middle East' and 'Mashrek Politics and Institutions'.

She is part of the Phd program in Social and Political Change. Her research interests focus on democracy and authoritarianism in the Middle East with a particular attention on Lebanon. Recently she investigated the nexus between power, space and identity in the Mediterranean region with particular interest on borders. She authored two books (Il Libano contemporaneo, Carocci, Roma 2017 and Guida alla Politica Medio Orientale con Francesco Mazzucotelli) and co-edited several books and Special Issues. In 2023 she co-edited (with Daniel Meier) the book "Mediterranean in dis/order. Space, Power and Identity" for The University of Michigan Press. Chiara Maritato is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Department of Cultures, Politics and Society at the University of Turin. She holds a MSCA "Seal of Excellence" grant for the ROADSIDE project investigating the multilevel governance of transit migration in partnership with the Istanbul Bilgi University European Institute. Her research interests include "transit" migrations and border management, transnational religious actors and diaspora communities, religion and gender issues in contemporary Turkey. Her latest publications are: "Pastor of a Dispersed Flock: Diyanet officers and Turkey's art of governing its diaspora" Italian Political Science Review, "Turkey as the 'liberator' of Muslims in Europe: The circulation of Islamophobia as a political remittance" Partecipazione e Conflitto, "Claiming for Moral Superiority while Bargaining with Mobility. Turkey-EU Migration Diplomacy in the post-2016 Euro-Mediterranean space" De Europa.

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