Dr. Imad Mansour

Imad Mansour is Assistant Professor in the Department of International Affairs at Qatar University. He has been a visiting professor at the Campus Moyen-Orient Méditerranée of the Institut d’études politiques de Paris (Sciences Po Paris) and holds a PhD from McGill University where he was also Faculty Lecturer. He previously studied at the American University of Beirut.

His research interests include ideas and agency in politics, regional orders, rivalries and protracted international conflicts. Imad is also an advocate for the need to reimagine conceptual and ontological categories with which we describe, explain, and theorize politics in the Global South - especially in regards to states and “non-states” (tribes, families, nations, others). He is an active member of the Global South Caucus of the International Studies Association.

ABSTRACT:

This book by Imad Mansour is about the role that ideas play in state-building and state behavior; it argues that government policies in foreign policy and domestic politics must be understood as always embedded in a broader ideational and societal context. The book explains how governments in the contemporary Middle East have governed internally and acted externally based on societal narratives; such narratives bring together a constellation of ideas about a society’s history and place in the world. Though there are always competing narratives about what a society is, there is a dominant societal narrative that acts as a primary building block of statecraft, where statecraft is understood as an ongoing set of local, regional and global state-building processes that are, at least in part, ideational in nature. Narratives create parameters of acceptable domestic and foreign action that at once constrain and direct (but do not determine) the choices governments can and do make. Narratives are also malleable; just as they influence governments, they can also be influenced and reconfigured by them. Mansour investigates how statecraft has been guided by narratives through a close historical reading and comparative discussion of the political behaviors of six states – Egypt, Israel, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran – over a period of 60 years (1950–2010).

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