

CONFERENCE

POETICS AND POLITICS OF IMAGINATION: CAUSES AND OBSTACLES TO PROSPERITY

2nd and 3rd of December 2022

UCL – Institute for Global Prosperity

 #takhayyul @takhayyul1 www.takhayyulproject.com [Zoom link will be distributed to those who signed in via Eventbrite. Please register [here](#)]

In the first conference of our ERC project entitled “TAKHAYYUL: Imaginative Landscapes of Islamist Politics Across the Balkan-to-Benghal Complex” we bring together academic works offering a fresh perspective that does not reproduce the irrational tropes yet is able to move beyond the Eurocentric preoccupation with liberalism and secularism. While a growing consensus emerges on the multiplicity of paths to modernity, the relationship of modernity with disenchantment and secularization is being hotly debated. In the West, scholars note that disenchantment caused by the retreat of religion in public life is replaced by the rise of ‘secular magic’- through charisma, myth, revelation. This conference seeks to contribute to the scholarship on contemporary forms of populist politics through a focus on the mystical, charismatic, dreams, and the affective. We aim to develop a discussion around various theoretical approaches on which to delineate the ways Islamist movements forge imaginative landscapes.

In this conference, we ask: *How can we expand our understanding of the formation of various populist Islamist political milieus through a focus on longing, nostalgia, dreams, desire, and other subjective, psychoanalytical, emotional, aesthetic facets of everyday life? How do imaginative and emotive references shape and steer the ideals of prosperity? If any, what are the obstacles to those ideals in the formations of narratives around hope and better future?*

The conference brings together a wide array of scholars working on Muslim societies and Islamist movements across the world. It will stimulate a debate on the parallels and differences between various Islamist movements and their claims on the past, present, and future in an interdisciplinary forum bringing together scholars of sociology, political science, anthropology, social and legal history, and cultural studies.

Brochure Content (please click)

CONFERENCE

POETICS AND POLITICS OF IMAGINATION: CAUSES AND OBSTACLES TO PROSPERITY

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Panel Titles, Dates, and Locations

DAY I

December 2nd, Friday

Location: Institute for Global Prosperity, 149 Tottenham Court Road, Maple House, Floor 7,
IGP Collaboration Room (Please scroll down for the maps)

10:00-10:30 Welcoming Remarks

10:30-12:00 Panel 1: Populism and Prosperity 1: Populist Imaginaries

Discussant: Dr Ammarah Maqsood (UCL)

Chair: Dr Chris Harker (UCL)

Panellists:

Emanuelle, Degli Esposti (Cambridge): “My heart beats Hussain”: Prophetic charisma, humanitarian ethics, and the re-enchantment of Shi’a populist thought

Wang, Michael (UCL): Yaxshi—Expressing the evolution of CCP's conceptualization and governance of Xinjiang through a folk song

El Masri, Ghassan (FAU-Erlangen): The Rise of the City State, the Islamic Version

Kalia, Sumrin (UCL): “The Lesser Evil”: Techniques of Neutralizing Populism in Pakistan

13:00-14:30 Panel 2: Populism and Prosperity 2: Engendering Populisms and the Masculinist Restorations

Discussant: Prof Deniz Kandiyoti (SOAS)

Chair: Dr Yuan He (UCL)

Panellists:

Pandey, Shilpi (Vrije U): Do They Talk about Economy when they talk about women's rights in India?

Kalpakkıoğlu, Burcu (Amsterdam U): Life as an *Imtihan*: Women's Religious Imagination, Destiny and Divorce in Istanbul

Rahmana, Sara (Morgan State U): Shame, Hope, and Islam in the Interwar Algerian Debates about Women

Kütük-Kuriş, Merve (29 Mayıs U): The Reinvention and Appropriation of Traditions in the Turkish Marriage Market

15:00-16:30 Roundtable: Intimacy, Charisma, and Leadership

Discussant: Dr Deepra Dandekar

Chair: Dr Charis Boutieri (King's College London)

Panellists:

Akarsu, Hayal (Utrecht U): Breathing Together”: Conspiracies that Bind “US”

Telci, İsmail Numan (Sakarya U): Charisma Building and The Politics of Enchantment
under Mohammed bin Salman’s Saudi Arabia

Kostadinova, Zora (UCL): Charisma and the ethical demand in postwar Sarajevo,
Bosnia-Herzegovina

17:00- 19:00 TAKHAYYUL PROJECT LAUNCH

Location: Wilkins Building, Haldane Room, UCL
Drinks

Addresses by:

Dr Christopher Harker (Institute Co-Director)

Dr Sertaç Sehlikoglu (Project PI)

Ms Lorelai Rae (Artist-in-residence) ”Imperial Threads”

DAY II

December 3rd, Saturday

Location: Wilkins Building, Gustav Tuck Lecture Theatre, UCL (Scroll down for the map)

09:30-11:00 Panel 3: Imagining Prosperity: Revolutionary Aspirations in the “Non-revolutionary” Middle East

Discussant: Dr Ala’a Shehabi (UCL)

Chair: Dr Kate Maclean (UCL)

Panellists:

Yonucu, Deniz (Newcastle U): Protecting the Dead from the Dangers of the Present:
Martyrs, Ethics and Resistance

Al-Khalili, Charlotte (Sussex): Ethnographic Theory of Revolution: Understanding the
Syrian Revolution beyond Failure and Success

Naeem, Raza (Independent): Arab Jacobins or Passive Revolutionaries? The Yemeni
Revolutions in Historical Perspective

Sadeghi, Fatemeh (UCL): Politics in Unusual Time: Redemptive Aspirations in
Non-revolutionary Situation

11:15-12:45 Panel 4: Dramas and Imaginary Narratives of Prosperity

Discussant: Dr Samuli Schielke (ZMO)

Chair: Dr Nikolay Mintchev (UCL)

Panellists:

Moataz, Yasmine (American University in Cairo) , and Claire Panetta (Barnard College NYC):
The Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend: Revisit the Mamluk Dynasty in Post-2013 Pan-Arab
Drama

Altınay, Rüstem Ertuğ (Kadir Has U): Staging the National Utopia: Militarism and the

Politics of Ethnicity in Late Ottoman Children's Performances
Hisarlıoğlu, Fulya, and Lerna Yanık (Kadir Has U): News from the "World": Broadcasting
Turkish Geopolitical Identity in the Emerging World Order

13:45-15:15 Panel 5: Imaginations as Politics of Enchantment

Discussant: Prof Homa Hoodfar (Concordia U)

Chair: Dr Onya Idoko (UCL)

Panellists:

Bahçeci, Seren (LSE): Exiles of the oneiric: how disenchanting experiences of timespace
ascended among Turkish Cypriots.

Kazmi, Zehra (U St Andrews): Ruins of Memory: Nostalgia and the Indo-Muslim Imagination
in Intizar Husain's Fiction.

Almazidi, Nour (LSE): Imagining Otherwise: Stateless Political Struggles & Worldmaking in
Kuwait.

Afaki, Abdul Rahim (U Karachi): Islamic-Hermeneutic Reflexivity and the Prophetic
Hermeneutics: the Mutuality Nexus of Contemporary Political Islam and Reflexive
Modernity.

Panel Abstracts

Panel 1: Populism and Prosperity 1: Populist Imaginaries

Emanuelle, Degli Esposti *"My heart beats Hussain": Prophetic charisma, humanitarian ethics, and
the re-enchantment of Shi'a populist thought*

The figure of Imam Hussain – the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed – has long been central to Shi'a Islamic thought. Indeed, many scholars trace the emergence of Shi'ism as a distinct form of Islamic belief and practice to Imam Hussain's untimely death at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. However, subjective and affective attachments to Imam Hussain have shifted over time, and have shaped the evolution of Shi'a thought in multiple ways, from quiet acquiescence in the early-modern period to revolutionary fervour in the mid-to-late 20th century (characterised most memorably in the Shi'a Islamic revolution in Iran). This paper chronicles the re-enchantment of the figure of Imam Hussain in contemporary Shi'a populist thought, and traces the way in which Hussain has retrospectively been imbued with transcendental prophetic charisma through a re-imagining of the mythology around the Battle of Karbala. In particular, I attend to the contemporary re-imagining of Hussain as a representative of charitable giving and humanitarian action. Weaving together contemporary populist preoccupations with social justice, minority rights, and global "woke" politics, this new imagining of Imam Hussain produces a charismatic motivational persona through identification with the underdog, the downtrodden, and the repressed. In this new imagining, Hussain becomes a sacrificial lamb on the altar of modernity; giving his life in the pursuit of justice and tolerance for all. By following the discursive threads of this re-imagined Hussainism as they weave across time and space, I excavate the entanglements of humanitarian ethics and Shi'a populism as they travel from Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East to the avowedly secular spaces of Europe and the US, and back again. By attending to the subjective attachments of Shi'a Muslims in Europe and the Middle East to the figure of Imam Hussain, the paper also offers an alternative approach to social justice and humanitarian ethics that doesn't draw directly on secular liberalism and instead offers the potential for spiritual enchantment and transcendentalism within the contemporary political moment.

Wang, Michael. *Yaxshi—Expressing the evolution of CCP's conceptualization and governance of
Xinjiang through a folk song*

Many researchers have attempted to explore and discuss how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) conceptualizes and governs Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region through the examination of CCP

policy papers on ethnic minorities and historical archives of Xinjiang. This paper aims to contribute to the existing scholarship by introducing and analysing a different material—a folk song, written by CCP’s propaganda institution, that has undergone several generations of adaptations since its creation—and, by comparing the lyrics with other historical and policy sources and dissecting the performance of different variations of the song, to show how and discuss why CCP’s conceptualization and governance of Xinjiang have evolved. In addition, this paper wishes to link the present with the past and provide new perspectives of analysing the adaptations and transformations of Ci—an ancient form of Chinese literature. It is a CCP tradition to write folk songs from the ethnic minorities’ perspectives to praise itself; nevertheless, no other songs written after 1921 has experienced more adaptations and changes than the folk song Yaxshi (Uyghur: Good), a song written by Wang Luobin in 1958 upon the request of Chinese People’s Liberation Army to reflect ethnic minorities’ happy life in Xinjiang under the leadership of CCP. Over the past 65 years, the lyrics have undergone four major generations of changes, and the depiction of Xinjiang has transformed from a stationary utopia in 1958 (drastically different from the reality) to an economic powerhouse specialized in raw-material production around 2000 (the period of Xibudakaifa, the Great Development of the West), then to a passive recipient of CCP’s beneficence in 2010 (after 7.5 Riot in 2009), and to a backward region whose people need constant self-criticism and urgent improvement towards modernity (2018 onward corresponding to the iron fist governance of Xinjiang and the establishment of re-education centres). This paper will focus on analyzing the normative aspect of the song, connecting lyrics of Yaxshi of each period with CCP’s conceptualization and governance priority in Xinjiang at the time, and making comparisons of the lyrics and performance among the four periods.

El Masri, Ghassani. *The Rise of the City State, the Islamic Version*

What future did they imagine until the recent past, and what imagined futuresⁱ are being constructed today? In the following few pages, I will offer the perspective of the student of Islamic Sciences and theology who specifically worked on the issue of eschatology and destiny, and supplement it with knowledge acquired from writing consultancies to Arab and German politicians and public administrators. The paper makes the argument that while the Middle East is inherently related to Islamic Salvation history on the one hand, and Arab Utopian dreams of the other; the future that is currently being drawn, and is already on its way to practical fulfilment is divorced from the former history and the latter dreams, and is exclusively premised on neo-liberal positivistic progressivism. Be that as it may, the future that is currently being drawn has a real chance of reinstating the Arab-Islamic world on the world’s economic and political map, not as a single nation, secular or Islamic, but as a constellation of highly successful and influential global city-states versed in both secular and faith-based diplomacy.

Kalia, Sumrin. “*The Lesser Evil*”: *Techniques of Neutralisation Populism in Pakistan*

In most contemporary democracies the rise of populism has raised concerns over increasing authoritarianism. More importantly, persistence of support for populist leaders despite their norm-violations—such as curtailment of civil liberties, use of deception, delegitimization of other institutions etc. remains a puzzle. This paper takes the case of Imran Khan’s populist politics in Pakistan and demonstrates how support for his politics persists in Pakistan despite his governance failures and anti-democratic rhetoric. Borrowing from Sykes and Matza’s typology, of ‘Techniques of Neutralization’ (Sykes and Matza 1957), I argue that supporters vindicate Khan’s deviant behaviours, such as attack on freedom of press, spreading hate speech, corruption etc. through various techniques of neutralisation such as denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, favouring particularist loyalties, and blame shifting. They consistently justify Khan’s norm-violations by arguing that ‘there was no choice’ and that ‘Khan’s PTI is the only acceptable if not ideal option’. These justifications are underlined by the claim that the system is

corrupt, politics is evil and Khan, despite his transgressions, is ‘the lesser evil’. In the context of Pakistan where legitimacy of state institutions remains low and structural conditions such as inequality, inflation and bad governance provide fertile grounds for populism, this paper examines socio-political implications of neutralising populist norm-violations.

Panel 2: Populism and Prosperity 2: Engendering Populisms and the Masculinist Restorations

Pandey, Shilpi. *Do They Talk about Economy when they talk about women's rights in India?*

Secularism is often suggested as the only viable option for gender equality. Yet, with the ‘return of religion’ and the growing ethno-religious diversity (especially within Europe) scholars are now analysing secularism from a feminist or gender perspective and raising questions such as “Is Secularism bad for women?” In her book, “Sex and Secularism”, Joan Wallach Scott shows secularism to be a gendered concept, and how the reliance of secularism on the private/public distinction deeply affects the rights of women belonging to religious denominations and legitimises the political and social inequality of women. Yet this is only one side of the story; these critiques concentrate on the French *laïcité* or in general the policies on the issue of the ban on religious clothing of Muslim women. They also do not consider feminist voices coming from the East which suggests that in light of the religious domination of women, a strict version of secularism is required to protect the rights of minority women. This observation holds in the Indian context. While secularism in India allows for the expression of religion in the public sphere, it also allows for extensive religious interference in the rights of minority women. Despite being secular, Muslim personal laws still govern the rights of Muslim women. This paper explores the recent political debates relating to the rights of Muslim Women in India concerning some fundamental changes in these laws to protect the rights of Muslim Women in India. This paper analyses these debates to focus on two-point:

- i. How far have these debates been able to segregate from the colonial narrative of Muslim Women, and
- ii. if the socio-economic conditions of Muslim Women have been a part of these debates and whether the said changes can improve the economic conditions of Muslim women in India?

Kalpakhioğlu, Burcu. *Life as an Imtihan: Women's Religious Imagination, Destiny and Divorce in Istanbul*

The notions of *adalet* (justice) and *hak* (right) are constitutive parts of Islamic social and political imaginary, producing meaning to the world and shaping reciprocal relations within a particular society. They gather people and provide perspectives and imaginations through which adherents of Islam, particularly of Islamist groups/movements, make sense of their personal relationships, transactions and their whole lives. In this vein, justice has been one of the promises of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and since it came into the power, the term *adalet* has mainly been deployed in the discourses of political actors and pro-government NGOs/movements in Turkey.

However, *adalet* has also a flexible, dynamic, and ambiguous meaning. Drawing on Plato, many Islamic ethicists has considered justice as “a broad social condition referring to everyone receiving their dues in correct measure or according to their station in life as determined by their gender, class, level of intellect, and so on.” (Zahra Ayubi, 2019: 9). This definition of *adalet*, providing a basis for the gendered division of labor and hierarchy, has been deployed by the anti-gender movement in different contexts in Turkey today, particularly in their demand of limiting women’s right to obtain alimony after divorce. In this context, this presentation seeks to analyze the social media accounts, mainly Twitter, of pro-family movements and “divorced men platforms” in Turkey, which have been conducting a strong campaign against the unlimited right to alimony for women since 2018. By tracing the ways in which the terms *adalet* and *hak* travel across different platforms, movements and individuals, it aims to show the ways in which they appropriate the discourse of *adalet* as well as imagine gender, family, marital ties, and intimate economy of marriage.

Rahmana, Sara. *Shame, Hope, and Islam in the Interwar Algerian Debates about Women*

This paper explores the role of emotions, particularly shame and hope, in the interwar Algerian discussions about women. Within the pages of the French- and Arabic-language press, thinkers debated a range of questions, including the utility of women's education, the appropriateness of women's work, the necessity of the hijab, and whether Muslim society or the French colonial state was responsible for limiting women's possibilities. The emotional, the aspirational, and the imaginary mattered. French colonial censors understood the power of the emotional, as they actively worked to limit Muslims' access to certain types of news that may inspire Muslims to revolt against French rule. It is in this repressive context, that Muslims defined what the future would look like for themselves. The pride that Muslims in Algeria articulated in response to Middle Eastern developments was bound up in their own emotional response to the daily humiliations of life in a settler colony and their mounting hopelessness regarding the possibility of reforming colonial policy. In between the lines of calls for a more feminist society were dreams of a future in which young Algerian men and women could satisfy their desire for freedom and modernity within their own communities.

These discussions were shaped by the Muslim reform movement emerged out of Egypt at the turn of the century and rapidly grew in popularity across Algeria in the interwar years. Commentators ordered and reordered the corpus of Islamic knowledge to reframe Islam as emancipatory, flexible, and modern. Together, these references to Islamic knowledge and to news from the Middle East enabled Muslims in Algeria to organize the world on their own terms. Their praise for the modernization of the Middle East decentered Europe and enabled them to articulate new aspirations for the future. These discourses offered them a path forward amidst growing frustration and resignation about what the French colonial project could offer Muslims. Islamic knowledge for them was not about mastery of a static set of historical texts, but rather something malleable to be worked into a vision for a modern and sometimes feminist future Algeria.

Kütük-Kuriş, Merve. *The Reinvention and Appropriation of Traditions in the Turkish Marriage Market*

Parallel to Turkey's neoliberal-conservative turn under the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), marriage preparation process has undergone a dramatic transformation in the last decade. For the upper and middle classes in particular, wedding ceremonies began to express forms of gloire and grandeur. Long forgotten traditions such as the ritual of henna night (kına gecesi) and the preparation and exhibition of trousseau (çeyiz) has enjoyed a major revival. The centre of attraction has soon become strong neo-Ottomanist features being incorporated into these marriage celebrations due to their close association with the AKP's politics of neo-Ottomanism. However, the existing studies of Turkish marriage market fail to approach how brides reinvent some Turkish marriage rituals (e.g. neo-Ottoman style henna nights) on one hand, and appropriate and give new meanings to contemporary Western marriage rituals (e.g. first dance for wedding, bridal showers) on the other. Drawing on the theory of ritual economy, this article examines newlywed women's marriage-related consumerist practices and rituals, namely henna nights, bridal hammams (gelin hamamı), bridal showers, bundle preparations (bohça), and gold-jewellery gifts (takı adeti), and asks to what extent their practices can be understood in terms of the vision of Neo-Ottomanism. Based on two months ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Istanbul and Bursa in 2019 on the self-making performances of newlywed women, the article argues that it is a selective reading to investigate the recent changes in the Turkish marriage market as practices of neo-Ottomanism only. The article focuses on the appropriation of marriage trends from the Western consumer market and newlywed women's continuous (re)negotiation and (re)interpretation of Turkish marriage customs vis-à-vis the female family members (i.e. mothers and mother-in-laws), and thereby contents that brides performances during a lengthy process of marriage rather demonstrate a pressing need for female sociality and individuality.

Panel 3: Imagining Prosperity: Revolutionary Aspirations in the “Non-revolutionary” Middle East

Yonucu, Deniz. *Protecting the Dead From the Dangers of the Present: Martyrs, Ethics and Resistance*

This paper focuses on the agentive effect of the martyred dead and explores the relationship between the discourse of martyrdom and political spirituality (Foucault 1997). Foucault's fascination with the masses' determined resistance to the Shah regime during the Iranian revolution and the "absence of fear" he witnessed in the streets of Tehran when he visited the city after the September massacres of 1978 were influential in the development of his theoretical interest in questions related to ethical self-transformation, political will, and political spirituality. Engaging Foucault's rather sporadic writings on Iran and martyrs' calls for a "permanent obligation of justice" and drawing on long-term ethnographic study among revolutionary youths of Istanbul, I argue that in order to better understand how ethical aspirations can be translated into overt and fearless resistance, we should take into account the agentive effect that the dead have on the living.

Scholarship on martyrdom has demonstrated the mobilizing effects of the martyred dead in nationalist and anticolonial movements. As we have recently seen in the Black Lives Matter Movement and during the Arab Spring, deaths that reveal deeply embedded and enduring structural violence can drive the masses into the streets by evoking memories of past injustices and bringing their contemporary reverberations into the open. In this paper, however, rather than focusing on the mobilizing force of the (martyred) dead during large-scale protests, I elaborate on the ethical and invigorating power that the dead wield over the living during times of "mundane violence."

Al-Khalili, Charlotte. *Ethnographic Theory of Revolution: Understanding the Syrian Revolution beyond Failure and Success*

What is a successful revolution and what is a failed or a defeated one (Armbrust 2017; Haugbolle and Bandak 2017)? Moreover, do failed or defeated revolutions still have transformational power? If so, where are the transformations engendered by non-successful revolutions located? This paper argues that the Syrian 2011 revolution, although it was seemingly defeated in the political domain, that is, that it did not overthrow an existing regime, can nonetheless produce ruptures and disruptions in the social realm, as well as on micro (intimate) and macro (cosmological) scales. In this paper I suggest stepping away from the dichotomous definition of revolution as successful / failed rupture and shifting the research focus to its marginal and often unexplored dimensions in order to grasp what a revolution is more fully. Rather than looking at the epicentre of revolutionary action – protests, occupations, and political organisations – I propose to explore what is often seen as peripheral and apolitical: everyday life, kinship relations, religious imagination, and spatio-temporal practices. This ethnographic exploration of revolutionary transformations in "non-revolutionary" domains is based on over two years of fieldwork with Syrian displaced to the border city of Gaziantep, Turkey.

Naeem, Raza. *Arab Jacobins or Passive Revolutionaries? The Yemeni Revolutions in Historical Perspective*

The paper takes issue with the contention of the conference panel that the Arab 'revolutions' made little break from the previous regimes and that while these revolutions were rich in movement, they are weak in change. Employing Gramsci's concepts of passive revolution, war of position and war of maneuver to the Yemeni revolutions of old and new gives us a different conclusion. Amidst the chronicles of modern revolutions, and, not least, of modern Middle Eastern revolutions, from Iran in 1905-6, Turkey in 1908 to Afghanistan in 1978, the revolutions of what can broadly be termed 'Yemeni', that is North Yemen and South Yemen, occupy a normally marginal when not almost wholly unrecognised place. Separated from the mainstream of Middle East politics in the period of the Cold War, and framed by regional and internal concerns that few observers, even those from elsewhere in the Middle East, analysed, the events that spanned over three decades, from the September 1962 revolution in North Yemen, to the final subjugation of the South by Northern forces in the war of 1994, were a twin legacy of the end of World War I leading to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia; as well as the beginning of decolonization and the beginning of the Cold War. They were of immense importance both in the history of the Arabian Peninsula and of the modern Middle East, but also in the annals of

twentieth century radical upheavals, and revolutions, themselves. Also, for a very brief period, at least in communist south Yemen, the communists were able to bring significant transformation and prosperity to social and political life, despite powerful counter-revolutionary forces, falling into (left-wing, factional) extremism, geopolitical constraints, and external interventions. Perhaps more than anywhere else in the Arab world, it was in the two Yemens that a different Gramsci was being considered and acted on politically: the Gramsci of the decolonizing struggle for national independence, especially in south Yemen against the British. In addition, Gramsci's 'Southern Question' – "the Mezzogiorno was reduced to the status of a semi-colonial market" – presents a few striking parallels to the Yemeni question in the aftermath of the 'unification' in 1994 and more recently, the uprising of 2011. In the aftermath of the Yemeni revolutions of 1962 (north) and 1967 (south), it can further be argued that the Yemeni proletariat engaged at the same time in struggles against both the national bourgeoisie and Saudi expansionism buttressed by international imperialism. So as part of the war of position in the north controlled by the Imamate and the south under British control, the republicans and the communists developed alternative values and an alternative ideology in contrast to the dominant ideologies of the Yemeni imamate and the British, respectively. Both the republican struggle in the North and the communist movement in the south eventually led to the war of position being won by the republican army and the working-class respectively, who successfully built a counter-hegemony in opposition to the imams and the British; with the result that the final war of manoeuvre became possible in the two Yemens in the form of the republican revolution in 1962 (north) and the communist victory in 1967 (south). Thus what matters for analyzing the Yemeni situation in this period is not only Gramsci's notes on the southern question, the several ones on colonialism but also, those on the Italian process of national construction. What has Gramsci's Italy to offer, besides its still unresolved southern question (Yemen's own southern question?), for the analysis of Yemeni matters, in which the conflicts between the urbanized elites from the ex-communist South and the more tribal and conservative peoples in the North plausibly echoes the Italian conflict between north and south? Gramsci's analysis of Italy's national formation as a passive revolution seemed to acquire new meanings after the forced 'unification'/annexation of 1994: the Yemeni national bourgeoisie, once enlisted in the struggle against imperialism and colonialism in the 1960s both in the North and in the South, now seem to be precisely in the business of passive revolutions. It had created a unified nation in Yemen – but only to thrive in a parasitical extractive economy of rent. Its nonproductive oligarchy began to display its most dictatorial tendencies, resisting anything that would bridge the gap between the North and the South. The relevance of these revolutions is, however, based on something more important than these considerations, which is simply the fact that these revolutions remain of immense importance today, that none of the tasks which these revolutions set themselves, and few of the issues they were intended to resolve, have been settled even after the 2011 uprising. The same applies to the revolutions in Yemen of the period 1962-1994: state formation, the relation of state to society in its class, clan and tribal forms; the role of religion in state and society; the position of women; the economic context of social activity and the economic base of the state; the character of education; the very definition of the nation. All of these issues, posed first in dramatic form in the September 1962 revolution in Sanaa remain on the agenda of the twenty-first century in contemporary Yemen. My paper is thus a timely attempt to understand the roots of the current uprising(s) in Yemen, initiated against the former dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh and his current successor, within the unfulfilled promise of the old revolutions in both the former North (1962) and South (1967) of the country. It also focuses on revolutionary upheaval and state consolidation in revolutionary Yemen (1962-1994) and on analytic issues following from these events and from a retrospective analysis of the events of these years.

Sadeghi, Fatemeh. *Politics in Undusial Time: Redemptive Aspirations in Non-revolutionary Situation*

This paper examines and conceptualizes a situation in which conventional collective actions have become either impossible or undesirable, while aspirations for radical change are unprecedentedly high. It discusses this situation as a no longer-not yet condition and the frustrations within this unyielding

obduracy. This situation is marked by collapse and chaos, and a feeling that catastrophe is approaching. It evokes temporariness, anxiety, and emergency. In such a condition, desire for change cannot be created based on utopian aspirations about the future. This is because the dreamworlds of modernity expressed in utopian imaginations have evolved into dystopian societies, especially when Middle Eastern contexts are concerned, which is the focus of this paper. Redemptive politics is primarily an existential politics, in which nostalgia, narrative, memory, amnesia, and imagination play a key role in demarcation between a golden past and a dark present.

Panel 4: Dramas and Imaginary Narratives of Prosperity

Moataz, Yasmine, and Claire Panetta. *The Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend: Revisit the Mamluk Dynasty in Post-2013 Pan-Arab Drama*

This paper queries the sociopolitical implications of a wave of popular interest in the legacy of the Mamluk dynasty (1250-1517) in post-2013 Egypt. Although the era's rulers have traditionally been derided in mainstream culture as tyrannical 'foreign' leaders, they have recently been reframed as the last nationalist rulers before the Ottoman invasion. This revised characterization underpins the newfound fascination with their political legacy, which has manifested in an array of cultural productions, including a popular, new television series, *Mamalik al-Nār* (Kingdoms of Fire). In this article, we analyze the show's content, its popularity in Egypt and the debate it has generated on social media, and the regional production and distribution networks in which it is embedded. Through this analysis, we argue that the series—and the Mamluk 'revivalism' to which it is connected—is part of the reformulation of what it means to be Egyptian in the post-uprising context.

Altınay, Rüstem Ertuğ. *Staging the National Utopia: Militarism and the Politics of Ethnicity in Late Ottoman Children's Performances*

When the Turkish War of Independence started in 1919, the ongoing wars, massacres, and genocides had resulted in a surge in the number of orphans in the land that would become the Republic of Turkey after 1923. Witnessing the plight of orphans and perceiving them both as a pending security threat and potentially utopian subjects who could create a prosperous nation-state, the military general Kazım Karabekir (1882-1948) established what he called "the Army of Robust Children" [Gürbüzler Ordusu].

Karabekir recruited approximately four thousand children of diverse ethnic backgrounds. He dressed them like soldiers, fed them with military rations, and made them follow a strict physical exercise regimen. Combining modern education with vocational, military, and artistic training, Karabekir desired to transform the children into patriotic Muslim Turkish citizens who were committed to rationalism, science, and industrialism as well as economic nationalism and militarism; wary about the dangers of excessive Westernization; cautious about public health; and had healthy and strong bodies. He believed that these children could bring the nation-state utopia to life. The most striking aspect of Karabekir's training program was the use of applied education and drama-based pedagogy. The General wrote numerous dramatic texts, which he staged with the children.

This presentation builds on extensive archival research to analyze how The Army of Robust Children's performances became a site of militaristic paternal care and discipline. Studying the theatre as a site where ubiquitous and artistic performances converge, I examine how the children rehearsed and performed desirable Turkish citizenship, and how theatre practices shaped their everyday performances and their visions for the future. The Army of Robust Children's performances thus demonstrate how theatre can serve as a disciplinary technology, and how such artistic performances may undermine diversity and pluralism in and beyond the theatre. Even more importantly, this case study presents an opportunity to review and revise the tendency to associate utopian performances with liberal or progressive politics.

Hisarlioğlu, Fulya, and Lerna Yanık. *News from the "World": Broadcasting Turkish Geopolitical Identity in the Emerging World Order*

"Bigger than five", "Africa Matters", "Across the Balkans", "Off the Grid", "A Place Called Pakistan"... are some of the names of the tv programs that are being aired by TRT World -Turkey's official TV

channel broadcasting globally. In the year 2015, the channel has been initiated as a public diplomacy instrument of the ruling Justice and Development Party government. It defines its corporate identity in line with Turkey's global and regional actorness in the emerging world order that necessitates seeing and telling world events differently. Within this socio-political milieu, 'TRT' World aims to reach a global audience, aspiring for "a better informed" global public, and voice the "global conscience". Inspired by TRT World's ambitious targets and its call for telling the story of the neglected others of the international system, this paper deconstructs this global media enterprise's narratives on and coverage of world events. We argue that TRT World's ambitions to become the voice of (non-Western) global society is an expression of neo-Third Worldism which has been an integral part of Turkey's Neo-Ottoman re-ordering of a post-Western international order.

Keywords: non-West, post-Western world order, Global Society, New World Order, Critical Geopolitics, Neo-Third Worldism

Panel 5: Imaginations as Politics of Enchantment

Bahçeci, Sergen. *Exiles of the oneiric: how disenchanted experiences of timespace ascended among Turkish Cypriots*

When one of the foremost leaders of the Naqshbandi order, Shaykh Nazim el-Kibrisi, died in northern Cyprus in 2014, his funeral attracted thousands of mourners, including prominent Turkish Cypriot politicians. However, historically, Shaykh Nazim was a controversial figure for the radically secular(ising) and nationalist Turkish Cypriot elites who were conventionally suspicious of Shaykh Nazim's charismatic power and international connections. In fact, Naqshbandi order's activities were strictly limited in northern Cyprus until the 1990s, with the order conducting the majority of its activities among Turkish Cypriots through its bases in London.

In my paper, I will focus on one particular episode of historical conflict between Shaykh Nazim and the Turkish Cypriot secular elite. This conflict concerned a particular 'dream' that Shaykh Nazim was reported to have had in the early 1950s: according to his 'dream', Shaykh Nazim was warned that a major catastrophe would strike Cyprus very soon and that he was tasked with leading the Muslims in Cyprus to Syria, where they would start new lives. For this purpose, Shaykh Nazim travelled around Cyprus in the 1950s, urging Turkish Cypriots to sell their lands and belongings specifically to non-Muslims in order not to prevent other Muslims from taking up his call to leave for Syria. Secular(ising) Turkish Cypriot elite of the time saw Shaykh Nazim's call as a major threat to Turkish Cypriot's political position against the more populous Greek Cypriot society, initiating a political campaign that eventually led to Shaykh Nazim's decades long departure from the island.

I will argue that this historical episode captures the fundamentals of how linear, modernist, and secular experiences of timespace, and disenchanted understandings of what it means to collectively prosper, ascended among Turkish Cypriots through an exclusion of the 'oneiric' and millenarian experiences of timespace represented by Shaykh Nazim. However, although socially more salient, linear, modernist, and secular experiences of timespace always coexist with other forms of timespace experience, with social oscillations occurring based on a variety of factors.

Kazmi, Zehra. *Ruins of Memory: Nostalgia and the Indo-Muslim Imagination in Intizar Husain's Fiction*

For this paper, I look at two works by the noted Pakistani writer Intizar Husain—Basti (1979) and The Sea Lies Ahead (1995). Like many Indo-Muslim modernist writers of his generation, Husain uses memory to narrate history. However, he fundamentally distinguishes himself from them on one key front; in Husain's works, memory is not an archive to realistically represent national history but instead becomes a metaphor or mode to tie the affective and narrative threads of his work together. Set in the metropolises of Lahore and Karachi during the political violence of independent Pakistan, Husain uses memory to offer not only a psychological portrait of those impacted by trauma of conflict, but also, historical and ethical commentary on the Partition.

Husain's cross-cartographic vision spans a vast temporal and geographical scope. His writing draws from a mythistory that subverts the narrative script of the modern nation-state (Mali, Kabir). History, thus, emulates memory to occupy a liminal space between dreams and reality—Husain constructs spatiality and belonging as zones of memory. Through this blurring of spatiotemporal lineages, Husain offers a critically alert, radically nostalgic alternative to the Indian and Pakistani nation-states as they exist in the present day (Raychaudhuri). This vision of a homeland is as Hindu as it is Muslim—harkening back to a pre-Partition past. The nostalgia of Husain's writing works on two levels, it is a pastoral elegy for the death of a different time and an affective register for articulating the global and local histories of Muslims as a people. read these texts as a combination of the shahr ashob and the Urban Pastoral genres (Gray and McNamara), where the home as remembered in memory becomes a mythified, idealised space of an aspirational syncretism, in stark contrast to the contemporary city/postcolonial nation-state, which is marked by violence and decay.

Almazidi, Nour. *Imagining Otherwise: Stateless Political Struggles & Worldmaking in Kuwait*

Drawing on my ethnographic PhD research's oral history project that uses the life history and biography method to produce a careful engagement with an intimate, historicised, intergenerational and heterogenous account of the stateless Bidoon Jinsiyya (Arabic term that translates to 'without citizenship') and their political subjectivities, struggles, and encounters with the materiality of structures of power that shape their daily lives in Kuwait, this paper explores the construction of an alternative political imaginary electrifying stateless Bidoon subaltern politics, collective resistive practices, and political organizing. The paper draws on queer feminist theorizing on the political imagination and queer temporalities and futurities to explore the multivalent ways in which the production of an alternative political imaginary is central to producing political meanings, cultures, and mobilisations in stateless political struggles in Kuwait specifically and in the Gulf region more broadly. I interweave multiple narratives, memories and experiences that show the different registers of Bidoon politics in order to bring into view how subaltern counter-memories, counter-histories and alternative political imaginations carry a political potency and explore what this worldmaking potency means for knowing, living and being in the world. In this sense, the paper focuses on the Bidoon as a stateless subaltern group that is actively engaged in struggle not only against the concrete practices of the state in producing, maintaining and controlling conditions of statelessness but also the hegemonic historical narratives about who the Bidoon are in the dominant national political imaginary. The paper does this to show how alternative political imaginaries that emerge through multiple and heterogenous narratives, memories, and experiences, and the meaning-making work of these narratives, holds transformative political potentialities to dominant conceptualisations of citizenship and statelessness in the region.

Afaki, Album Rahim *Islamic-Hermeneutic Reflexivity and the Prophetic Hermeneutics: the Mutuality Nexus of Contemporary Political Islam and Reflexive Modernity.*

Drawing upon Heidegger's notion of 'Sorge (Care)' and Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', Scott Lash expounds the concept of 'hermeneutic reflexivity' and 'reflexive community.' Man (I) is thrown in community (We), so that all growth of 'I' will be consistent with its involvement in 'We.' I is engaged with We through the Heideggerian Care for others and things in everyday communal practices which Bourdieu takes as habits or the Sitten – the unconscious and unthought bodily practices. Having the Sitten as the determinants of all shared practices, Lash thinks that human reflexivity being hermeneutic in nature operates not through concepts in the sphere of a conceptually given world rather through habits as predispositions and orientations that situate 'knowers' in their community or lifeworld. This paper argues that Islamic-hermeneutic reflexivity in this regard operates through the Islamic habitus – the Sitten already objectively given in the form of revealed meanings. All concepts are construed either on the ground or in the light of these meanings and all habits in Muslim community have already been conventionalized in accordance with these very meanings. Owing to their being ahistorical (divine), these meanings are always found to be obscured by a historical (mundane) mind, and so these meanings cannot

be taken as fixed patterns for man's thoughts and practices. They must instead be taken as interpretive schemata that can be historicized hermeneutically. This Islamic-hermeneutic reflexivity may get obscured due to Muslim mind's coalescence with certain myopic framework of ideology like modernism, conservatism, fundamentalism etc. In that case Islamic-hermeneutic reflexivity requires to be coupled with some additional form of critique of ideology which cannot be psychoanalysis, as a psychoanalyst cannot attain the task of therapy of such an ideologue. The psychoanalysis of one's ideological symptoms of intolerance and myopia requires to be referred to one's history instead of ahistoricity of meanings. Therefore in order to treat Muslim mind's ideological disorder instead of psychoanalysis the model of the Prophetic hermeneutics is most aptly workable, as a prophet not only communicates the divine meanings to the people but also interprets them on the level of life-praxis.

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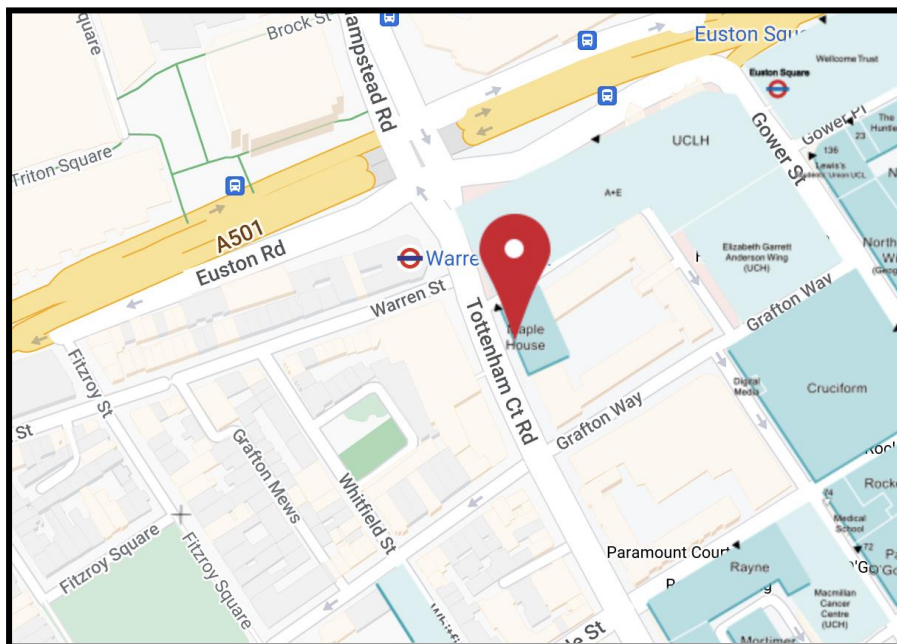
Newcastle University

University College London (UCL)

Kadir Has University

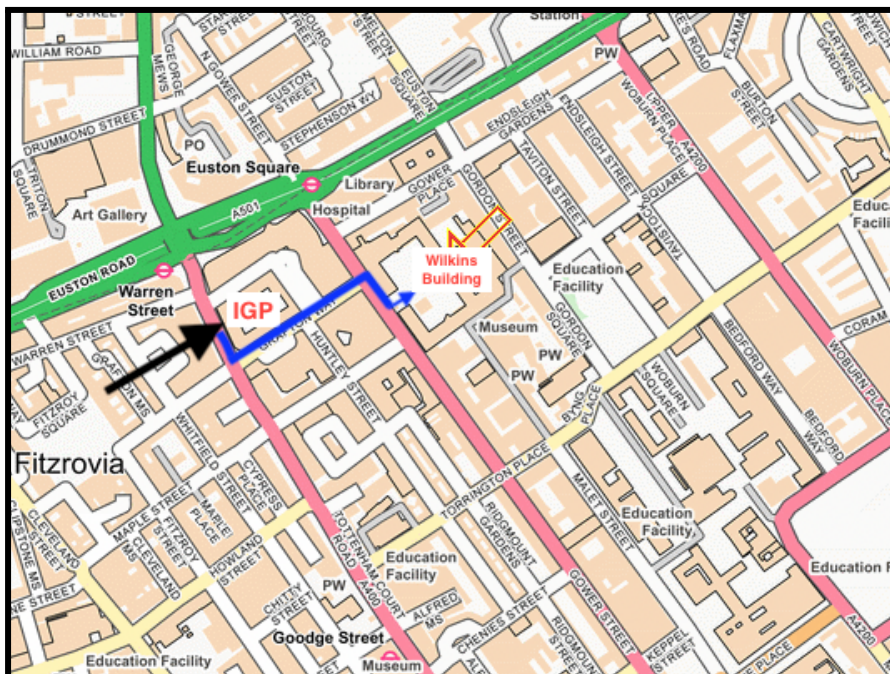
Maps and Locations

Day I/a: Institute for Global Prosperity



Floor 7, Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, W1T 7NF. The nearest stations are Warren St Station and Euston Road Station.

Day I/b: Launch (17:00): Haldane Room, Wilkins (Main) Building



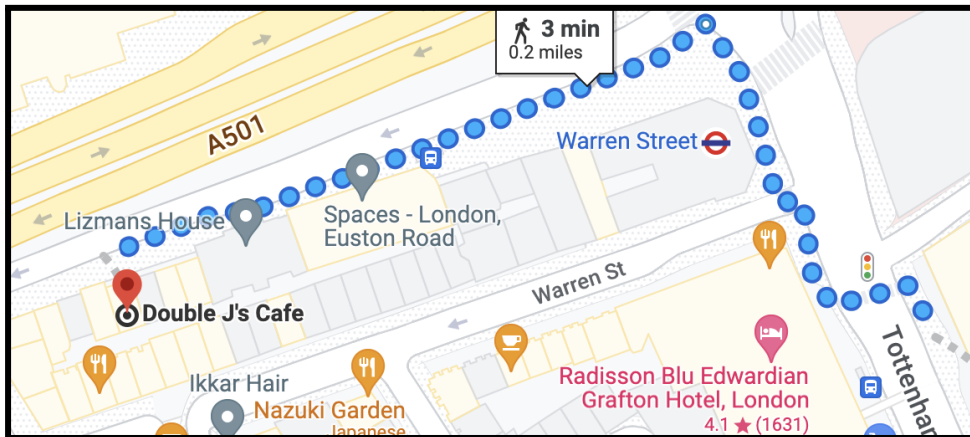
Day II: Gustav Tuck Lecture Theatre, Wilkins (Main) Building

- The easiest way to reach the lecture theatre is to enter through the main gates on Gower Street, opposite the Cruciform building.
- The grand Wilkins Building will be directly in front of you.
- Head towards this building and turn right. (You do not need to climb the stairs).
- There will be a door way leading into the South Cloister building, ignore this and take the second door which will be in the far right hand corner.
- Upon entering this door turn right and walk through a second set of doors keeping to the right again. There will be a staircase in front of you with signs leading to the Gustave Tuck lecture theatre.
- Walk up the stairs, (two flights) and the lecture theatre will be on your right hand side. Please see below for a detailed map of the area.

Nearby Breakfast Place Suggestion

Double J's (3 min walk, 07:00-15:00)

This is a budget-friendly and quite tasty place with vegan and vegetarian options. 333 Euston Road



Nearby Coffee Shop Suggestion

Mikel Coffee (3 min walk, 06:00-22:00 weekdays, 07:00-22:00 weekends)

Although it's a chain, this is a Greek company that serves Frappe and Greek coffee on top of regular coffee shop options.

