

FINAL PROGRAMME
The Future in Arab Media and Cultures Symposium
20 May 2022 | London School of Economics

The future is always unknown but at times it seems more difficult to imagine than others. Certainly, we are living in times when visions of the future feel dystopic, whether in political or technological realms. But how do we approach studying the future? This research symposium examines the idea of the future in its affective and conceptual sense within the context of the Middle East and North Africa. It engages with questions such as: what are future trends in Arab media? What media forms and technologies mediate the future, and how? How do we navigate histories of, and past intellectual debates about, political futures? And how do we study a fickle concept like the future from the vantage point of the Middle East and North Africa?

Friday, 20 May 2022

9.30-10.00 Welcome and Coffee

10.00-11.30 Panel 1- Future Trends in Arab News Media

This panel brings together scholars of journalism as well as journalists and news leaders to discuss present and future trends in Arabic news media. It focuses on the challenges that shape the future of news from political economy to the ways that new technologies are reshaping news making and consumption.

Chair: Omar Al-Ghazzi, London School of Economics and Political Science

What Role for a Digital Future? Exploring Arab News Media and Publics

Abeer Al-Najjar, American University of Sharjah

Political Economy of Arab Independent Media

Zahera Harb, City University of London

Rima Maktabi, al-Arabiya TV

Rasha Qandeel, BBC Arabic

11.30-12.00 Coffee Break

12.00-13.30 Panel 2 – Imagining Futures in Contemporary Arab Political Cultures

Drawing on examples from Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen, this panel examines contemporary positions of futurity in political life. It explores themes about the place of the future in relation to anticolonialism, neoliberalism, revolution and counter revolution

Chair: Zahera Harb, City University of London

The Future Past as State Narrative: Making Art in a Collapsing Lebanon

Omar Al-Ghazzi, London School of Economics and Political Science

Time and Value in Revolutionary Yemen

Ross Porter, University of Exeter

Utopian infrastructures: Promise, Loss and Anticolonial Futurity

Sara Salem, London School of Economics and Political Science

14.30-16.00 Panel 3 – Futurity in History

With examples from Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon and Syria, this panel focuses on the histories of imaginaries of the future with case-studies from the 1930s to the 1980s. Collectively, the panel draws on discussions and representations of political futures in novels, magazines, and intellectual thought.

Chair: Marwan M. Kraidy, Northwestern University - Qatar

The Future in the Past: Arab Leftist Intellectuals and the Socialist Imaginary

Sana Tannoury-Karam, EUME Berlin

***Rihlas* to the Nation's Future**

Ghenwa Hayek, University of Chicago

On the Insoluble: Post-Revolutionary Futures and Non-Archives

Anne-Marie McManus, EUME Berlin

Returning from Exile, Mountains, and Dunes: Abdallah Laroui and Moroccan Modernity in the Seventies

Idriss Jebari, Trinity College Dublin

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break

16.30–18.00 Panel 4: Futurity in Middle East Studies

This concluding panel explores epistemological approaches to futurity. It considers how the concept of the future sits in Middle East Studies, particularly as approached from cultural studies, comparative literature and media studies. The panel discusses the potentialities and limitations of the idea of futurity in Middle East scholarship.

Chair: Tarik Sabry, Westminster University

The Future of Knowledge: From the Nahda to the Arab Digital Age

Tarek El-Ariss, Dartmouth College

Marwan M. Kraidy, Northwestern University – Qatar

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Speakers' Bios

Omar Al-Ghazzi is Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Communications at LSE. His work focuses on questions around the global power asymmetries in the reporting and representation of conflict. He researches digital journalism, the politics of time and memory, and the geopolitics of popular culture, with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. He has published in the field of communication's top journals including *Communication Theory, Journalism, and the International Journal of Communication*.

Abeer Al-Najjar is Associate Professor of Media and Journalism Studies at the American University of Sharjah. Abeer was a Visiting Scholar at the Westminster School of Media, Arts and Design (2018–19) and a Visiting Senior Fellow at the LSE Middle East Centre (2016–17). Abeer is an Editorial Board Member of Journalism Studies and the International Journal of Communication. She was the Dean of the Jordan Media Institute in Amman from 2011–12. Received her PhD from the University of Edinburgh. Abeer has published two books and several articles and book chapters on media, society and politics.

Tarek El-Ariss is the James Wright Professor at Dartmouth College and Guggenheim Fellow (2021/22). He is the author of *Trials of Arab Modernity: Literary Affects and the New Political* (Fordham, 2013) and *Leaks, Hacks, and Scandals: Arab Culture in the Digital Age* (Princeton, 2019), and editor of *The Arab Renaissance: A Bilingual Anthology of the Nahda* (MLA, 2018).

Zahera Harb is the International Journalism Cluster lead at City, University of London. She has published widely on journalism and politics in Arab countries. Her publications include an edited collection titled *Reporting the Middle East: The Practice of News in the 21st Century* (IB Tauris 2017), She is co-editor of the *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* and associate editor of the internationally renowned academic journal *Journalism Practice*. Zahera served as a member of the UK broadcast regulator Ofcom content board and board member/trustee of the Ethical Journalism Network. She is currently a board member trustee of Dart Centre Europe for Journalism and Trauma. She is a mentor and steering group member of Marie Colvin Journalists' Network and a member of Thomson Foundation consultancy board. She was a broadcast journalist in her native country Lebanon, where she worked for local and international news organisations.

Ghenwa Hayek is Associate Professor of Modern Arabic Literature in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Her research focuses on the relationships between literary and cultural production, space and place, and identity formation in the modern Arab Middle East, with a specific focus on Lebanon. She is the author of *Beirut, Imagining the City: Space and Place in Lebanese Literature* (2014) and is currently working on a book project titled *Carrying Africa, Becoming Lebanese: Emigrant Anxieties in Lebanese Culture*.

Idriss Jebari is Assistant Professor in Middle East Studies at Trinity College Dublin. He is a historian of Arab thought, on decolonization and North African cultural and social history during the radical sixties and seventies, on collective memory in the Arab world.

Marwan M. Kraidy is Dean and CEO of Northwestern University Qatar, founder of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Global South, and Anthony Shadid Chair in Global Media, Politics and Culture at Northwestern. Supported by Carnegie, Guggenheim, and other fellowships, his books include *Hybridity, or, the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (Temple, 2005), *Reality Television and Arab Politics* (Cambridge, 2010) and *The Naked Blogger of Cairo: Creative Insurgency in the Arab World* (Harvard, 2016). He serves on the Board of Directors of the American Council of Learned Societies, and of the Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication. [@MKraidy]

Rima Maktabi is the United Kingdom's bureau chief for Al Arabiya news network. Rima has over 20 years' experience in broadcast journalism and was nominated by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader. Between 2012 and 2015, Rima did extensive war zone TV coverage from Syria on political, military and humanitarian stories; she also showcased the emergence of ISIS in Iraq's Mosul. In 2010, Rima was an anchor at CNN reporting news in the Middle East including the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrain. She was also the host of CNN's renowned show *Inside the Middle East*. Rima was given the Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum Award for her work covering the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006. Rima interviewed world leaders and decision-makers throughout her career including: Boris Johnson, Tony Blair, John Kerry, William Hague, Mahmoud Abbas, Wendy Sherman, John Wilks, Angela Merkel, Manouchehr Mutaki, David Petraeus, Ahmet Davatuglo, Mohammed Javad Zarif, Hoshiyar Zibari and others. Rima started her career in her home country Lebanon at Future TV where she worked for ten years. Rima has an Masters of Arts in International Affairs and attained her bachelor's degree in communication arts from Lebanese American University in Beirut.

Anne-Marie McManus is Principle Investigator of the European Research Council-funded project SYRASP, on contemporary Syrian narrative and art practices of incarceration, disappearance, and absence, at Berlin's Forum Transregionale Studien. Her forthcoming and recent writings appear in *Critical Inquiry*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *The Cambridge History of World Literature*, *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, and *Books & Ideas*. She received her PhD in Comparative Literature from Yale University.

Ross Porter is a lecturer at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. He works primarily on questions of time, freedom and ethics, with an ethnographic focus on revolutionary movements in Yemen. He is currently writing a monograph about everyday life in a revolutionary camp in Sana'a between 2011 and 2013, focusing particularly on what revolution means as an event at the level of the self.

Rasha Qandeel is Bilingual Lead Presenter - BBC News presenting war coverages, NewsNight and Hardtalk. Rasha has been a journalist for 22 years, covering mainly wars and international politics. She was named Woman Journo Hero 2020 and won, along with her team, "best talk show" in 2021. She was chosen by UNESCWA UNWomen to chair sessions on women empowerment in 2022. She was also named among the 30 most influential female journalists in the Middle East by the META Project of Journalism in April 2022. She received her MSc in Critical War Studies from the London School of Economics.

Tarik Sabry is Reader in Media and Communication Theory at the University of Westminster where he is a member of the Communication and Media Research Institute and Co-ordinator of the Global Media Research Network. He is co-founder and co-editor of the *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* and co-founder of the journal *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*. He is co-author of *Children and Screen Media in Changing Arab Contexts: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Palgrave 2019) and author of *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World: On Media, the Modern and the Everyday* (2010, I.B. Tauris). He is also editor and co-editor of several anthologies on the subject of Media, Culture and Society in the Arab region.

Sara Salem is Assistant Professor in Sociology at the London School of Economics. Her research interests include postcolonial studies, Marxist theory, and global histories of anticolonialism. Her recently published book with Cambridge University Press is entitled [*Anticolonial Afterlives in Egypt: The Politics of Hegemony*](#) (2020).

Sana Tannoury-Karam is a historian of the modern Middle East, writing on the intellectual and cultural history of the Arab Left. Tannoury-Karam is an EUME fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien and a Research Affiliate at the Center for Global History, Freie Universität (2020/2022). In 2019/2020, she was an Early Career Fellow at the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS), and in 2018/2019 she completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Rice University. Tannoury-Karam's work has appeared in a range of publications, including her most recent co-edited volume, *The League Against Imperialism: Lives and Afterlives* (Leiden University Press, 2020).