

Transnational Kemalism
Online Workshop, 30-31 May 2022
Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (CERS), Leeds University
Call for Papers

We are delighted to invite submissions for an online workshop on the theme of Transnational Kemalism. Workshop attendees will be invited to submit their papers for publication in a special issue of [ReOrient: The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies](#).

Whilst Kemalism has been studied at length, attention has focused primarily on the Turkish Republic as its exemplar. In those instances when inquiry has moved beyond Turkey, it has remained confined to the “Middle East North Africa” (MENA) region, and, furthermore, has assumed a nationalist frame of reference. Consequently, the transnational dimension of Kemalism has remained under-researched. **In convening the workshop, we propose to move beyond existing historiographies of Muslimistan (Islamdom) in the post-Caliphal period that reproduce the Eurocentrism of the Westphalian template.**

The abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 by Mustafa Kemal in Turkey ruptured the 1400-year relationship between Islam and political authority. The Turkish Republic instituted a distinct political project anchored in **the dislocation of Islam from the centre of social and political life, and the construction of a new order interweaving nationalism, secularism, modernisation, and Westernisation as its hallmarks.** We deploy Kemalism as a concept to identify motley political projects across Muslimistan that were nascent prior to the Caliphate’s abolition or emerged in its wake, and that are allied in seeking to disrupt the imbrication of Islam and politics. In disarticulating the relationship, these projects opened up space for its rearticulation in a context in which the post-Caliphal coincided with the tumultuous geopolitical upheavals of the 20th century.

Understanding Kemalism as an analytical and conceptual rather than a historical category, we bring the post-Caliphal into conversation with the postcolonial, and the transnational, and pose the following question: **what is gained in terms of analytical cogency, historiographical insight, theoretical richness if Kemalism is deployed as a lens to interrogate the post-Caliphal trajectories of Muslimness?** While the existing literature is valuable in generating data on various nation-states, and enabling comparativist analyses, it obscures understanding of the historical and contemporary relationalities that obtain amongst these. In contrast, our intervention aims to shed light on the epistemic, political, societal and cultural dimensions of transnational Kemalism. Thus, we seek to widen the theoretical field by according attention to states and actors that lie outside MENA-centric geographies as well as to their inter-linkages. We welcome contributions that explore transnational Kemalism as a theoretical or empirical concept beyond the nationalist methodologies and historiographies of the Turkish Republic. Themes that might be examined include (although this list is by no means exhaustive):

- Postcolonial nation-state building in Muslimistan
- Kemalism in Diasporic Spaces
- Re-formulations and extensions of Kemalism from the early 20th century to the present

- Case studies of Kemalism in different societies, for example: The ‘Malay world’, West Africa, Sahel, South Asia, Caucasus, the Balkans
- Xenophobic nationalism and Muslimness
- Performing Kemalism through various subjects: art, architecture, cuisine, dress codes, legal system, education, language, gender, media

To apply, please submit your abstract (up to 500 words) via the form in this link: <https://forms.gle/qjNs95Hm8BTUml6h6>

If your abstract is accepted, we will invite you to submit a working paper ([3000-4000](#)) for presentation in the workshop. Working papers can be a preliminary draft of your manuscript.

Dates:

Abstract submission: 15 January 2022

Notification of acceptance: 31 January 2022

Draft Submission for circulation to attendees: 15 May 2022

Workshop: 30-31 May 2022

Full-Paper Submission: 14 August 2022

If you have any inquiries, please contact the organisers:

Dr Shehla Khan (shehlakhan102@gmail.com)

Sümeyye Sakarya (ssssa@leeds.ac.uk)