



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM



## Divine Sovereignty, Morality and the State: Maududi and His Influence

Joint Workshop University of Birmingham and Kings College London

5 September 2019

Kings College London, Small Committee Room

- 9:00-9:30 **Welcome and Introduction to Workshop**  
*Humeira Iqtidar (Kings College London), Oliver Scharbrodt (University of Birmingham)*
- 9:30-10:15 **Theorising Sovereignty in the Colony: Abul Ala Maududi's Theodemocracy**  
*Humeira Iqtidar (Kings College London)*
- 10:15-11:00 **From *Fitrah* to Perfectionism: The Development of Islamist Political Theory from Rashid Rida to Tabatabai and Motahhari**  
*Christopher Pooya Razavian (University of Birmingham)*
- 11:00-11:30 **Coffee Break**
- 11:30-12:15 **Divine Sovereignty and Clerical Authority in an Islamic State: Baqir Al-Sadr, Taqi Al-Mudarrisi and the Rise of Shia Islamism in Iraq**  
*Oliver Scharbrodt (University of Birmingham)*
- 12:15-1:30 **Lunch**
- 1:30-2:15 **A Direct Flight to Revolution: Maududi and the 1979-Moment**  
*Simon Wolfgang Fuchs (University of Freiburg)*
- 2:15-3:00 **The Arab Islamist Reception of Maududi's Conception of *hakimiyya* after Sayyid Qutb**  
*Usaama Al-Azami (University of Oxford)*
- 3:00-4:00 **Discussions and Reflections**  
*Muhammad Qasim Zaman (Princeton University)*
- 5:00-7:00 **Panel Discussion with Muhammad Qasim Zaman (Princeton University) about his new book *Islam in Pakistan***  
Venue: River Room, King's College London, Strand Campus
- 7:30 **Dinner** (Tas Restaurant, Bloomsbury)

## **Divine Sovereignty, Morality and the State: Maududi and His Influence**

### **Outline and Abstracts**

Abul Ala Maududi articulated a detailed vision of divine sovereignty (*hakkimiyat ilahya*) in the course of almost six decades of writing and activism. As Zaman (2015) has noted, Maududi may not have been the first one to coin the term *hakkimiyat* but his ideas have travelled widely such that they have almost become the norm of Islamist thinking. In fact, this idea has also deeply infused popular imagination in many pre-dominantly Muslim countries.

This workshop will bring together new scholarship on the generative influence of Maududi's notion of *hakkimiyat* and its reception by both Sunni and Shia Islamist thinkers and activists. Engaging critically with the circulation, variations and contestations of the notion of divine sovereignty, this workshop will be the first major attempt at thinking through the implications of this important concept in contemporary politics.

#### **Theorising Sovereignty in the Colony: Abul Ala Maududi's Theodemocracy**

*Humeira Iqtidar*

Abul Ala Maududi (1903-1979), the influential Indo-Pakistani Islamist thinker, saw popular sovereignty as a moral problem. Popular sovereignty, he thought, corrupted the potential for individual moral development that the institutional mechanism of the state could otherwise allow for. He recognized that the idea of popular sovereignty held a complicated, non-linear relationship with the sovereignty of the modern state, and thought that one critical implication of this obfuscated relationship was the enhanced autonomy of the state against its own citizens. Yet, he was also enthusiastic about the potential for the state to transform individual morality. Theodemocracy was his attempt at divorcing sovereignty from the state while retaining the state's institutional framework for the moral transformation of individuals. This endeavour generated creative tensions and forms an important contribution to the ideas about the state that have inspired political action and debate around the world. The paper elaborates the intellectual context within which Maududi articulated his vision of a theodemocracy and highlights the range of ideas he brought to bear upon the question of sovereignty.

#### **From *Fitrah* to Perfectionism: The Development of Islamist Political Theory** **from Rashid Rida to Tabatabai and Motahhari**

*Christopher Pooya Razavian*

Iran's constitution states that the purpose of government is teleological perfectionism, meaning that it is the duty of the state to maximize human excellence by bringing citizens closer to God. How did this teleological perfectionism come about? This paper will examine the development of teleological perfectionism in two of the chief intellectual architects of the Islamic revolution of Iran, namely, Allamah Tabataba'i and Morteza Motahhari. The argument for perfection is grounded in the notion of innate disposition (*fitrah*) and that it is Islamic law that brings this *fitrah* to its perfection (*kamal*). This study will begin with debates on the concept of *fitrah* (innate disposition) as discussed in the Egyptian journal *al-Manār*. It will then be argued that Tabataba'i was influenced by these writings and began to incorporate these ideas in articles written for the Iranian Islamist journal *Maktab-i Islam*. Next, it will be shown how Motahhari, influenced by broader Islamist discourses such as Sayyid Qutb and Maududi, expanded on these concepts and considered perfectionism as the primary duty of the state.

**Divine Sovereignty and Clerical Authority in an Islamic State:  
Baqir Al-Sadr, Taqi Al-Mudarrisi and the Rise of Shia Islamism in Iraq**

*Oliver Scharbrodt*

The paper investigates the rise of Shia Islamism in Iraq in the 1950s and 60s by examining two central figures and their divergent visions of divine sovereignty and clerical authority in an Islamic state. Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr (1935-1980) was the chief ideologue of the main Shia Islamist party in Iraq, *Hizb Al-Da'wa* which he founded with others in Najaf in 1957. In his political writings, Baqir Al-Sadr is less concerned with the concept of *hakimiyya* but, based on the Qur'anic notion of consultation (*shura*), seeks to locate sovereignty within the Islamic community (*hukm al-umma*). Muhammad Taqi Al-Mudarrisi (b. 1945) originated from Iraq's second shrine city Karbala. In the mid-1960s Taqi Al-Mudarrisi established the *Harakat Al-Risaliyin Al-Tali'* as a political movement that sought to rival *Hizb Al-Da'wa*. In his political writings, Taqi Al-Mudarrisi concludes from the collective deputyship (*al-niyaba al-'amma*) of the 'ulamā' during the occultation of the Hidden Imam that they are the agents of divine sovereignty on earth. As a consequence, he develops an understanding of the political role of clerical authority in an Islamic state that anticipates Khomeini's notion of the "guardianship of the jurisconsult" (*wilayat al-faqih*). Both figures, Baqir Al-Sadr and Taqi Al-Mudarrisi, illustrate the diverse approaches to divine sovereignty in nascent Shia Islamism and in the wider Islamist field in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**A Direct Flight to Revolution: Maududi and the 1979-Moment**

*Simon Wolfgang Fuchs*

No other Sunni Islamist thinker enjoyed ties as close with the protagonists of revolutionary Iran than Abul Ala Maududi. This special relationship had been long in the making. After a meeting in Mecca in 1963, Khomeini got busy translating Maududi's writings. In return, the Pakistani wholeheartedly condoned the upheaval against the Shah. This unconditional embrace of the Iranian Islamist project was widely discussed and reported in the Arabic Islamist press at the time. Additionally, the Jamaat-i Islami chartered a private plane in late February 1979 to facilitate a direct flight from Karachi to Tehran. On board was the assembled Islamist international, comprising representatives of Muslim Brotherhood and other groups from the Middle East, Europe, the US, India and Southeast Asia. In my paper, I will flesh out these ties and ask how we can conceptualize Maududi's influence both within Iran as well as in the context of the initial global Islamist excitement after the success of Iran's Revolution.

**The Arab Islamist Reception of Maududi's Conception of *Hakimiyya* after Sayyid Qutb**

*Usaama Al-Azami*

The South Asian Islamic scholar and activist, Abul Ala Mawdudi (d. 1979), has wielded considerable influence on contemporary Islamic political thought. Less carefully examined has been the reception of his writings in Arabic among Islamist authors, with the exception of Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966). The present paper considers the Arabic reception of Maududi's ruminations regarding the concept of *hakimiyya* after Qutb. I pay special attention to three Islamist authors who write in Arabic, namely Maududi's long-time collaborator, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi (d. 1999); the notable Qatar-based Azhari Muslim Brother, Yusuf al-Qaradawi (b. 1926); and the prolific Azhar-based Islamist, Muhammad 'Imara (b. 1931). Each scholar adopts a distinctive, and so far unexplored, approach to Maududi's conception of *hakimiyya*. Nadwi (1980) critiques its over-politicisation; Qaradawi (2006, 2015) defends its soundness, when read in the broader context of Maududi's writings; and 'Imara adopts a middle position, appearing to defend it robustly in the 1980s, but critiquing it in the 2000s.