

Programme for the 2023 Annual Millennium Symposium

**REMAPPING THE CRITICAL: IMAGINING ANTI-HIERARCHICAL FUTURES
IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

19-20 October 2023 | London School of Economics and Political Science

Thursday 19 October

Room: TBC

9:00-9:30: Breakfast and coffee

9:30-: Welcome address by editors

Panel 1:

9:30-11:15

Panel 2:

11:15-1

Lunch break (1-1:30)

Panel 3:

1:30-3:15

15 min coffee break

Panel 4:

3:30-5:15

Dinner from 6:30 onwards (*location TBD*)

Friday 20 October

Room: TBC

9:00-9:30: Breakfast and coffee

Panel 5:

9:30-11:15

Panel 6:

11:15-1

Lunch break (1-1:30)

Panel 7:

1:30-3:15

15 min coffee break

Panel 8:

3:30-4:45

Closing remarks by editors

Public event:

Whiskey and IR – podcast with Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Dan Nexon.

Location: *The Old Theatre*. Time: TBC. Followed by wine reception.

(More information soon).

Panel I

Discussant: TBC

Abhishek Choudhary (University of Delhi):

Emancipation as Security, Dignity as Emancipation

The paper has two-fold purpose: it seeks to bring emancipation at the fore and/or it seeks to redefine emancipation. The paper begins by addressing the question: why are certain alternate narratives marginalised and silenced in International Relations? Alternate narratives imply voices and perspectives other than the mainstream narrative articulated by individuals and communities in society. The discipline of IR undermines any effort of engaging with certain alternate narratives and due to this limited ontological stance, it narrows its scope, applicability and reliability. This further facilitates the perpetuation and sustenance of exclusion and maintenance of hierarchies. The paper focuses on alternate narratives of select caste-based minorities in India that are excluded from the dominant narrative. It locates the perpetuation of exclusion by identifying sustenance of 'epistemic violence' at two levels: first through colonial practices where caste was solidified through naïve archival process; second by the hegemonic Hindu social order that denied the so-called low caste people of any agency.

Theoretically, the paper is rooted in critical-theoretical understanding but seeks to redefine the idea of emancipation. It is asserted that despite its novelty, the Welsh/Aberystwyth school of Critical Security Studies is also Eurocentric. The contours of 'emancipation as security' ignore the social bearings of marginalisation. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to redefine what emancipation means. The paper favours referential homegrown theorizing to present the idea of 'dignity as emancipation'. It uses the writings of Ambedkar and Periyar alongside the untold stories from the margins to redefine emancipation and counter social hierarchies.

Cornelia Baciu (University of Copenhagen):

A Post-Critique Theory of Emancipatory Orders

Although critical scholarship has promised the emergence of emancipatory orders, these have not yet materialized, because, while emancipation requires change, orders have changed little. Critical theory has become a victim of its own success, despite its philosophical underpinnings 'upon which truth politics could thrive' (Jahn 2021). While critical IR has succeeded in broadening the meta-theoretical boundaries of the discipline through establishing new reflexive epistemologies and modes of theorizing, critical theory was perceived to have failed to provide a coherent scholarly intervention, despite its commitment to emancipation (Schmid 2023). Seeking to address this critique to critical theory, this paper aims to unearth the challenges of critical scholarship in establishing stable, anti-hierarchical orders: do we need a post-critique 'turn' in IR?

Mapping the critiques to critical scholarship, the paper conceptualizes the contours of a post-critique theory in IR. It applies a metaphysical component, arguing that, critical politics have not paid sufficient attention to the constitutive nature of orders, which is, paradoxically, provided by the philosophical underpinnings of traditional critical IR theory of the Frankfurt School (Benjamin 1940; Horkheimer 1937; Honneth 1986). A post-critique theoretical approach of emancipatory orders builds upon the relations of co-constitution in the emergence and change of orders. These processes are co-constituted by four elements that are intertwined: 1) memory and history; 2) knowledge; 3) practice; 4) subjective rationality. A post-critical theory of emancipatory orders needs to consider the productive link between orders and each of these four elements separately.

Kat Hunfeld (University of St Andrews):

Radical time(s): emancipatory temporalities in Marxist and ecological thought

This paper addresses the idea of temporal relationality as fruitful for making sense of emancipatory temporal imaginaries. As communities around the world struggle amidst the fallout from liberalist development, the time of liberalism, marked by narratives of universal progress and linear socioeconomic development, is losing its political purchase. Ranging from the Rawlsian idea of liberalism's resilience and universality to Fukuyama's universal theory of history that ended in liberal democracy, the liberal, linear teleology underlying the modern/colonial capitalist project is increasingly contested. Indeed, due to its inability to address the multiple political, socio-economic and ecological crises central to contemporary political debates, liberal teleology is displaced by radical, emancipatory temporal imaginaries that grapple with the realities of widening inequality and immanent climate collapse. Besides foregrounding time and temporality as a crucial dimensions of analysis for grasping current political projects, I will be specifically discussing the radical ecological-temporal narratives proposed by groups such as Extinction Rebellion and Ende Gelände, as well as Marxist dialectical thinking on time, as offering glimmers of alternatives to the dominant liberal temporal framework.

Panel 2: Disciplinary debates, divides and possibilities I

Discussant: Philip R. Conway (Durham University)

Sebastian Schindler (LMU Munich):

Reclaiming the Critical: Can the concept of phronesis offer a way forward for critical theories in times of post-truth?

What is an appropriately critical response to increasing fragmentation, confrontation and entrenchment of extreme political, ideological and cultural positions? An answer to this important question (as posed in the Symposium's Call for abstracts) must depend on a precise and accurate critical diagnosis of forms and causes of this fragmentation, confrontation and entrenchment. One possibility for such a diagnosis, I will suggest, is offered by engaging with the phenomenon of so-called post-truth politics. While post-truth is usually blamed on anti-liberal forces, a critical diagnosis reveals that it has social sources within the contemporary configuration of liberalism, which in its neoliberal form has hollowed out notions of the common and the objective, pitting isolated actors against each other in egoistic quests for competitive benefits. Against the background of this diagnosis (which draws on contemporary critical scholars like Albenaz Azmanova and Wendy Brown), my paper will examine whether the actualization of an old concept – namely, "phronesis," understood as the capacity to deal wisely with differences, searching for the common without destroying the other, indeed seeing in difference a chance to learn and grow – can contribute to the development of critical thinking today. Indeed, my hunch is that this concept offers (in a time when critique is thought to be co-opted and mis-appropriated) one promising way for our generation to reclaim the critical.

Alfredo Zeli (Beijing Foreign Studies University):

The Will-to-Power Hypothesis: A (Meta)Theory for Critique and Radicality in Late Postmodernity

The proliferation and consequent pulverisation of radical instances, the poststructuralist deconstruction of everything, and the fetishisation (if not commodification) of whatever is critical and radical have effectively been incorporated into the hegemonic superstructure at the present stage of postmodernity. A number of critical innovations have addressed the shortcomings of

contemporary critique. Notably, third-wave feminism and post-constructivism voiced the need for focusing on (and theorising from) embodied (situated, intersectional, thus non-essentialist) perspectives and the reweaving of all dualisms (nature/culture, women/men, etc.). Taking up these critical concerns, I try to offer a reading of Nietzsche's notion of Will-to-Power, duly unshackled from unwarranted politicised distortions and particular and accidental geo-historical entanglements, as a meta-theory explaining both the dialectical dynamics of oppression and struggle for emancipation in the social world as well as the deconstructionist logic of critique in academia. The metaphysics of the Will-to-Power as primordial dynamic interaction among competing drives repeating itself at the micro and macro thereby permeating the entire cosmos, accounts for totality, difference, and historical becoming within a non-hierarchical ontology, hence it resonates well with the post-constructivist political-ontological sensibility. Nietzsche's Will-to-Power perspectivism endows embodied subjectivity and historical contingency with the explanatory relevance dear to third-wave feminist theorising. Finally, Nietzsche's treatment of historical types, whose origin fundamentally lie in the interplay of Will-to-Truth and Will-to-Power, coherently explains, and promises a solution to, the problematic dissociation of critique from public engagement. The realignment of the Will-to-Truth and the Will-to-Power is what ultimately empowers historically informed radical action in our historical-political conjuncture.

Nicholas Michelsen (KCL) and Pablo de Orellana (KCL):

Cyclicity and the crisis of international critique

Cyclical accounts of historical evolution are back, and they are global. Xi, Putin, Erdogan, Modi, and Trump, all speak of a 'return' to greatness. This is not simply nostalgia, but indicative of a common interpretation of history as cyclical, which frames itself as a novel form of international criticism. Discourses of cyclical repetition lie at the core of the ideas of nationalist figures in both Global North and Global South that seek to critique the Liberal international order for its imperialism, violence and coloniality. Cyclical arguments are also increasingly widespread in academic and popular discourses about the crisis of our times. In this article, we examine the intellectual history of cyclicity in International Relations and ask how and why it intersects with the characteristic forms of cyclical thinking found amongst the Global New Right. Our argument is that the ongoing crisis is inscribed in the history of international critique: The mission of critique should be to locate, examine and engage with the legacy of cyclicity in International Relations - which otherwise, makes the world look as predicted by 19th century ethno-nationalists.

Panel 3:

Discussant: TBC

Devika Misra (OP Jindal Global University):

Reproduction of Power in Global IR: Reading Indian Experiments in Global IR Scholarship

Historically, the international has often served as the legitimizing and stabilizing pivot in several developing countries like India and Brazil, where status or the search for greatness has sustained state building visions. In the current Indian context, international renown has actively supported polarizing narratives unleashed domestically, all the while curbing opposition and dispersing dissent. The 'international,' the 'state' and the ruling ideology have congealed in the practice of politics in India if not in the discourse of it. This troubling reality when coupled with the much-needed push for displacing the western focus of IR, complicates the agency that Global IR has eked out for itself. Who defines globality in the Indian state and how has this articulation been co-opted by the purveyors of Hindutva?

This paper proposes a critical evaluation of the globality of Global IR by problematizing not only the state-centeredness of how IR is done and practised in India but also the context of Indian contributions to Global IR. Is the displacement of the western lens truly critical and emancipatory or is it a mere tool in the hands of the powerful upper caste elite in the Indian state who first prioritize sections of traditional Indian knowledge and then instrumentalize the same to consolidate the Hindutva agenda in the discipline of IR? What are the fissures in the propositions of Global IR that must be identified to protect it from capture by the goals and precepts of the Indian state?

Stanzin Lhaskyabs (Jawaharlal Nehru University):

Situating Critical Problem-solving Theory in International Studies: A Case Study of India-China Conflict at Eastern Ladakh

Critical Problem-solving theory, originally propounded by Chris Brown in 2013, seeks to locate the relevance of Critical Theory in International Relations studies by bringing in the causes and concerns of the 'wretched' or the margins within the realm of International Relations theory (Brown 2013). This paper is an attempt to explain the ongoing India-China conflict which resurfaced in the eastern Ladakh region in 2020 using critical problem-solving theory. This is done by first explaining the conceptual framework of critical problem-solving theory and then by applying the framework to the India-China conflict at Eastern Ladakh.

The key argument of the paper is that the ongoing conflict between India and China in the eastern Ladakh region is the result of two main factors: The ontological insecurity of India and China within the context of the rising power of both states in modern times and the historical sidelining (in case of India) and oppression (in case of China) of the marginalised community inhabiting across the borders of both the states. Further, the paper argues that these two factors cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive in understanding the conflict between the two states. The paper will employ a qualitative method of data collection by incorporating interviews of statesmen, security officers, and marginalised individuals inhabited at the border of both states.

Carolina Zaccato (University of St Andrews):

A defensive notion of regionalism: The Pan-American Conferences and the emergence of a Latin American regional order in the nineteenth century

This paper seeks to analyse the emergence of the idea of a distinctive Latin American region during the first Pan-American Conferences, at a momentum of a slow but steady American rise to hegemony in the Western Hemisphere. In the context of panamericanism, diplomats from the region started fostering the notion of a distinct Latin American regional space as separate from the US-promoted construct of an American Hemisphere. In this vein, Latin American diplomats saw in regional unity the means to safeguard their countries' recently acquired independence and contest ever-increasing American gravitation in what they considered to be exclusively regional, i.e. Latin American, affairs.

Through archival work conducted in the region, this work explores regional notions, understandings, and framings of shared threats to sovereignty and independence, and the 'regional rise of consciousness', this is, the constitution of a distinctive Latin American region and identity. Conceiving national sovereignty as inextricably linked to a regional principle of non-intervention, these countries forged a defensive notion of regionalism. Two hundred years after the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine (1823), the main point of contention during the first Pan-American conferences, tracing back the origins of the region remains crucial to understanding contemporary Latin American affairs.

Panel 4:

Discussant: Nivi Manchanda (QMUL)

Shubhankar Kashyap (LSE):

Critically Examining Hierarchies in Anti-Imperial Thought

Current attempts at decolonising International Political Thought have aimed to include anti-imperial thinkers as worldmakers with their own reconstructive theorisations instead of simply projecting them as a critic of Empire. Within these attempts, anti-imperial thought is constructed as emancipatory because of its resistance to Europe. By conceiving anti-imperialism through the paradigms of resistance and liberation, it becomes necessary for anti-imperial thought to be primarily conceptualised on the basis of its opposition to the empire. The anchoring focus on the empire recreates the international/domestic, or specifically metropole/colony, binary where all that matters lies in what anti-imperial thought has to say about the international, or the metropole, and the subject-matters related to domestic, or colony, itself receives any attention. Thus, sociopolitical and racialised hierarchies within anti-imperial visions of thinkers are considered paraphernalia that are not relevant to anti-imperialism. In this paper, I argue that hierarchies should be theorised as a central feature of anti-imperialism instead of being perceived as unpalatable components. I contend that hierarchies were not simply an unfortunate part of anti-imperial visions, but a tool of legitimation that was critical in securing mass resistance against imperial authorities. Drawing upon historical archives, this paper applies approaches offered by Global Historical Sociology to Indian thinkers, notably Shyamji Krishnavarma, Savarkar and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya for determining the role and importance of hierarchies in their anti-imperial resistance. While many scholars have outlined that hierarchies existed alongside anti-imperial thought of thinkers, this paper disregards this dichotomy and instead, analyses theoretical connections between them.

Gulsah Capan (University of Erfurt):

In Search of the Unicorn: The Magical, the Imaginary and the Spatio-Temporal Ordering of Knowledge

The hegemonic modern western knowledge has structured the way in which science, scientific inquiry and who under what conditions can make claims to truth and falsity. This construction has been narrated as being internal to Europe and through that has been fixed as an essential characteristic of that space. This has resulted in the negations of that 'scientific knowledge' being fixed as an essential characteristic of spaces designated as being outside of Europe. These differentiations and hierarchizations, even in their critique, turn their attention to the 'outside' of Europe resignifying another essentialization whereby the mystical becomes the purview of 'non-Europe' and 'scientific' knowledge belongs to Europe. The paper problematizes this narrative by focusing on the way in which the hierarchization between fact and fiction, beliefs and scientific truths, speculation and factuality worked within the space designated as 'Europe' and on the shift in discourses about the occult, supernatural beings and mysticism and how it was externalized to spaces outside of Europe. The discussion will focus on the witch trials, alchemy and the mapping of other worldly beings such as unicorns and discuss how claims to factuality, truth and science were formulated and how the logic of these externalizations for establishing and fixing hierarchies of knowledge ordered the international.

Megan Manion (University of Minnesota) and Nasema Zeerak (University of Minnesota):

Storytelling is/as Epistemic Violence: Imperial Shortcuts to Producing Knowledge about Afghanistan

Generations of scholarly and material work have carefully constructed “The Afghan Woman,” a fictive figure in the imperial imagination. While this fictive figure is always contingent on Afghan women, she is also entangled with the imagined audience and the specific political commitments her story naturalizes. A fictive figure does work for empire as much as she is the work of empire: she constitutes a colonial presence and conditions an imperialism of coloniality. We ask how storytelling about “The Afghan Woman” makes possible imperial forms of intervention, even when framed as humanitarian and peacemaking? Why and how does “The Afghan Woman” work for empire? We argue that because she is a fiction contrived by co-constitutive logics of coloniality, misogyny, and racism, “The Afghan Woman” functions as an embodied technology of “imperial containment” (Stoler 2016; 63-64). Even as we understand violence in its social form, non-violence (for Afghan women), or something-more-than-violence, “The Afghan Woman” reveals the permanency and power of fictive figures in the imperial imaginary and colonial present of Afghanistan. To tell stories about “The Afghan Woman” is to imagine and construct an imperial shortcut in knowledge making about Afghanistan, politically and cognitively, for what we can know and what we are allowed to know about Afghan women. Implicating ourselves among the we who are allowed to know in different ways, we argue that storytelling and the stories themselves can, thus, be understood as a technology and a technique of (imperial) containment. They constitute and are productive of epistemic violence.

Panel 5: Worldviews, narratives, and temporalities from the margins

Discussant: Ida Danewid (University of Sussex)

Ignasi Torrent (University of Hertfordshire) & Harshvardhan Bhat (The Ohio State University):

The Politics of Settling Weather: Science, Storytelling and Displacement

This paper explores how settler colonialism interacts, erases and absorbs vernacular weather knowledge(s) and practices in the production of settler Science as well as hierarchical world-making ventures. While most literature exposes the force of erasure in western scientific revolutions, swaying the fetishisation and obfuscation of what they theorize as storytelling, this text discusses how settler Science extracts and absorbs other ways of knowing throughout its very constitutive process. It displaces its labor, history and relations in re-purposing its significations in the maintenance of a settler calculus. First, we revisit a sketchy genealogy of the institutionalization of theoretical Physics and how its seemingly universal knowledge is twined with exclusionary political projects. Secondly, prompted by the tenets of colonial meteorology, we trace the work of settler Science claiming indigenous repositories and resources in theorizing the weather. As the former fails in decoding the mysteries of weather events and the latter acquires its legitimisation, we find that practices of displacement emerge and intensify. This indecipherability is presented as an invitation to unearth the value of alternative exploratory possibilities which eschew the Promethean desire of the intellectual conquest of nature, and therefore ask: How do certain hierarchies dissolve in the storm?

Rohan Chopra (University of Oxford):

Imagination as Decolonial Resistance: Unsettling the Nation-State through Historical Alternatives

The dominance of power structures is maintained through regimes of knowledge; in order to reject these structures, one must find ways to resist epistemes that uphold them. While there is ample literature on epistemic justice, there is less research on how power structures can be transformed through discursive resistance to these epistemes. This paper fills this gap by studying communalism in South Asia through a reinterpretation of Mirza Ghalib’s text, *Dastanbuy*, written during the 1857

revolt.

Through an analysis of absences, emotions and spaces, I gauge alternative conceptualisations of communitarian relations, specifically between 'Hindus' and 'Muslims'. I suggest that in using a different vocabulary for thinking about these, Ghalib offers us a glimpse into a non-hierarchical vision thereof. This is critical in rethinking contemporary relationships which link the hierarchised minority status of particular communities to their otherness from the nation-state, using this as a basis for marginalisation. Subsequently, I use these historical alternatives to 'imagine' new forms of being between faith-based communities in South Asia in the present, thereby unsettling the basis of the nation-state.

This research's relevance extends to post-colonial societies like Sudan and the Americas, with implications for critical IR theory as it employs imagination to disrupt the dominant discourse connecting colonial knowledge of religious identities to nation-states, thereby fostering alternative modes of socio-political existence. Consequently, by locating resistance in historical alternatives, this paper utilises imagination as a tool of emancipation and explores how radical reinterpretations of the past encapsulate historical alternatives to power structures and epistemes today.

Rochona Majumdar (University of Chicago):

Solidarity and Critique in Third World Cinemas

The goal of this essay is to think about the possibilities of cosmopolitanism in the context of filmic internationalism. My references are drawn from political filmmaking in India and Argentina, specifically Mrinal Sen's *Padatik* (The Foot Soldier, 1973) and Fernando Solanas Octavio Gettino's landmark film, *La hora de los hornos* (1968).

Panel 6: Disciplinary debates, divides and possibilities II

Discussant: TBC

Jonathan Luke Austin (University of Copenhagen) and David Chandler (University of Westminster):

(IR)Response-ability, Critique, and Post-Critique

For decades, the notion of post-critique has engaged in a critique of critique. Originally, post-critique drew on radical feminist, queer, and post-structuralist theory to question the distance of scholastic critique from more radical traditions of social activism, emancipatory political practices, and engagement with 'concrete' global problems. In more recent years – however – attempts to introduce post-critical thinking to IR and cognate social sciences have faced resistance, and accusations – paradoxical given its radical roots – of neoliberal and depoliticizing effects. In this article, we construct a fictional dialogue staging two underlying elements of this debate with the goal of unpacking post-critique, its problems, and promises. One half of that dialogue suggests that the problem of post-critique today is its lack of political engagement since its assimilation into sociological thinking (Latour) and literary studies (Felski), which has arguably drawn post-critique away from its roots in the radical work of figures such as Sedgwick, bell hooks, and Foucault. On the other hand, we explore how post-critique can be seen as too political for reinstating the human and the world in ways that reproduce the classic problems of critique. Our goal in constructing this dialogical inquiry is to provincialize contemporary debates on the place of critique, post- or otherwise, tracing them in relation to alternative critical figurations that have generally operated outside and alongside IR's liberal/Eurocentric purview. In doing so, we rethink the possibilities for post-/critique in the contemporary moment with the hope of generating different modes of (ir)response-able scholarly engagement with world politics.

Fabricio Chagas-Bastos (Harvard University) and Leonardo Ramos (Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais):

The Criticism About Being Critical: The Rise and Fall of Peripheral Critical Approaches in IR

The emergence of International Political Economy (IPE) as a subfield of International Relations (IR) in 1970s-1980s showed that 'critical perspectives', such as Dependency Theory, could be a 'third' way against Realism and Liberalism. Constructivism, however, took up the role of Marxist-inspired theoretical approaches, and assumed a prominent and legitimate role of such critical perspectives in mainstream IR theoretical debates. Our aim in this article is to reconsider this part of the critical IR field history. We shed light on Dependency Theory trajectory on IR, from a prominent critical approach to almost complete disappearance. More broadly, central to our argument is whether critical perspectives have detached from the Radical tradition to assimilate within the mainstream. If such opposition exists, we query the underpinning reasons and implications. By historicising IR critical theory, we aim to shed light on its present role, potential, limitations, thereby enhancing our understanding of the changing dynamics within IR. We first critically map out the Marxist intellectual traditions of Dependency Theory, and show how it has been introduced to IR. Next, we contrast it with other critical perspectives and IR mainstream theories during the 1970s and 1980s to show how Dependency Theory championed the critical role in the discipline. In section three, we show how constructivism took over for Marxism as third way, pushing Dependency out. Last, we problematise how critical approaches still 'hold water' theoretically and empirically, and how they can be brought to the fore together and not as compartmentalised or hierarchised entities.

Oliver Kessler (University of Erfurt):

Critique of the Market

After 30 years of continuous renewal, critical approaches in IR run the risk of becoming dogmatic and part of the orthodoxy. To leave established paths, this article juxtaposes critical vis-a-vis critique. Critique reconstructs the constitutive distinctions that produce phenomena. It identifies connections and differences, makes the invisible visible, and acknowledges the contingency of spatio-temporal regimes (or regimes of historicity). Critical projects are always part of fields of social forces in which they operate. With neoliberalism currently coming to an end, established critical approaches seem lose bite: globalization gives way to geoeconomics, the liberal moment to new great power politics. We are in need to understanding how social forces currently shift and alter the established spatio-temporal fix of the liberal international. To explore this question, this article offers a critique of the market as a social imaginary. This article first outlines the connections between critique and imaginaries and how they link with postcolonial hierarchies and the limits to any emancipatory hope. The second section points to a specific epistemology of neoliberalism. Based on three notions of contingency, this article outlines three understandings of 'critical' projects: as identification of alternative empirics and alternatives, as mode of communication (communicative reason), and as a mode of organization/institutionalization of imaginaries. It shows how discourses around the neoliberal market translate critiques of the second and third level into a 'critique' in the first sense which gives dominance to quantitative forms of knowing and silences other forms of critiques.

Panel 7:

Discussant: David Rampton (LSE)

Vinsent Nollet (KU Leuven):

Violence as force. On the role of violence in history

Discourse on socio-political realities like colonialism, structural oppressions, inequality or climate crisis cannot meaningfully be approached unless we are able to understand the extent to which they exert violence. However, these debates are accompanied by vehement and polarised conflicts over the semantics of violence, which makes it increasingly difficult to form coherent perspectives that escape moral-political partisanship. Moral-political and legal-philosophical perspectives on structural violence often express a circularity in which violence is judged or condemned in terms of certain goals or values foreign to the violence itself. Marx pointed out that violence has a capacity to transform historical realities and moral values, which is most sharply expressed in revolutions. In my paper, I will examine this capacity of violence to function as a historical reality or force that makes possible the existence of a present as a constellation of contingent yet established norms and values. Walter Benjamin's 1921 essay "Critique of Violence" still contains a relevant foundational framework for such a philosophical-historical approach to violence beyond moral-political instrumentalisation. Benjamin conceptually articulates history based on a transcendental critique of the way in which the concept of violence creates its own conditions of possibility, which goes against Hegelian or Marxist perspectives in which this violence can be "judged" or propels history towards a higher meaning. Benjamin understands violence in a broad sense as a "law" engulfing history, whereas freedom toward history is not the affirmation of this "law," but its deconstruction.

Oliver Richmond (The University of Manchester)

TBC

TBC

Mariana Caldas (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin):

A I.R. Certain Regard: looking to the concept of violence in I.R. and what is unseen

After Cox's famous quote, much has been discussed in what is the role of critique in I.R. theory. Critique is still a relevant exercise of thinking in the sense of finding the limits of what is meant to produce knowledge, in Kantian terms. This article will look at Walter Benjamin's understanding of critique as a concept intimately linked to the conditions of power and violence. Benjamin reacts against the traditional concept of critique to discriminate the role of power in social relations advancing the role of historiography. Considering this epistemological discussion, this article aims to associate the conditions of criticism in the field, specifically concerning the concept of what is "violence", with the positionality of seeing a phenomenon, which relates to certain embeddedness in contemporaneity. It argues that the very conceptualisation of what is violence is itself embedded in the conditions of possibility of what is to be seen informed by a certain point of view. The work of Benjamin supports an alternative reading of critique in the sense of legibility of International Relations. This article relies on Brazilian artworks to advance a reading of the concept of violence from the margins, namely, from the standpoint of colonial historiography. My aim is to reflect upon practices and concepts within the field are developed through history. Thus, the article argues that to re-think the role of critique within the field quests looking for the breaches that interrupt the way we frame concepts as supposedly we see.

Panel 8:

Alice Finden (Durham University):

Counter-mapping the archive: A decolonial feminist research method

Over the past decade there has been a growing interest in what is known as the 'turn to history' in the disciplines of International Politics and International Law. This turn has coincided with a counter-

reading of the archive as a means to trouble contemporary practices and institutions of governance. In this article I explore what a decolonial feminist approach to the colonial archive can look like through a research method that involves counter-mapping. I present participatory interviews, carried out between 2019-2020, that involved asking interviewees to annotate colonial maps of Cairo and the co-creation of an alternative map. This method presented a decolonial space where researcher and participants co-investigated colonial 'truth' of 'security threats' and 'dangerous communities' and examined how such truths transcend the colonial/modern continuum in new postcolonial forms of securitisation in Egypt. Securitised spaces on the map were reimagined as spaces of emancipation and life. At the same time, the experiences of Egyptian women participants point to the colonality of gender in Egypt and the need for an intersectional approach to decolonial research methods.

Premanand Mishra (Jamia Millia Islamia)

Subaltern Realities as critical methodology: Re-Imagining Kurdish (Statehood) from the lens of Non -Western IR

The normative conception of the state formations have been hegemonically grounded in socio-historical experiences of the Westphalian order. However, post-colonial experiences have found a different trajectory. Subaltern realities challenge the normative crises that these major dominant IR theories offer on war& peace, conflicts and the process of state formation. The paper discusses subaltern realities to situate the Kurdish question and its aspiration for separate statehood. The significant challenge that hegemonic IR theories have is that it doesn't offer the realities of existing pluralistic structures of international society. IR as an inclusive universal "discipline" has been challenged by scholars like Acharya and Buzan. For them, as an intellectual concern, the idea of a zero-sum choice between mainstream IR and its critical and cultural challenges needs to be rejected. Alternative realism in that sphere de-essentializes structural fixity. Another challenge has been the Westphalian episteme that dominates IR and its singular language. The re-imagining Kurdish aspiration for statehood needs a rethinking of ideals of Westphalian notion arguing for judicious interpretations of domestic, external and normative ideas. Thus, the subaltern realities try to fill the gap by examining the Kurdish question to its socio-historical processes and relative powerlessness, weakness of institutional settings and domestic and extern realities that have undermined its aspirations and possibilities. Subaltern realities help in re-defining ethnic identity, civic culture and absence of established literature in the grammar of politics over Kurdish questions.