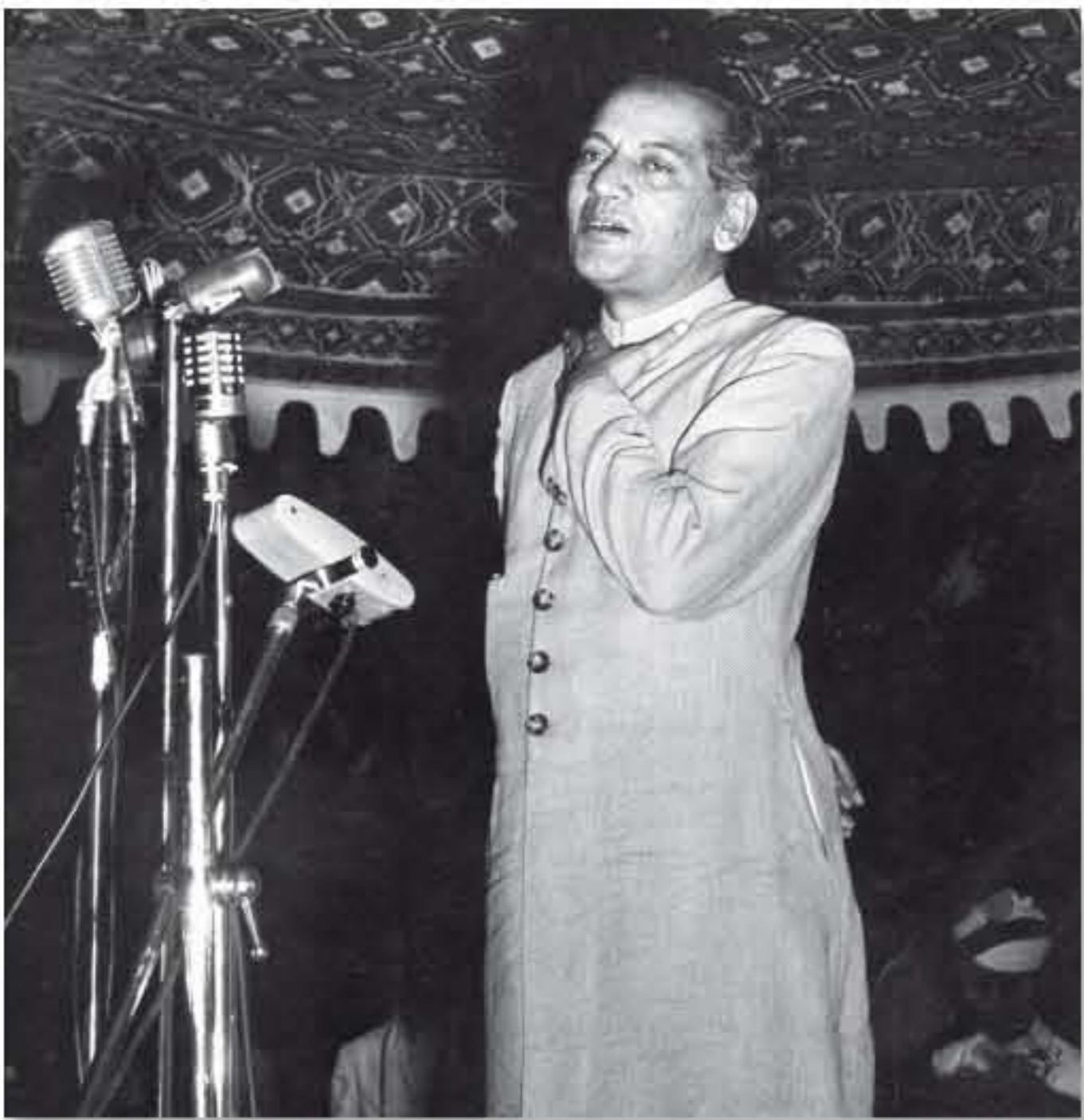




Trajectories of Lives and Knowledge



Landmarks and important sites in a historical map of Istanbul by S. Schweigger



Faiz Ahmad Faiz addressing a public gathering.
Source: Adabnuma, n.d.



The novelist Mukhtar Shehata and his daughter Omaila, Minyat al-Murshid, Egypt.
Photo: Samuli Schielke, 2012

From the Province to the Centre: Translocal Perspectives and Representations of Istanbul in Arabic Travelogues of the 17th and 18th Centuries

Feras Krimsti

This project examines Arabic travelogues from the 17th and 18th century, which do not focus on the Ottoman city of Istanbul as the seat of imperial power, but rather on its urban landscape and its everyday life. Focusing on the ways in which the capital was perceived and represented by the travellers from the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the research project aims to shed light on translocal perspectives as well as on knowledge reaching beyond the local sphere. Through their detailed descriptions the travelogues – literary fictions as well as mediums of cognition and knowledge – document the widening horizons of the erudite inhabitants of Ottoman Arab cities on the eve of modernity.

A Future in Question: Literary, Cultural and Political Debates in Pakistan, 1947 to 1977

Dr Ali Raza

This project seeks to examine the history of envisaged futures in Pakistan. It focuses on the cultural, literary, and political debates that animated Pakistan from its formative period to the end of the 1970s. Conducted between individuals and groups belonging to various political and ideological camps, these debates aptly reflected the anxieties accompanying Pakistan's formation as an independent nation state. At stake was nothing less than the all-encompassing future of Pakistan and the various peoples who inhabited it. These discussions emanated from a rich and diverse social, cultural, political and intellectual milieu that promised various trajectories towards a glorious and utopian future. When placed in the moment itself, this milieu was also reflective of the wider politics of the Cold War in which Pakistan played a key role. These debates were thus seminal in influencing official policies and wider public opinion in a way which had profound implications for the future direction and orientation of the nation state. As such then, this study is important not just for highlighting an understudied aspect of Pakistan's history, which has all too often been viewed in teleological terms, but also for its contribution to the study of the Cold War and its global impact.

Motivations and Consequences of Literary Writing in Alexandria after 2011

Dr Samuli Schielke

Writing poetry, prose and semi-literary texts is a fairly common activity among Egyptians who have received higher education, although the readership of fiction is very low. After 2011, such writing has become much more visible as many people have started writing or have started publishing online what they would have previously kept for themselves. Following the lives and works of writers in different milieus in Egypt's second-largest city, this research project looks at the practice, social conditions and possible consequences of literary writing from a long-term biographical perspective. Connecting literary works, their themes and their styles with questions of sociality, personal idiosyncrasies, political and social context, livelihoods and economy, the project is also an attempt to develop a non-reductionist understanding of imagination, cultural production, material conditions, relations of production and social change on the same analytical plane. The research, which is based on the shared fieldwork of Schielke and the Alexandrian novelist Mukhtar Saad Shehata, has a strongly collaborative aspect, debating and developing these theoretical directions in dialogue with the writers involved.