

WORKING GROUP A

1. Débora Gerbaudo Suárez

(PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology, National University of San Martin)

Local Identity and Transnational Citizenship. Community-Based Participation among Paraguayan Youth and the Second Generation in Two Cities: Buenos Aires and Misiones

In my research, I explore the city that migrant youth “make” and the landscapes of power that shape their life trajectories. I examine the ways in which Paraguayan youth inhabit the city in Buenos Aires, as members of a long-standing diaspora affected by xenophobia and racism given the history of neo-colonial relations in processes of South-South migration.

Despite living in polluted and segregated areas, migrant youth build ways of subaltern urbanism, especially young women through dense community networks and popular feminism. My collaborative ethnography, based on Participatory Action Research, seeks to unsettle certain anthropological canons of the Global North with epistemologies of the South. In addition, my feminist research approach aims to promote change toward the elimination of social oppression by producing “knowledge practices” with and for migrant youth and their families.

In doing so, I am producing biographies with different generations of young. Some of them came to the country from an early age as part of their family’s migration, or by young adults following their own projects. Others were born in Argentina, never emigrated but share with their mothers and fathers a culture linked to Paraguay.

I build their biographies from a generational perspective of migration that consider the genealogical, age and sociopolitical dimension. I also am interested in the histories of inhabited spaces made or transformed by subjects using interdisciplinary perspectives on urban history and geography.

I find the School’s topics to be closely related with my research project for two major reasons related with knowledge production and knowledge translation. Collectively, I conducted interviews with students, teachers and women’s organizations using Participatory Action Research methodologies. Furthermore, their stories deal not only individuals but also with their communities in the places they left and the places they inhabit in the destination country. This approach offers alternatives to address the discussion of the individual/collective in the construction of biographies and in the production of knowledge from them, but also questions.

Is it the collective construction of biographies possible? Not just among researchers but together with the subjects with whom we investigate. ¿How to generate feedback between biographies built with academic knowledge and biographies based on community knowledge that is expressed in other formats, beyond writing? ¿How would that translate into academia and, at the same time, in the community?

I also wonder how that dialogue with my own anthropological analysis within the framework of a thesis that seeks to innovate disciplinary canons, when Participatory Action Research was always peripheral in general to the scientific production system at the national level and in Anthropology itself.

Short Biography: Débora Gerbaudo Suárez has a BA in Social Anthropology from the Buenos Aires University (UBA) and a MA in Social Sciences from the National University of General Sarmiento (UNGS-IDES) where she studied migrant youth and their transnational political

practices in the global South. As a fellow from the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), she is currently doing a PhD in Social Anthropology at National University of San Martin (UNSAM-IDAES) where she analyzes the intersections between migrations, youth and urban space among Paraguayans living in metropolitan and intermediate Argentine cities.

2. Elham Shahsavar Zadeh

(PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology, York University, Toronto)

Reading Iranianness through the life of Naqsh-e Jahan Square

Built in the 16th century and regarded as one of Iran's most important historical and tourist sites of Iran, Naqsh-e Jahan Square is surrounded by mosques, palaces and bazaars containing hundreds of handicraft stores, artisanal workshops, art galleries and a fine art faculty. Each day, thousands of merchants, artists, artisans, dealers, and tourists gather in the square's bazaars to visit and trade commodities which is referred to as 'Iranian art'. This project interrogates how the multiple social actors, networks and material culture residing within and transiting through Naqsh-e Jahan's bazaars bring into being contemporary and multiple conceptions and articulations of 'Iranianness'. More particularly, the project examines the ways in which so-called 'Iranian art' are brought to life through generative labor, discursive acts, and material forms. I aim to see the square as a spectacle in which story of things and people intersect through time and spaces and mediate various conceptions of Iranian identities, including provincial sense of belonging to the nation.

Relaying to Bakhtin (2010) who see the chronotope as the analysis unite and a conduit through which meanings and worldviews meet each other, I aim to understand various configuration of Iranianness in Naqsh-e-Jahan square beyond official spatiotemporal definition of Iran as a modern nation-state.

Through this project, I aim to explore how such identities are articulated in the context of a hegemonic modern, post-Revolutionary Iranian nation-building project whose culture, arguably, places emphasis on Twelver Shi'a Islam, the Persian language and an antipathy toward the West that has resulted in a type of bounded nationalism. How and to what extent do conformist or alternative formulations of Iranianness and counter-narratives emerge in such a context?

While I rely on stories of things and people who are directly or indirectly involved in the social life of the square, I will write the square '*sar'gozasht*' in relation but independent from its actors. *Sar'gozasht* is one of the many words in Persian which refers to biography and can be translated to 'what is witnessed' and applied for both human and nonhuman subjects. While this notion stands for the narrative of someone/somewhere/something life, the embedded idea of witnessing gives rise to thinking about distributed agency between the human-nonhuman subjects and the network around them. It has the potentiality to include both cultural history and what is excluded from the wholistic conception of culture and can be only found in constant working against culture (Abu-Lughod 1998).

Biography: I am a Ph.D. candidate in social anthropology at York University in Toronto. My research interests focus on the intersection of materiality, affect, and belonging. I am interrogating how art and material culture are incorporated in processes of subject making in contemporary Iran, in particular Isfahan. I apply a post-colonial feminist approach in my research to examine how the conception of 'national art' is lived out in the historical site of Naqsh-e Jahan Square. Over the last

ten years, I have collaborated with different NGOs in Iran as a freelance researcher to write and record the oral history of volunteers and social entrepreneurs.

3. Yvonne Albers

(Postdoctoral Researcher, Freie Universität Berlin and Affiliated EUME Fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin)

What's in a Name?

Writing the Intellectual Biography of a Late 20th Century Arab Cultural Magazine

How can biography help us to reconstruct and understand the complex nature of an unanimated object, one that has shaped global intellectual history in the 20th century like nearly no 'thing' else? An object that has enabled transnational literary and intellectual communities to emerge and to sustain themselves, and which needs to be regarded as nothing less than the very materialization of these communities into printed matter? My dissertation "The Magazine as a Genre of Crisis: *Mawāqif* (1968-1994). A Biography" (completed in 2020 and to be published with Brill in 2022) is what I called an 'intellectual biography' of the cultural magazine *Mawaqif* (engl.: *Positions; Stations*) which was published between 1968 and 1994 in Beirut and later Paris. It was founded by the Syrian poet Adunis and produced by a changing editorial team of Arab writers, thinkers, and artists, most of whom are now central figures in Arab intellectual and literary history. Through the prism of this important but hitherto unexplored magazine, my dissertation tells the alternative story of a generation of Arab intellectuals at the end of the 20th century, whose intellectual trajectories were shaped by the *naksa* of 1967, May 1968, the Palestinian resistance movement, the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Lebanese civil war, and the increased emigration of Arab thinkers and cultural figures that peaked in the 1980s.

In the summer school, I would like to expand on some of my reflections related to the genre of biography when applied to a serial object like the cultural magazine. I intend to discuss how we can turn biographical writing into a critical methodology that allows us to examine the magazine not only as an "agent of change" (E. Eisenstein), but also as an agent *in change*. My general question – Why and how to write a biography of a serial non-human actor? – relates at some point to each of the summer school's main themes. The very practice of writing the biography of a historical print matter from the Arab region has to deal to a great extent with questions of data due to the magazine's unruly serial nature. In research on historical periodicals, *the hole in the archive* is a real one, a hole in between paper matter, not just one in memory; a hole the historian necessarily has to address, which forces her/him to consider how to weigh up 'dense' and 'dull moments' against each other. Further, writing a magazine's biography allows to challenge a prevailing understanding of biographies as single-man-accounts, and instead shift to a reflection of how to conceive of biography as a *connected, interactive, ongoing act of creation* with overlapping, not necessarily coherent, and surely not linear self-conceptions of the biographic individual and of historical collectives. A cultural magazine like *Mawaqif* might have had a central editorial figure from beginning to end, but its biography is the fragmentary work of a collective group, albeit one that was in itself inconsistent and constantly changing. Therefore, a magazine biography necessarily complicates the prevailing understanding of 'biography' as a genre confined to narrate the course of one biological individual. And last but not least, since the magazine as form upholds an intrinsic relation to temporality and (literary) history-writing, it seems most

promising to reflect on how the temporal pattern of biographical writing is complicated when applied to the magazine, a form that is both structured by linear time while also producing its own temporalities in relation to its *social and historical context*.

Short Biography: Yvonne Albers is a postdoctoral researcher at the Cluster of Excellence *Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective* at Freie Universität Berlin and an affiliated EUME fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin. She studied Theater Studies, Philosophy and Arabic Literature in Leipzig and Damascus and obtained her PhD in Arabic Studies at Philipps-Universität Marburg. Besides several essays she has published a book on the question of spectatorship in theatrical practices of post-war Lebanon (2011), co-edited a volume on literary commitment since the 1950s (2015), and co-authored a textbook for modern Arabic literature and culture (2021). She is finalizing her second monography, an intellectual biography of the Beirut-based cultural magazine *Mawaqif* (Brill 2022). Her current research addresses the temporal dimension of the modern periodical and its function in shaping other temporal concepts like “revolution”, “modernity”, or “exile”. Albers is also co-founder and former editor of the open-access journal *Middle East – Topics and Arguments*, 2011-2021.

4. Ophélie Mercier

(PhD Student, Universiteit Gent, Ghent, Belgium)

Navigating Value and Recognition within the International Arts Field: Between Self-Definition and Assigned Identities. Case study of Egyptian artists residing in Europe

Artists biographies tend to focus on training background, professional cooperation and partnerships, highlighting recognition through prizes. These elements differ from how, for instance, Mahmoud El Haddad, an Egyptian performer based in France, introduces himself in the presentation of his new creation ‘self-entitlement’, in which the artist rather appears through his positionality and internal feelings towards his settlement in a new country. These different focuses highlight the tension that appears when trying to put down (or reduce) in words someone’s life and they illustrate the various emphasis and format that biographies can take depending on the purpose they aim to serve and the context where they are produced. Do the artists adjust their life stories to write biographies to fit with the expectations of art institutions? Or do they strategize what they want to portray? How does this adaptation/strategy process happen?

In this research project, I explore life trajectories of Egyptian artists who (re)settled in Europe following the counter revolutionary unfolding of the 2011 uprising. The Egyptian revolutionary moment contributed to provoke an impulse in creativity and spaces for artists that took place not only through the embodiment of politics in artistic work and exploration of new aesthetics but also creating spaces for new autodidact artists. For these reasons, the revolution appears as a life-altering experience in artists’ biographical narratives, highlighting new sociabilities and new subjectivities. However, these new spaces for artistic expressions gradually closed or were pressured by the successive political shifts. In this context, this paper explores the life trajectories of Egyptian artists who (re)settled in Europe as a consequence of these closures and constraints.

Life trajectories are understood at the intersection between different forms of biographical accounts from Egyptian artists residing in Europe. I combine analysis of three types of data: biographical interviews, analysis of publications, interviews and articles published online, and discussion on their artworks. Discussing the production history of these artworks sheds light on the power dynamics at stake between the artists and the institutions that validate and legitimize the artistic creation and therefore the position of the artist in their host society.

This research project proposes to explore three hypothetical trends of thought. First, it looks at how the revolutionary moment in Egypt was a life-altering experience for many Egyptian artists involved in the independent art scene. Secondly, it explores how the experience of exile and/or migration is rather presented by artists as a biographical continuity, refusing the stigmatizing label of exile. Finally, it interrogates how their new positionalities and sometimes labelled identities in Europe as ‘Arab migrant artists’ contributes to the conversion of their political engagement.

Short Biography: Ophélie Mercier is a PhD Student at Ghent University and associated with the Centre Marc Bloch (Berlin where she is currently based). She graduated from SOAS where she conducted research exploring theatre as a form of resistance in Palestine. She worked in Cairo from 2013-16 as a street clown performer and social theatre practitioner with the collective Outa Hamra. Back in France, she coordinated the organisation Caravan, an international network for youth and social circus. In her PhD, she is exploring the life trajectories of Egyptian artists residing in Europe, focusing on the reconfigurations of their artistic practices and looking at the transnational dynamics of the production and distribution of their art works.

5. Anahi Alviso-Marino

(Research fellow, Ecole des Ponts ParisTech/University Gustave Eiffel)

Mapping Monument Stories

In part because we become accustomed to the places we inhabit, public monuments tend to become invisible objects in our daily routines. When they do, their stories remain unknown to the general public and their physical appearance of immobility seems to cast their history in stone. Yet, from inception to design, from construction to installation and inauguration, monuments rarely live their lives in a linear fashion. Their biographic trajectories can be made of composite histories and stories of changing networks of actors and of places that participate in their lives, from their first sketch on a piece of paper to their installation, relocation, obliteration, destruction, and reconstruction in public spaces.

My ongoing research project investigates how can we make monuments speak back to us through experimental protocols and films that activate archival and fieldwork materials. These protocols map monument biographies across cities of the Arabian Peninsula by reconstructing the different stages in their biographic trajectory while inquiring how these narratives contribute to the symbolic edification of the state, of cities, and of the role art could play in public space. During the Summer School, I will be presenting excerpts of protocols and films I have been working on collaboratively with an artist and filmmaker, proposing non-linear biographic narratives of monument stories.

Short biography: Anahi Alviso-Marino specializes in political sociology of visual arts in the Arabian Peninsula and is currently co-coordinator and research fellow at the collective “Penser l’urbain par l’image,” Ecole des Ponts ParisTech/University Gustave Eiffel. She obtained her PhD in Political Science at the University Paris 1-Sorbonne and the University of Lausanne, her MA from Columbia University in New York, and her BA from Complutense University in Madrid. She works at the intersection of social sciences and artistic practices and has exhibited her archival and research materials at the Palais de Tokyo (“The enemy of my enemy” by Neil Beloufa, 2018) and at the Villa Vassilieff (“One of many stories. Art worlds in Yemen,” 2017). Her forthcoming book focuses on art and politics in Yemen, and she is currently working on a collaborative research-creation project dedicated to mapping monument biographies across the Arabian Peninsula supported by the EUR ArTeC (2021), the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts (2021/2022), and by a research residency at Alserkal Arts Foundation (2022).

6. Melanie J. Sindelar

(Visiting Professor in Visual Theory and Practice, Central European University (CEU), Vienna)

Gulf Futurism: The Biograph(ies) of an Artistic Movement

In the last ten years, Gulf futurism has emerged as a trope among artists and writers in the Arabian/Persian Gulf. Their works explore hypercapitalism and consumerism, technology, and outer space ambitions, along with the ethnofutures of a region where migrant workers from the Global South constitute a majority of the population. Gulf futurism’s aesthetic and tone are dystopian rather than utopian. It engages with Gulf countries’ sociopolitical problems, especially as they relate to these states’ ambitions for the future, stereotypes about the Gulf, the role of migrant workers, and the gendered dimensions of these issues. In my talk, I will be approaching the artistic movement of Gulf futurism through a biographical viewpoint, examining both artists who enthusiastically engage with tropes of Gulf Futurism and artists who critique the movement. I would like to discuss with participants the question of how to approach studying a relatively recent and still emerging artistic movement. Where does one start researching and writing a biography of a movement? For research proposals, I have identified five artists as a starting point, researching their works and approaches first, which would allow identifying further artistic positions at a later research stage. Yet in previous funding assessments, reviewers have often mistaken the five identified artists to be the sole focus of the research, and have instead called for an exhaustive and complete review of the entire movement. As an art anthropologist, I am wary of any holistic claims placed on the study of any social, artistic, or cultural phenomenon, and as such, I do not believe it is desirable nor realistic to produce a holistic understanding of any artistic movement. Yet, in order to acquire the funding the project deserves, the research proposal will need to strike a delicate balance between a viable entry point, and a realistic vision of which (and how many, if at all) biographies can be written about an artistic movement in a single research project.

Short Biography: Melanie Sindelar is an anthropologist of art with research interests in contemporary art in the Global South and global art markets. Currently, Melanie Sindelar is a Visiting Professor in Visual Theory and Practice at Central European University (CEU) in Vienna.

7. Flavia Malusardi

(PhD Candidate in Art History with LAWHA/OIB & Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

On Unearthing the Archive(d): Fragilities of oral history in the biography of Dar el Fan's founder Janine Rubeiz

This presentation considers some of the problems of access to sources and conduction of fieldwork in relation to the reconstruction of biographies. In particular, it focuses on the fragilities of oral history in Lebanon.

The attempts of reconstructing the biography of Janine Rubeiz (died 1992), the founder of Dar el Fan w-el Adab (House of Art and Literature, a polyvalent cultural space active in Beirut between 1967 and 1975) seek to highlight the importance of Rubeiz own life in relation to her cultural centre. Her personal life proves relevant in the understanding of the birth of Dar el Fan and of the development of its cultural program. Furthermore, it helps tracing the social fabric and the connections of the intellectual and artistic scene of Beirut during the 1960s and 1970s.

Editions Dar An-Nahar published a tribute to Janine Rubeiz and Dar El Fan in 2003, collecting a number of homages in memory of Janine and the place she founded. While this composes an important source, it also requires critical reflection. The research thus largely relies on archival material such as newspaper articles, obituaries, memorials, and oral history. Through the analysis of the first findings of the fieldwork in Beirut (February 2022-ongoing), which includes an interview with Rubeiz's daughter Nadine Majdalani Begdache and attempts of approaching family members and friends of Janine Rubeiz, complexities and intrinsic issues have emerged in relation to the sources of oral history and its associated practice.

The presentation aims at discussing the ethical implications of oral data collection in relation to audience and context. It sheds a light on the difficulties we encounter when an elderly audience is involved, especially that with a familial bond. It also observes how this intersects with the delicate historical and political context they have lived through and the impact of its remembrance. Questions and debates are opened in order to re-think methodologies and approaches to interact with fragile communities in the preservation and re-reading of their own memory.

Short Biography: Flavia Elena Malusardi is a PhD candidate in History of Art as part of the LAWHA project, with an international position between Università Cà Foscari (Venice) and OIB Orient Institut Beirut (Beirut). Her project investigates the role of gallerist Janine Rubeiz and her informal space Dar Al Fann (1967-1976) within the Lebanese cultural panorama. She holds a Master's degree in History of Art and Architecture of the Islamic Middle East from SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies (London) and an MFA in Visual Cultures and Curatorial Practice from Accademia di Brera (Milan). Her work focuses on the contemporary arts and visual culture of the Middle East and North Africa, with an interest in archival and collecting practices within post-colonial contexts. She lived in Cairo and Dubai, where she worked with international galleries and curators. She is the editor of Vista Sud, a bi-monthly column featured in Osservatorio Futura, and she contributes regularly to the visual arts section of Arabesque, first Italian magazine devoted to the study of culture of/from the Arab world.

8. Michelle Wun Ting Wong

(PhD Candidate in Art History, The University of Hong Kong)

The Work of Hong Kong Artists Ha Bik Chuen

My project is on the oeuvre of Hong Kong artist Ha Bik Chuen (夏碧泉 1925-2009), which includes his prints and print matrices, which he called motherboards, his sculptures, and a posthumously discovered collage practice. A self-taught artist, Ha's creative output does not conform to the conventional linear narrative of an artist's early, mid, and later works. While Ha's motherboards date from 1970s to 1990s, his sculptures were made throughout 1960s-2000s and his collage practice lasted from 1958-2009. Throughout 1960s-2000s, Ha amassed a large collection of printed matter and photographic documentation of exhibitions were a repository of sources for his creative work. Ha stored these sources in a dedicated space across from where he lived and called it his "thinking studio." Currently I am looking into Ha's motherboards as core to his artistic practice. I propose that materiality is an entry point for us to understand Ha's motherboards, and thus a way to think about his other artworks as well. By examining how Ha's art and collecting practices are enmeshed, I suggest the "thinking studio" was deliberately cultivated as a space where Ha could be an artist and think about larger ideas around art, modernism, and visual culture through his works.

I plan to include Ha's collecting practice as part of his biography because it was a key part of his artist persona. However, an artist's persona and his/her biography could be constructed and manipulated, while a detailed biography does not necessarily ensure a critical study of an artist's works. I am therefore interested in how one writes a biographical account in art history. Ha also collected photographic self-portraits that he took with his works, other artists and members of the art world at different occasions. These self-portraits form another kind of visual and fluid biography, in which Ha inserted himself into the art world occupying multiple roles, some more staged than the others—as artist, as friend of artist, as viewer of art. The images Ha collected and organised not only tell of the ways he consumed and internalised the world around him, they also became portals through which he constructed a cosmopolitan imaginary while being located in Hong Kong. In my project, I suggest that these sources not only help us better understand Ha as an artist, but also tell a story of an expanded visual cultural world that converged upon Hong Kong.

Some of the questions I bring with me to the Moving Biography Summer School are as follows: What are the places of artworks and exhibition histories in an artist's biography? Where and how does Ha's "thinking studio" and its content fit in his biography and a larger story of Hong Kong's art history?

Short Biography: Michelle Wun Ting Wong is a PhD candidate in art history at the University of Hong Kong. From 2012–20 she was a researcher at Asia Art Archive (AAA), focusing on Hong Kong art history and histories of exchange and circulation through exhibitions and periodicals. She curated *Portals, Stories, and Other Journeys* at Tai Kwun Contemporary (2021), and was part of the curatorial teams for 11th Edition of Gwangju Biennale (2016), and Yokohama Triennale 2020. Her writing has been published in *Ambitious Alignments: New Histories of Southeast Asian Art, 1945–1990* (2018), the journal *Southeast of Now* (2019) amongst others.

9. Iman Al Kaisy

(PhD Candidate in Comparative Literature, University of Toronto)

Libraries and Papers of Their Own: Auto/Biography, Memoir, and Arab Women Writers

My research aims to demonstrate how the study of lost personal papers, letters, and private libraries of Arab women writers could be immensely conducive to our understanding of Arab feminist dissent as expressed in the genre of auto/biographies and memoirs. It starts with the premise that Arab women writers' and intellectuals' auto/biographies, memoirs, and other forms of written personal narratives are almost always deemed in academic research sites of self-empowerment and socio-politically and culturally situated practices of self-representation in private and public spheres. This approach, I argue, primarily feeds literary scholars' and historians' curatorial urge to canonize, make-known, and contextualize works of Arab women intellectuals inside and outside the Arabophone world but does little in terms of mapping alternative analytical and epistemological trajectories that divert from classic conclusions about the scarcity of archival and written material on Arab women writers and intellectuals. By curatorial urge, I mean the scholarly tendency to collect stories, connect dots, forge plots of historical, cultural, political, and rhetorical relevancies, and find clues in the dynamic lives of Arab women writers and intellectuals to trace afterlives of historical periods. My research argues that such tendencies limit discussions about Arab feminist dissent to conventional dichotomies of self/other, religious/secular, traditional/modern, among others; these tendencies also mask the need to delve into the personal lives of Arab women authors and intellectuals not only for the sake of tracing patterns of empowerment and defiance but also for the purpose of examining how conditions of psychological and material loss, vulnerability, and self-preservation introduce new understandings of forms, movements, and originations Arab feminist dissent.

I believe that studying Arab women writers' and intellectuals' lost private libraries and personal papers will introduce new questions into the study of the genre of Arab feminist auto/biography and memoir: questions that have to do with the availability of archival material, cultural capital, knowledge accumulation, ownership, inheritance, accessibility, collecting, and material loss and how these notions allow for reconceptualizing and breaking conventionally identifiable patterns of Arab feminist dissent. My purpose in highlighting private libraries of Arab women writers is to bring forward a new theoretical approach that disrupts dominant literary and analytical approaches to Arab women writers' lives and works and presents the private library, with its multiple existences and absences, as an intriguing site for exploration. Scholars of modern Arabic literature need to address the under-highlighted status of many Arab women writers in Arabic and world literature anthologies through actively searching for Arab women writers' lives among personal papers, archives, collections, and spaces, such as private libraries.

Short Biography: I am currently a first-year doctoral student in Comparative Literature at University of Toronto. My research interests include modern Arabic literature, auto/biographies, memoirs, archival studies, material culture, Arab cultural and intellectual history, private libraries of Arab women writers, feminist epistemology, and political and feminist dissent. I have an MA in English Literature from the American University of Beirut where I taught academic writing and translation courses and worked as the program coordinator of the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR). My published translations include "Writer and Exile" (by Abdulrahman Munif; in the *Journal of World Literature*) and "Mohammad Al-Attar: In Conversation With Sonja

Mejcher-Atassi,” (in Sa’dallah Wannous: Syrian Playwright and Public Intellectual). I also have a recent article published in Manhajyyat journal about the role of educational leadership in the current Lebanese crisis: <https://www.manhajyyat.com/ar/-مقالات-القيادة-التعليمية-مقالات-لبنان-الأزمة-أي-دور-للقيادة-التعليمية-مقالات-المجلة>. Besides my academic interests, I am part of the Palestine forum at the University of Toronto and the co-founder of the Feminist Club at the American University of Beirut.

WORKING GROUP B

1. Hunter Bandy

(Postdoctoral Fellow, Université Paris Sciences et Lettres, France)

Biography of Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad Gīlānī

I am presently engaged in writing a biography of a Muslim scholar called “Ḥakīm al-Mulk” Nizām al-Dīn Aḥmad Gīlānī (1585-1662) who served in different professional sites within Safavid Iran, Mughal India, and Quṭbshāhī Hyderabad during the 17th century. Studying nature, the human body, and the cosmos, Gīlānī’s writings, like those of his peers, evidence a *mentalité* common among Shi‘i Muslim elites of the era that has been widely misunderstood. They contended that medicine, natural philosophy, astrology, and related natural sciences were sacred in accordance with bodies of statements (*akhbār*) that they also commented upon transmitted from the Twelve Shi‘i Imams who lived during the first three centuries of Islam.

As a naturalist, a religious scholar, and a statesman, his work and thought defy easy classification. His writings challenge traditional historical scholarship on the evolution of Shi‘i Islam during this era for favoring currents of thought that were at once part of a mystical/gnostic vein, yet which were congruent with inhabiting a quintessentially political life at the same time. Recovering his biography will seek to draw more attention to the transnational scholarly network uniting distant regions of the Persian-speaking Muslim east that have previously been studied in isolation according to nationalist logics. Writing this biography will also draw attention to the copious “homeless” manuscript sources that remain unstudied, composed by ‘Iranian-born’ authors that were produced in South Asia now held in libraries and archives across the region, which have been neglected for not fitting easily into the national histories of either Iran or India.

I hope to use the sessions of the summer school in Beirut to think through specific questions relating to data, the creation of the biography itself, and the implications of producing such a biography for diverse audiences. Despite access to hundreds of pages of Gīlānī’s autograph manuscripts, the first thirty years of his life remain entirely opaque. “Data” about this era must be sourced from extant knowledge about his contemporaries, his teachers, and known peers in late Kārkiyā Gilan and Safavid Isfahan. Approaching these parallel sources allow me to produce a composite sketch about the type of education that he likely had, and his own marginal comments on his later writings describing lessons that he attended in Safavid academies give some indication that he was not a cultural or intellectual outlier. In this regard, I hope to draw from other studies on Persian manuscript anthologies—*unicums*, existing in single copies—that map cultural knowledge and expression from this era and document to the best extent possible our knowledge of collective experiences.

Working from an eclectic array of manuscript sources—including treatises in medicine, theology, occult sciences, syntax, and other genres— challenge me as an author to produce a biography that can positively illuminate dynamics of concern important not only within a subfield like Islamic history, but within a broader community of humanists. How does the local precarity of a foreign-born administrator make a distant homeland appear not so distant, but all together palpable, accessible, and valuable? What significance does this experience hold for other stories of personal loss, mobility, and striving for refuge in a fleeting world? What are the politics of narrating a life full of spatial and epistemic mobility? Is there a voice of early-modern life and memory escaping the methods that I choose to employ to capture them? These are some of the questions that I look forward to addressing at the Moving Biography Summer School.

Short Biography: Hunter Bandy is a postdoctoral researcher at the École Pratique des Hautes Études-section des sciences religieuses-Université PSL, in Paris, France. His research project, “The Intellectual and Cultural History of Shi‘i Islamic Scholarship among the émigré Iranian community among the Deccan Sultanates, 1500-1700,” is funded by the Paris Region Fellowship Programme, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions program. He completed his PhD in Islamic Studies at Duke University (2019). His research relies upon the recovery and analysis of unique Persian and Arabic manuscripts, which he has researched at archives in India, Iran, Europe, and North America. His research has been supported by a Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship; a Fulbright-Hays Grant; a Julian Price Fellowship; an Evan Frankel Fellowship; the Foreign Language and Area Studies Program; the American Institute of Indian Studies; the American Institute of Iranian Studies; the American Academy of Religion; and other agencies.

2. Rosy Beyhom

(Postdoctoral Researcher, Orient-Institut Beirut)

Finding the musical network in *al-Wāfi bil-Wafayāt*

My post-doctoral project consists in its first degree phase of identifying entries (people, treatises, concepts, practice, theory, etc.) related to the music world in all the Arabic literature spanning from the 10th to the 13th century, this time being considered a void by scholars in musicology. However, I believe that research was never undertaken to fill this gap and the post-colonial musicology was never challenged by researchers in the Arab world. I intend to find the people and the knowledge they carry which relates to the musical practices. I am starting with al-Şafadī’s most famous work, *al-Wāfi bil-Wafayāt*, the biggest biographical collection that happens to be written in the 13th century by this wealthy Mamluk scholar. His distinguished position in society allowed him access to data other collectors could not reach and his biographical collection is the widest for his century. Al-Şafadī relies on other books that he introduces in his introduction; he also performs field work to complete many of his entries. I find that the selection of data to constitute a biography is very important, although it is not yet entirely clear to me at this stage how Ibn ‘Aybak al-Şafadī has proceeded to write his entries when related to music, how does he chose what to keep and what to disregard and how do these factors influence our contemporary scrolling of the data, especially when it comes to material pertaining to music?

One of the most interesting characteristics of *al-Wāfi bil-Wafayāt* is that al-Şafadī links people throughout his text; he would mention for example that a person’s father or teacher has a

biographical entry, but he also provides the social, cultural and political context very often. By embedding people, it becomes easy to follow teachers and their pupils, to determine lineages of intellectual families but mostly to see the cultural and educational network that existed until the 13th century. The space al-Şafadī describes is a moving one: a person wishing to learn was supposed to travel to a designated city to learn a precise science. All this movement in space and time can be tracked in *al-Wāfi bil-Wafayāt* for the main sciences of Islam but in a less degree for music, nonetheless, even marginal individuals have their impact on the chain of musical knowledge transfer. When al-Şafadī goes into the detail of a person's life, this is when it becomes exciting and thrilling and the chances of reading information related to the music life or entertainment via music increase. On another level, it is known that music was not always favoured by rulers; hence many times it was considered illegal and was even forbidden. Was al-Şafadī a true reporter of the musical events, people and the entertainment, did he hide some facts to clean a person's slate in history regarding music, a part of *al-malāhī* (frivolous distractions), out of his respect for the person's status in society or among scholars? I expect that several readings of this biographical collection in addition to a later comparison with another biographical collection by al-Şafadī dedicated only to his contemporaries, *ʿAʿyān al-ʿasr wa ʿaʿwān al-naşr*, will surely shed some more light on the above mentioned questions.

Short Biography: Rosy Beyhom holds a PhD in musicology from the WWU Münster - Germany. She is an active member of the CERMAA research center (<http://foredofico.org/CERMAA/cermaa-membres>), an international musicology hub based in Lebanon that promotes awareness via non-biased approaches to the analysis of music. She is a permanent co-editor of the NEMO-Online (<http://nemo-online.org/academic-board>) peer-reviewed journal. She earned a post-doctoral fellowship at the OIB (Oct 2021-March 2022) that allowed her to better establish the dimensions of her project. She is currently completing the study of *al-Wāfi bil-Wafayāt* by Ibn ʿAybak al-Şafadī as an introductory phase to her project.

3. Gürzat Kami

(PhD Candidate in History, Marmara University)

Where does the Family Stand?

Contextualizing the Life Story of a Scholar in the Early Modern Ottoman Damascus

Numerous studies on individual scholars and scholarly life in Syro-Egypt in the early modern era have underscored the importance of familial background and network for individual achievement in scholarship. Those enjoying kinship ties with learned people usually had a better chance to receive the necessary education to become future scholars. Once they achieved it, they became qualified for abundant positions available to and reserved for educated elite in endowments and government services. Their knowledge and lucrative posts secured them social prestige, political influence and financial means. This, in turn, enabled their children to access the means of knowledge relatively earlier and easier, and eventually to replace their fathers as scholars. This cycle of success was established in generations and consequently created distinguished families remembered by brilliant scholarly memories of its members. Thus, “family” appears as a significant meso-level social structure while contextualizing a scholar's life story in the early modern period.

This presentation deals with the intertwined and dynamic relations between life story of individual scholars and their family history in the example of Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (1570–1651) and his family. Najm al-Dīn was born into a Damascene learned family represented by leading scholarly figures in its last four generations in the mid-sixteenth century. His grandfather Radiyy al-Dīn (1458–1529) was a Shāfi‘ī judge in both the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, and his father Badr al-Dīn (1499–1577) was the eminent Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus during the last thirty years of his life. Although Najm al-Dīn started his education as an orphan without enjoying fatherly support, he eventually managed to become one of the most famous Ghazzīs in the history of the family. Today, he is rather known by his centennial biographical dictionary *al-Kawākib al-sā’irā fī a’yān al-mi’a al-āshira* [The Wandering Stars among the Notables of the Tenth Century], an ambitious project that contains approximately one thousand five hundred biographies from the tenth hijrī century (circa. 1495–1592).

Since his early ages, Najm al-Dīn endeavored to appear as his deceased father’s true heir by assuming material and non-material familial heritage. This presentation attempts to highlight the multiple ways in which Najm al-Dīn reconstructed his familial history and contextualized his life story within it with special reference to his aforementioned biographical dictionary and other historical works. Najm al-Dīn utilized biographical narrative to create powerful portraits for his family members retrospectively. He also connected his own life story to theirs by composing an autobiography, narrating accounts of dreams and saintly visions, and utilizing several other intellectual and symbolic means.

Short Biography: Gürzat Kami is a PhD candidate in history at the Marmara University. His research focuses on Syrian scholars during the Mamluk–Ottoman transition period. He received a bachelor’s degree from the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University in 2012. He earned a master’s degree in history at Istanbul Şehir University in 2015. Currently, he is a researcher in the Ulama Database Project in the Centre for Islamic Studies (ISAM) and ERC-funded project OTTOLEGAL at the Sabancı University. His research interests include scholarly networks and mobility, the history of education and scholarly production in Ottoman lands during the early modern period, and the applications of social network analysis in historical studies.

4. Ayşegül Koca

(PhD Candidate, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich)

Guardians of an Empire, Founders of a Republic: The Lives of the 1902 Graduates of the Ottoman Imperial Military Staff College

My project is that of a collective biography of twelve Ottoman officers who graduated from the military academy in 1902, served as commanders during World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, and, if surviving, had a public career in the early Republic of Turkey. This study pursues a middle way between conventional prosopography and individual biographies, and engages with the dominating narrative that identifies the secular military elite as central to the “Young Turk” movement, the driving force of late Ottoman constitutionalism and the War of Independence, but regards the Kemâlist period despite all its continuities with the period of 1908 to 1918 as one of a basically civilian regime. In addition, in the wake of post-new military history,

this study deals with the experiences, networks and living conditions of the agents by focusing on complex variations of the military culture in different times and regions. On the other hand, it employs the systematic approach of new military history by offering theoretical frameworks and wider contexts. In this way, it is intended to achieve the study's overriding objective of seeing inconsistencies and congruencies between the theoretical frameworks/wider contexts and the agencies/variations in the field. It thus contributes in equal measure to the political and military history of Turkey during the first half of twentieth-century.

The research proposed here chooses to dwell on a smaller but significant group of men who then can be investigated in greater depth rather than a large population (say, Ottoman military officers above a certain rank) where it is only feasible to compare those aspects that are relatively simple to unearth such as steps of a military career. The choice of a more limited sample allows for a contextualized investigation of life-stories with a common background that, however, occasionally took dramatically different directions.

The research question of the project is that how can be various identities and life cycles instead of physical aging and historical transformation processes rather than chronological account of events construed together? While carrying out the study and attempting to deal with the research question, netzwerkforschung (network theory) is particularly helpful in interpreting the multifarious sources and contextualizing the raw data to examine the complex processes of social concepts and theoretical approaches by establishing different sub-networks. In this way, the tension and harmony between social, temporal, spatial and experiential differences as well as collective actions, objectives, feelings will be considered.

Being involved in group discussions with professional specialists in various disciplines is one of the best opportunities for fulfilling the aims of the project because prosopography, as a methodological synthesis, is somewhere at the intersection of humanities and social sciences.

Short Biography: In 2019, she earned her master's degree in History at Istanbul Şehir University.

Thesis: Fahreddin Altay (1880-1974): Under the Shadow of Militarism

Supervisor: Professor Abdulhamit Kırımı

In 2021, she began her doctoral studies at LMU, Munich.

Dissertation: Guardians of an Empire, Founders of a Republic: The Lives of the 1902 Graduates of the Ottoman Imperial Military Staff College

Supervisor: Professor Christoph K. Neumann

Scholarships:

2021-2022: Munich Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, Ph.D.

Scholarship

2017-2019: The Turkish Historical Association, Graduate Scholarship in the History of the Republic of Turkey

2017-2019: Istanbul Şehir University, Full Tuition Fee Waiver Scholarship

5. Hiyem Cheurfa

(Postdoctoral Researcher and Associate Lecturer of Postcolonial Literature, Larbi Tebessi University, Algeria)

Contemporary Arab Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance

I am currently working on my book manuscript entitled *Contemporary Arab Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance*. The book is under contract with Edinburgh University Press and is forthcoming in their Edinburgh Studies in Modern Arabic Literature series, edited by Rasheed El-Enany. My book project falls directly into the interests of Moving Biography Summer School particularly in the way it investigates issues relevant to the autobiographical genre and the role and implications of life writings in critically engaging with, reflecting on, and rethinking key socio-political and cultural contexts that shape their enunciation.

My project interrogates the relationship between revolutionary movements and experimental life writing forms by contemporary Arab women. In the context of twenty-first century Arab uprisings, women invoke the complexity of their experiences as citizens, revolutionaries, women, and writers through a range of narrative strategies. Autobiographical discourses that emerge as part of national revolutionary struggles make audible Arab women's voices and experiences, foregrounding women as active social and political agents and redefining conventions of self-representation and narration. Drawing on autobiographical and postcolonial theories, *Contemporary Arab Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance* examines twenty-first-century Arab women's life writing as sites for the articulation of resistance to interlocking power structures and sociocultural and representational norms. Looking comparatively at subgenres of memoir, auto-portrait, testimony, diary, and digital life writing across different linguistic (Arabophone, Anglophone, and Francophone) and national contexts (including Egypt, Algeria, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia), this book explores *why* resistance is important when writing about the self for Arab women and *how* it is articulated through experimental formal and thematic approaches to the autobiographical genre.

Modern and contemporary Arab autobiography has flourished in contexts of, diverse yet overlapping, colonial and anticolonial struggles, and thus situates its subject at a particular historical juncture. In *Contemporary Arab Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance*, I am particularly interested in the political implications of genre, as it is stressed by postcolonial and feminist studies. I draw from postcolonial studies and feminist autobiographical theory in order to examine ways in which contemporary Arab women's life writings situate their subjects in relation to gendered, social, historical, and political axes of power. I explore how these subjects write themselves out of the dominant discourse of genre criticism which is a source of patriarchal, racial, and colonial authority. The postcolonial, feminist lens of analysis deployed in this book enables us to analyse cultural manifestations of oppositional forces in Arab women's life writing discourses which reflect the complexity of historical processes of imperialism and colonialism and their enduring effects on identity formation and multiple neocolonial struggles.

Short Biography: Hiyem Cheurfa has PhD in English from Lancaster University and is an Associate Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy. She specialises in auto/biographical literature, with a focus on women's writings from the Middle East and North Africa. She has published her research in leading peer-reviewed international academic journals, including *Comedy Studies* (10:2, 2019), *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* (35:2, 2020),

and *Biography* (44:3, 2021). Her first monograph *Contemporary Arab Women's Life Writing and the Politics of Resistance* is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press. She is currently an associate lecturer of postcolonial literature and is based in Algeria.

6. Sara Hegazi

(PhD Candidate, Alexandria University)

Life Narratives in a Selection of Contemporary Trauma Literature from Egypt

My doctoral research project titled “Life Narratives in a Selection of Contemporary Trauma Literature from Egypt” looks closely at the liberating power of life narratives as self-referential writing style gaining popularity in the contemporary Egyptian literary scene carving a space for under-represented and/or non-represented individual voices to inscribe their own personal stories. Life Narratives revolutionize the (auto)biographical literary writing tradition by introducing new concepts and practices of self-life-writing utilizing their narrative spaces as spaces of self-exploration, meditation and rewriting of the self. The three life-writers understudy: Nadia Kamel, Lucette Lagnado and Sahar Hamouda, embark on very similar yet different (auto)biographical journeys, create and recreate in their respective texts their traumatic family narratives and eventually come to a better understanding of their own personal journeys with their lifelong painful and silenced chapters.

El Mawlouda by Kamel, *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit* by Lagnado and *Once Upon a Time in Jerusalem* by Hamouda, as (auto)biographical texts explore the tensions of life writing of trauma and challenge their authors to find creative literary and artistic outlets to put the actual writing of their lives into practice, by locating their narratives in larger socio-political and historical contexts that in many ways are the triggers behind their family traumas. The three personal narratives challenge the monopoly and the authority of institutional and colonial narratives and introduce new ways to read, write and question history. They also speak of entire communities, social and ethnic groups in different historical phases of twentieth century Egypt. The three life narratives of trauma are transgenerational and transnational social documents defying spatial and temporal limitations.

The three life-writers intentionally employ a narrative format to accommodate their personal narration of trauma. The family narratives are passed on to the three authors since their childhood as family fairy tale like stories. With the conscious use of fictional tools of narration on the lines of ‘Once a Time’, the focus of the story shifts from an obsession with truth to a willingness to hear a personal story and connect to another human being. Oral family history is channeled towards a literary expression, and life narration as a form of autobiographical writing is best appropriate for the creative narration of autobiographical nature. The dividing lines between fiction and nonfictional narration are intentionally blurred allowing the personal narratives to flow naturally and freely questioning generic assumptions and decentering the genre.

The three life narratives of trauma, exhibit moving definitions of (auto)biographical writing and look closely at innovate practices of self-life-writing. They also celebrate works of literature that might not be regarded as canonical or high brow literature. Life narratives as an innovative mode of self-life-writing proves that the field of (auto)biography is ever changing, ever moving and ever evolving.

Short Biography: Sara Hegazi is an assistant lecturer at the English Department, Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University. She has received her MA in Comparative Literature from Alexandria University in 2016 and is currently a PhD candidate at the same university. Her research interests include; Comparative Literature, Modern and Contemporary Arabic Literature, Performance Studies, Film and Literature Studies and Popular Culture.

7. Farida Begum

(Postdoctoral Fellow, Colgate University)

A Friend of One's Own: Friendships, Sociality and Everyday Interactions in Bengal

My book manuscript, tentatively titled *A Friend of One's Own: Friendships, Sociality and Everyday Interactions in Bengal*, is a monograph on women's friendships in various spaces. Using Bengali autobiographies as my primary archives, my manuscript questions the arc of history writing, and asks what constitutes history. Women's autobiographical texts, where they highlighted various modes of sociality among women, are constructions of histories that center their everyday experiences. Using the framework of the biographical arch of one Muslim woman, I show how women utilized opportunities for socializing in sites newly accessible to middle-class women, creating a space for women to come together despite differences in identities and backgrounds. I argue that social connections among women provide an alternative history of Bengal during the twentieth century.

This surge in women's writings about their own histories over the last few decades can be seen as constituting yet another sphere of sociality, since the act of writing itself is a form of both remembering and inscribing modes of sociality. The Bengali texts that make up my sources were written from the 1940s to the 2010s, and include autobiographies originally published in Bengali and later translated to English. As historians have been unearthing and writing about women's writings, many women who lived through the major changes of the twentieth century were convinced by friends and family to write of their experiences and histories. Many women stated that they were hesitant to write an autobiography, saying that they did not feel worthy; however, the existence of these memoirs shows that they wrote anyway.

I am invested in examining why women wrote and the contexts that shaped these autobiographical texts. Some may have felt a necessity to look back at a time that was different than their present. Another conjecture for the timing of women writing and publishing their autobiographies, decades after the events they describe, could be the period of crisis of secularism and doubts in their new postcolonial nation states. In Bangladesh, many of the women who wrote in the years after 1990s lived through the Ershad era, when religious freedom was in danger while in India, it was the aftermath of increased communal violence. The women whose autobiographies I utilize wrote retrospective histories: we see how and why they choose to write and what their conception of their histories are.

Short Biography: Farida Begum is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Colgate University, NY. She earned a PhD in History from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her interests are in South Asian history, gender and sexuality studies, and global histories of imperialism. She is currently working on a book project on women's sociality and friendships in twentieth-century Bengal through an examination of women's autobiographical writings.

8. Pierre France

(Research Associate, Orient-Institut Beirut)

Takrim and Mudhakhirât, the Two Faces of Living Memory: Books of Memoirs, Memory-Related Social Events and the Staging of Capital in the Self- Narratives of Lebanese Elites (1950-2020)

Beyond the many literary aspects of the biographical form in the Middle East, memoirs or 'mudhakhirât' are also one of the privileged sources for the writing of history from the nineteenth century to the present day. However, compared to the books of writers and intellectuals, those of politicians or senior government officials are not the subject of any methodological or literary studies; they are most often used, quoted in a footnote. Little is known about their writing context and the modalities of their creation. This observation is all the more intriguing given the notable multiplication of these books, to the point that Beirut bookstores often have an extremely well-stocked shelf of 'biographies'.

Over the years, and without having planned it at the outset on a research whose subjects (the civil war and the history of the Lebanese bureaucracy) and methodology (archives and interviews) are apparently far from a literary dimension, the multiplication of mudhakhirâts has become an aspect gradually taken into account. Going back and forth between the content of the text, the book itself as a thing, and the social situations in which it is used, I focus on three main aspects of this encounter: the biographical interview and the recited biography; mudhakhirâts in place: analyzing the takrim; the social conditions of public writing.

Because the memoirs may have been read beforehand and used to prepare for the interview, they are a potential asset on the interviewer's side, as much as, on the contrary, they offer the respondent a touchstone for several things such as avoiding questions, arguing that the answers are in the book to shorten the interview, or even escaping the interview, by only receiving the person to sign the book and exchange courtesies for a few minutes. The course of the fieldwork led us to encounter several situations where the book and the interview respond to each other: a book already written and almost recited, a book in the process of being written, an interview desired or requested by the respondent because it could become a book, etc.

Beyond the interview situation, these memories result as much as they are at the base of specific social events - between people from a certain generation, who have occupied similar public positions. Each one pushes the others to write their own memoirs, in a form of social competition, while they also create their own social event, the *takrim*. This generic word designates a ceremony where speeches of praise by political figures or colleagues follow one another, often followed by the signing of a book or the awarding of a medal. The book is then almost a "souvenir book" of the ceremony rather than a literary object, rarely opened afterwards, even if they are left visible in the offices - the researcher may more often than not be the first to try to read these objects, which are also instrumental in showing a certain social position through the language they used.

Finally, the fact remains that despite their multiplication not everyone writes memoirs - the main Lebanese politicians have never written their memoirs or have never published them, instead, it is often their lieutenants and second-in-command who write. Even more behind them, other absences or near absences question: that of the memoirs of Muslim actors or even more testimonies coming from women. As such it is a certain part of Lebanon whose books are piling up in the book stores, certain experiences that are written down, whose limits need to be clearly addressed.

Short Biography: Pierre France is a Research Associate at the Orient Institut Beirut. Through his project "Fictio Statis. Unreliable numbers, Private Statistics and Economists' careers in Lebanon (1950-1990)" he aims at unfolding the question of statistics in Lebanon, from the mandate to the contemporary period. A PhD candidate (defence in waiting) in Political Science at Paris 1 Sorbonne University, his doctoral research focused on the process of the Lebanese state's survival throughout the Lebanese war (1975-1990). Aside of his PhD, Pierre co-wrote a book with Prof. Antoine Vauchez on the phenomenon of top french civil servants becoming lawyers, a contribution to the study of the blurring lines between public and private social spheres in contemporary France (Cornell, 2021) which he now extends to the Lebanese case through a prosopographic study of the top civil servants and the minister's advisors.

9. Ali Musa

(PhD Candidate in Social Sciences, Birzeit University)

Memory of Childhood place in the Palestinian Self-Writing

This Research aims to study the memory of Palestinian childhood place through published texts, based on the experiences, interactions, and individual views on the lives of a number of Palestinian individuals, and their expression of the way in which they lived their life experiences and expressed them later, through self-writing texts, which depend on distant memory (autobiographies and memoirs).

The research main question is: How did the Palestinians express, through their individual memories and their own texts, the place of childhood and their relationship to it, and what are the factors that affected this memory and expression? The research suggests the existence of several patterns of remembering the place of childhood and expressing it in the texts it will address: memory of family (including home and neighborhood), memory of reductionist romance, memory of nowhere, and memory of exile and nostalgia. The research presents an assumption that there are multiple factors affect the overcoming of one or more of the mentioned patterns on each of the studied texts. These factors are the writer spatial and social background, gender, the period covered in the text (before 1948, after 1948, before and after 1948), and the interval moment for the end of childhood according to the text and its interpretation according to social class. The research argues that while the patterns of memory and expression of the place of childhood in writing the Palestinian self are distributed on bases of individual choice or destiny, the factors behind this distribution are general or structural.

The research uses the methodologies of content analysis, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis in the study of selected texts. The researcher will also interview some of the authors of these texts (the alive ones), to highlight some points that attract attention and need some clarification and enrichment in their texts.

This research tries to strengthen the position of the weakest actors in the process of historiography and the study of history, and to combat the phenomenon of silencing, concealment and selectivity practiced by traditional historical work in the context of subjection to cognitive power relations.

The importance of this research comes from that it is expected to make a serious and new contribution in enriching the fields of Palestinian studies, social history, critical discourse analysis,

space studies, memory studies, and childhood studies. This research will open new research horizons, and propose different focus and raw materials for these fields and other related fields, especially since this kind of research intersects with the interests of researchers in the fields of literature, history and psychology, in addition to social sciences, social history, and Palestinian studies, which the research revolves around.

Short Biography: I am a lecturer in Philosophy and Cultural Studies department, and PhD candidate in the PhD program in Social Sciences- Birzeit University, Palestine. I work on my dissertation (Memory of childhood place in the Palestinian self- writing), under Dr. Salim Tamari supervision. I hold a MA degree in contemporary Arab studies and a BA degree in English language and translation from the same University. I am interested in studying the Palestinian individual and collective memory and their relationship to identity, place, and time, within the framework of Palestinian social history, through self-literature (biographies, memoirs, and diaries).