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## CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds  
Studies

28 June - 2 July 2021



## Panel 52

## Research and collection in Human and Social Sciences in Algeria: from the field to the archive?

Researchers working on post-1962 Algeria often have to deal with a sparse bibliography and almost inaccessible sources. With the lack of public or private archives, the data collecting can form potential and valuable sources for future research.

This workshop aims to question the destiny of materials collected during surveys. It will therefore rely on the primary sources (notes, field notebooks, photographs, interviews, etc.) of doctoral students and researchers currently conducting a study: How to make them known? How to facilitate their access and circulation? By focusing on the collection step, the purpose is to take on what often remains hidden by the results, for restricted and/or confidential use. How do researchers view their materials? Can these raw elements be considered as lasting traces or even archives?

Based on interdisciplinary field experiences, this workshop aims to investigate the practices and methodological issues of researchers to discuss the possibility of a common approach to sharing, or even archiving. Starting from this collective reflection, the workshop is also intended to be an opportunity to consolidate a network of researchers on contemporary Algeria, supported by the ERC DREAM.

**People in charge : Fabbiano Giulia (ERC DREAM) and Rondeleux Nejma (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, CHS, DREAM)**

**Discussant : Raymond Candice (Ifpo, DREAM)**

### Program

**Djelloul Ghaliya (Interdisciplinary Center for Studies of Islam in the Contemporary World (IACCHOS/ UCLouvain))**

*Notebooks of close fieldwork and gendered domestic spaces in contemporary Algeria: ethical questions and tracks of intimacy in ethnographic writing*

As part of doctoral research in sociology, I conducted a «go along ethnography» which consisted of following the movement of 25 women living in Algiers, from the insides to the outsides. In this case of a «close fieldwork» experience, anchored in domestic spaces, the restitution of empirical data recorded in my field notebooks fuelled an ethical questioning on what it was possible or not to reveal without endangering the anonymity of my respondents, as well as the confidentiality of their family intimacy. This questioning also feeds reflection on the possible archiving of ethnographic materials collected within an interpersonal relationship of trust.

## **Gacem Saadia (UNIL, University of Lausanne)**

### *Algerian women and the family Code: from the collective record to the individual archive*

My research works on the Algerian Family Code and its judicial practices lead me to investigate the socio-political background in which it has been thought and passed. What were the State, the NGOs and women's groups' arguments for its enforcement? Most of all, what was the mobilization against its enactment?

From these research questions, I decided to track all kinds of relevant documents - leaflets, magazines, articles, newspapers, various reports and so on - often not accessible, scattered across Algeria and even worldwide. These documents, because of their lack of accessibility, have therefore not been explored, and, for most of them, they are unknown. They were public collective documents and they became now 'invisible private archives' to be traced and questioned in their new status.

Our purpose is to enlighten the history of some of the newly found archives - a magazine, a diary, a guide on women's rights, all of them related to the Family Code - belonging to women's NGOs in Algeria that have organized a campaign against the enactment of this Personal Status Law. The archives will help us to follow the development of these organizations as well as the individual paths of those women who kept these documents.

## **Haouati Awel (EHESS, Centre Maurice Halbwachs)**

### *Building a corpus of photographs of the Algerian Civil War of the 1990s: alternatives, limits and issues*

Starting from an experience of fieldwork which took place in Algiers from 2017 to 2020 on the practices and uses of photography in Algeria in the 1990s, I will present the process that leads me to compile - alongside the main work of interviews with press agents, journalists and photojournalists - a corpus of images of war and violence during the 1990s.

I will discuss the methodological, political and ethical issues caused by the composition of such a corpus as well as the potential outcomes of publicly sharing some parts of it, during presentations or in a published version of the thesis, for instance.

## **Temlali Yassine (Aix Marseille University, CNRS, TELEMME)**

### *Building (potential) archives from oral accounts: the example of the Berber movement in Algeria between 1962 and 1980*

The political literature produced by the Berber movement in Algeria between 1962 and 1980 is so sparse that a historian has to draw from rare material held by Berber activists and rely on interviews to build an oral archive. The scarcity of documentary material is sometimes explained by the context of repression which pushed activists to dispose of it, or by the activists' frequent relocation.

The question is to know to which real extent this movement made use of written political literature: tracts and roneo newsletters? Could the written word have had the importance that some militants tacitly ascribe to it when they talk about "lost archives", in a society that had barely started to reconnect with its scriptural tradition after more than a century of near general illiteracy?

Once used within a precise disciplinary and methodological framework, can the collected materials (written archives, oral sources) be transformed into archives open to other researchers? The difficulties encountered in collecting private archives for our thesis (roneo newsletters, statements, etc.) could be indicative of some difficulty in convincing their holders to cede ownership. Likewise, some experiences lead us to believe that certain witnesses would prefer their words to be "reworked" to deserve the status of "written source" accessible to a large audience.