



**Issam Fares Institute for Public
Policy and International Affairs**
**معهد عصام فارس للسياسات
العامة والشؤون الدولية**

**Palestinian Oral History Archive (POHA)
American University of Beirut
Call for Proposals**

The POHA project is soliciting proposals for the Archive's launch conference on June 3 – 4, 2019. Applicants must submit an abstract of 500 words in addition to a CV by January 15, 2019. Applications should be sent to: ifi.comms@aub.edu.lb with the subject line: POHA Conference.

The Palestinian Oral History Archive is an archival collection that contains more than 1,000 hours of testimonies with first generation Palestinians and other Palestinian communities in Lebanon. The project's aim is to digitize, index, catalog, preserve, and provide access to the material through the creation of a state-of-the-art digital platform. It aims to expand and include additional oral history collections documenting varied aspects of the Palestinian experience in Lebanon and the region. The project is being completed in partnership with the AUB Libraries, the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, the Nakba Archive and the Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts (AL-JANA), and is currently funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant (2016-19). POHA is co-housed by IFI and AUB Libraries.

The conference will be held at the American University of Beirut in June 2019, and will mark the launch of the Palestinian Oral History Archive. Papers are solicited under the conference's four themes, as they relate to oral histories in, from and about the region:

I- Women Histories: Oral histories - a synergy?

A preference will be given to papers which address inter-generational, and inter-regional aspects.

A great number of the interviewees in the POHA collection are women: the archive thus offers rich material for the exploration of women's lives in pre-1948 Palestine, their experience of refuge in the events of 1948, and their experience in the early days of refuge in Lebanon. Proposals under this theme are encouraged to tap into the archive's rich potential of inscribing the voice of subaltern women into the historical record, producing research on any facet of women's history made possible by the testimonies housed in the archive.

II- Use of Digital Mapping Tools: How can digital tools help bring out the potential of oral history projects

A preference will be given to papers which explore the potential of digital humanities for oral history projects from and about the region.

Layers of geographic data available in the interviews, as well as the fine-tuned indexing of geographic markers and local landmarks, render the archive a rich source for complementing and enriching the cartographic and human-geographic repository available thus far. Proposals under this theme are encouraged to employ the Archive's geographic data using digital tools for mapping, visualization, and spatial-temporal storytelling.

III- **Oral History as Ethnography: How can an ethnographic stance for oral histories advance new histories in, from and about the region?**

A preference will be given to papers that combine a general theoretical stance with an applied methodological take on oral history in and about the region.

In avoiding transcription of interviews, and the flattening of a sonic and visual experience into text, POHA strove to maintain the power of oral history in allowing for a dialogical-ethnographic stance for the researcher. Proposals under this theme are encouraged to reflect on the researcher's ethnographic positioning while exploring oral history interviews, and the methodological implications such a stance allows

IV- **Theories and Methods of Oral History Archiving: How can oral history fill in the silences, gaps and omissions in the Archive? How best to archive oral histories? What kind of ethical questions does archiving oral histories from and about refugees in particular, and other groups in the region in general, raise?**

A key concern of the project has been devising a methodology for archiving oral history that remains faithful to the narrator's experience while complying to international standards for cataloging and indexing. This concern has informed the project's key decisions over the course of the project's development. Papers presented under this theme are encouraged to reflect on methodologies of archiving oral histories and exploring alternative methodological avenues and technical tools and the ways in which they might impact users' experiences. Ethical questions of privacy, access, and impact of archiving subaltern voices are also of interest.

Applicants must submit an abstract of 500 words in addition to a CV by January 15, 2019. Applications should be sent to: ifi.comms@aub.edu.lb with the subject line: POHA Conference. The conference organizers will cover the cost of travel and accommodation for accepted papers.
