



Spotlight on PAVE partner FMSH (Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme) – An interview with Marie Kortam

- **A short summary of FMSHs tasks within PAVE**

FMSH is the work package leader of WP4, which is addressing interactions between state institutions and religious leaders. FMSH further participates actively in the work packages 2, 8 and 9, and is involved in the research on transnational dynamics in WP6.

- **Get to know the PAVE members - a brief interview with Marie Kortam from FMSH**

- **Introduction**

My research path is clearly oriented towards the analysis of violence in the South, and more particularly in Lebanon, using an anthropological approach. My research falls within the fields of political and pragmatic anthropology. It first questioned the State "from below" in order to study political violence by favouring a comprehensive approach anchored in daily life. Today I focus my research on the metamorphoses and dynamics of political violence and its effects on society and socialisation in violence. In the course of my work, I have developed a political anthropology of violence that has been applied to several objects of study: the city of Tripoli, the context of the Syrian crisis, the political conflict in Lebanon, jihadism, armed engagement and violent extremism.



- **What do you hope you/ we will achieve with PAVE?**

With being part of the PAVE project, I hope to extend my field of research and expertise by working on other MENA countries and in the Western Balkans. Concerning my subject, I believe that a new research approach will be developed through the work of the PAVE team.

- **How does your regular work day look and what's the most rewarding part of your job?**

My work can be divided into three parts: administrative, desk work for reviews and reading, and fieldwork. The administrative part is the less lovely part and I do it without any pleasure. The desk work and readings are a needed part of my spiritual daily work, it makes me calm, serene, open-minded and connects me to different fields and areas. Fieldwork is my favourite part as it allows me to discover new areas, sites, discuss, and observe. It enables me to learn and be humble and it gives me the opportunity to follow other stakeholders in the field. This part of work is intense, purpose- and meaningful, but also exhausting - especially in a subject as hard as PAVE. Back from the field, I do concentrate on the second part of my work, i.e. desk work and reading, to take distance from the field, while engaging in fruitful thinking and analysis.

- **Job-wise: Did you consider going into a totally different direction at some point or did you always know that this is the work you want to do?**

My first Master was in social work and I used to work for years as a social worker with refugees. During my years of interventions on a personal, family, group and community level, I felt and noticed the limitations of this work based on resources, funds and the work targeted only one aspect. I wanted to understand these limitations to comprehend the "symbolic violence" experienced by refugees (a concept in sociology theorised by Pierre Bourdieu). I decided to continue in sociology to understand this field and development work, to have knowledge to describe what I observe and to equip myself with analytical tools.

- **What is your scientific interest and what are your plans for the future?**

My scientific interest through my research and beyond, within PAVE and outside PAVE, is to build knowledge and recommend public policies for a better and more equal world and a better environment for vulnerable individuals, so that rule of law is applied, as well as transitional justice in post armed conflict and war contexts.



- What do you wish everybody to see / experience and why?

I wish everybody to have the chance to experience his/her work as passion and mission.

- What's the best book you've read recently?

"Blood and Faith" by celebrated journalist Matthew Carr. It is a riveting and "richly detailed" (choice) chronicle of what was, by 1614, the largest act of ethnic cleansing in European history. It is a remarkable window into a little known period of modern Europe—a complex tale of competing faiths and beliefs, cultural oppression, and resistance against overwhelming odds that shed new light on national identity and Islam.

- If you could have dinner with three people (dead or alive), who would they be and why them?

My father and grandfather because we did not have enough time to debate on many subjects concerning justice – which they were struggling for; and my sister to share these talks with her.

- Are you a coffee or tea person?

A coftea person. Coffee in the morning and tea after noon.