

# Sulayman Najm Khalaf, 1946–2023: A Pioneering Anthropologist of the Gulf and Syria

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**Abstract:** This article celebrates the life and scholarship of Sulayman Najm Khalaf (1946–2023), Syria’s first social anthropologist who made important contributions to the fields of Gulf and Syrian Studies, as well as Intangible Heritage. It traces his life’s journey from a Bedouin upbringing in the Euphrates Valley to a pioneering scholar of Syria and the Gulf. It highlights his contributions to the study of society and tribal politics in rural Syria and the impact of oil wealth on the Gulf Arab states — on Gulf citizens, cities, heritage, identity — and the lives of migrant labourers who work there. It emphasises his ethnographic rigour and theoretical innovation in the study of social change and modernity. It concludes by assessing his enduring legacy for Middle Eastern anthropology and the academic communities he cultivated.

**Key words:** Sulayman Khalaf, anthropology, Syria, Gulf Arab states, Kuwait, UAE, heritage, migrant workers

Sulayman Najm Khalaf (سليمان نجم خلف), the pioneering anthropologist of the GCC states and Syria, passed away on 20 March 2023 at his home in Exeter, England. This article examines the fascinating life of this shaikhly scholar. It discusses his important contributions to Gulf Studies and Syria Studies, and reflects on the enduring impact of his work and a life well lived. He was beloved by all who knew him, admired as much for his kindness, generosity, and mentorship as for his scholarship and keen intellect. His middle name, Najm (نجم, star), symbolised this: he was a star in his field and a guiding star for a generation of early scholars, advising on or supervising their dissertations and theses.

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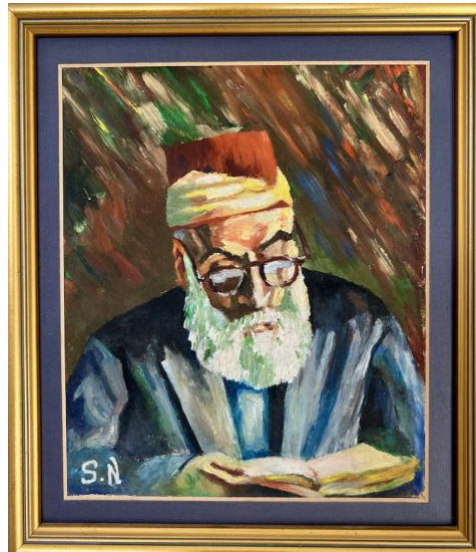
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**Figure 1:** Sulayman Khalaf at the American University of Sharjah, March 2009

Sulayman was Syria's first social anthropologist: the first Syrian to earn a PhD in that discipline to write about Syria through that lens. His work on village life in the Euphrates Valley has become indispensable for the study of rural Syria. After receiving his PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1981, Sulayman spent most of his academic career in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, which became his second field of study. His theorisation of "the image of unlimited good" in Gulf societies added an important cultural dimension to our understanding of the impact of oil wealth on Gulf politics, while his ethnographic studies of the GCC states' (re)invention of their intangible heritage — camel racing, camel beauty contests, falconry, and pearl festivals — were groundbreaking. The latter became foundational texts for the newly-emerging field of Heritage Studies within Gulf Studies.

Sulayman was a quintessential anthropologist: incessantly interested, curious, funny, and adventurous. Everywhere he went he kept notes and diaries, collected newspaper and magazine cuttings, and recorded interviews and poetry. An ethnographer through and through, he was equally at home in his family's village in Syria and the campuses and cafes of Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE, socializing with shaikhs, scholars, and migrant workers. He was a man of two worlds: Arab and British. He was a native of Syria and an adopted son of the Gulf with a British wife and British-Arab sons. He spent his childhood and adult life in the Arab world and his retirement in Britain. He was ever the anthropologist: always thinking, always theorizing, always collecting ideas and evidence for his work. He was interested in everything people did, and this interest was genuine, overflowing, and contagious. That is why he was also a great teacher and supervisor: he used his own curiosity and knowledge to generate interest, to help us see the world through others' eyes, to identify new avenues of enquiry, to connect the dots, and to find the bigger picture.



**Figure 2:** One of Sulayman's paintings: the Syrian scholar



**Figure 3:** Sulayman and his wife, Barbara Hayward, at their home in Exeter, England, October 2016

Because of this, Sulayman's anthropology was vivid, alive: like his oil paintings and the characters of his PhD dissertation, later published as *Social Change in Syria: Family, Village, and Political Party*. His studies of Syria employed a biographical ethnographic method to bring to life the lives, loves, and contradictions of a people living on the periphery of the Syrian desert, whose worries, dramas, and dreams he deeply sympathised with.

### **Early life and education**

Sulayman was born in a black goat-hair tent on the bank of a tributary of the Euphrates in northern Syria. He was the second son of Ḥajj Najm Khalaf, the shaikh of a Bedouin sheep-



herding tribe, and Hajja ‘Anūd Al-Shwāmī. At the time of his birth in January 1946, his family was encamped with the powerful Fed‘ān tribe in the district of ‘Ayn ‘Issa (عين عيسى) because his father had sought the protection of its shaikh, Al-Mujhim Ibn Muheid — a story about which Sulayman later wrote an article on the Bedouin custom of protection-seeking.<sup>2</sup> As was tribal custom, babies born with good looks were tattooed to ward off the evil eye, and Sulayman’s three facial tattoos remained visible all his life. He spent his early years with the Bedouins until 1952, when his father was pardoned, after which his family settled at Al-Jaiyf (الجاييف, aka Al-Jaif) on Syria’s flat wind-swept plains some 30 kilometres northwest of Raqqa, where his father founded a village.<sup>3</sup> There, Sulayman’s family prospered from rain-fed agriculture of barley and wheat (and later with more established fields with the Euphrates dam irrigation), but also continued with sheep herding. His mother was responsible for milking the sheep and producing yogurt and cheese, as well as Sadu weaving to make items for their home.

Sulayman had five brothers and four sisters. Along with his brothers and cousins, he attended school in Raqqa, taken care of by his paternal grandmother who was sent to “sit on the boys”, as the Arabic saying goes. Sulayman thrived at primary school and continued his education up to secondary level — the first in his family to do so. At that time he used to accompany his father on his annual trip to Aleppo’s famed Al-Madina Souq, where they would stay in a *khān* (urban caravanserai) for a few days to sell their sheep and purchase items for the family household. During one of these visits, his father learnt that the merchants of Aleppo were educating their sons in English and sending them to universities abroad. He decided that Sulayman should follow suit. Although Hajj Najm was illiterate, he was very astute and recognised that education was a path to a better future.



**Figure 4:** Sulayman with his brothers, 1985.

Back row (left to right): Fādhil, Farḥān, Sulaymān, Mamdūh.

Front row (left to right): Mu‘teb, Mandil

After Sulayman obtained his high-school diploma and studied English at a summer

<sup>2</sup> Khalaf, “Settlement of Violence in Bedouin Society”, *Ethnology* 29.3 (July 1990), pp. 225–243. The story appears on pp. 228–230.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Jaiyf was renamed Al-Ḥadbah (الحدبة) in the 1980s, but the original name persists, often appearing alongside Al-Ḥadbah (aka Al-Hadba).

school in Aleppo, his father sent him to England in 1966 — first to Cambridge to further his English studies, then to Manchester for science A-levels. His father's ambition was that Sulayman should become a medical doctor, but Sulayman's talents lay in an entirely different direction. Sulayman decided to enrol himself in the American University of Beirut, where he earned a BA in Sociology and Anthropology in 1972 and then an MA in the same field in 1975, graduating at the start of the Lebanese Civil War. He wrote his MA thesis under the supervision of G.J. Obermeyer on the tribal politics and leadership of two Syrian tribes in the Raqqa region: the Fed'ān and 'Afādla. On the basis of his excellent thesis, UCLA awarded him a full PhD scholarship in 1977. He wrote his dissertation on Ḥāwī al-Hawā (حاوي الهوى), a rural village in northern Syria 10 kilometres west of Raqqa, under the supervision of John Kennedy. UCLA awarded him a PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology in 1981. While his PhD dissertation was much cited over the years, he did not publish it until 2021. Although his university education was entirely in English, he was a bilingual scholar, teaching and publishing in both English and Arabic.



**Figure 5:** Sulayman with his father in 1966, before travelling to England to start his studies



**Figure 6:** Sulayman with his parents in Beirut, 1972, while he was a student at AUB

## Research

Sulayman's research encompassed many themes across Syria, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE:

- Anthropological theory
- Political anthropology
- Socio-cultural change
- Globalization and local cultures
- Intangible heritage
- (Re)invented traditions
- Arab society and culture
- Syrian tribal and peasant communities
- Gulf Arab society
- Gulf Arab heritage and culture
- Emirati identity
- Shī'ī religious life in Bahrain
- Modernity and nation-building in the Gulf
- The Gulf city as a sociological type
- Migrant workers in the Gulf Arab States
- British expatriates in the Gulf

Sulayman's scholarship was meticulous and incisive, grasping the dialectics of modernity and tradition, history and economy, culture and inventiveness. He leaves behind an anthropology bursting with colour, curiosity, playfulness. His writing was clear, vivid, potent, and authentic — challenging us to rethink Orientalist visions of anthropological natives and scribes. We discuss the main themes in his research below.

The first subject of Sulayman's research was rural life in Syria, for his PhD. Most of his work was on the cotton-producing village of Ḥāwī al-Hawā in the Euphrates Valley, where he documented and analyzed the dynamic interplay between three major social forces: the peasants, the shaikhs (the land-owning / entrepreneurial class), and the party comrades of the Ba'ṯh socialist ruling party. His groundbreaking ethnographic work drew on a rare combination of historical documentation, participant observation, interviews, and life stories. He offered a nuanced account of how individuals navigate change, balancing tradition and modernity under shifting regimes, from tribal authority to Ba'ṯhist socialism.

His concept of the *mukhadram* (مخضرم, the cultural “collagist”, whose life encompasses two epochs or worlds, who is creative and manipulative in his bridging of them)<sup>4</sup> provides an original lens for understanding deviance, adaptation, and continuity in the context of rural transformation, state-building, and political mobilization. He also wrote a unique study of the settlement of violence in Bedouin society, involving the custom of *dakhala* (دخل, “to enter” the protection of another), taking his father’s refuge with the Fed‘ān tribe during 1942–52 as a case study. In total, Sulayman published five notable studies of rural life in Syria:

- 1990 “Settlement of Violence in Bedouin Society”, *Ethnology* 29.3 (July), pp. 225–243.
- 1991 “Land Reform and Social Classes in Rural Syria”, in Richard Antoun and Donald Quataert (eds), *Syria: The Society, Culture, and Polity* (SUNY Press), pp. 63–78.
- 1993 “Cheikhs, paysans et membres du parti Ba‘th: Changements politiques en Syrie du nord” [Shaikhs, Peasants and Members of the Ba‘th Party: Political Changes in Northern Syria], in Riccardo Bocco, Ronald Jaubert, and Françoise Métral (eds), *Steppes d’Arabies: États, pasteurs, agriculteurs et commerçants: le devenir des zones sèches* (Presses Universitaires de France; reprinted in 2014 and 2016), pp. 178–194.
- 1997 “Shaykhs, Peasants and Party Comrades: Political Change in Northern Syria”, in Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam (eds), *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East* (Cambridge University Press), chapter 10 (pp. 110–122).
- 2021 *Social Change in Syria: Family, Village, and Political Party* (Routledge, 2021), edited by Barbara Hayward and Maria Kastrinou, 360 pages.

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<sup>4</sup> He defines the concept in Khalaf, *Social Change in Syria: Family, Village, and Political Party* (2021), pp. 252–260.





**Figure 7:** Sulayman with his uncles at Al-Jaiyf, Syria, 19 January 1994



**Figure 8:** Sulayman enjoying a feast outside the family majlis, Al-Jaiyf, Syria, 12 January 1994





**Figure 9:** Sulayman outside the Khalaf family compound, Al-Jaiyf, Syria, 2008

Sulayman continued to be involved in follow-up research on this village community for the rest of his life. A related theme, which bridged his work on Syria with his later work on the Gulf Arab states, was the role of shaikhs and shaikhly authority in tribal society — a subject he examined in all the publications appearing above, and some of his work on the Gulf, most notably:

- 2006 “Shaikhly Authority in the Pre-Oil Gulf: A Historical-Anthropological Study”, co-authored with James Onley, *History and Anthropology* 17.3 (September), pp. 189–208.

This co-authored article with James Onley, which bridges history, anthropology, and political science, became one of their most-cited publications.

A related theme in Sulayman’s research was anthropological theory, for which he had a deep fascination. While this permeated most of his work, he wrote five studies on the subject, all in Arabic, including his first journal article and his first book:

- 1985 “Qirā’a naqdiyya li-al-anmāt wa-istikhdāmātihā fī ‘anthrūbūlūjiyyat mujtama’āt al-Sharq al-’Awsaṭ” [A Critical Reading of Patterns and Their Uses in the Anthropology of Middle Eastern Societies], *Majallat al-’ulūm al-ijtimā’iyya* [Journal of Social Sciences] 13.4 (Winter), pp. 369–399.
- 1992 *Al-anthrūbūlūjiyā al-siyāsiyya: dirāsa naqdiyya li-al-ittijāhāt wa-al-manāhij fī al-anthrūbūlūjiyā al-siyāsiyya* [Political Anthropology: A Critical Study of the Trends and Approaches in Political Anthropology] (Kuwait: Academic Publications Council, Kuwait University), 97 pages.
- 1995 “Khaṣā’iṣ al-anthrūbūlūjiyā: taqṣīmātuhū al-far’iyya wa-ṣilatuhū bi-l-ḥayāh al-mu’āṣira” [Characteristics of Anthropology: Its Subdivisions and

Relevance to Modern Life], *Al-anthrūbūlūjiyā: muqaddima ‘āmma* [Anthropology: A General Introduction] (Dubai: Dar Al-Qalam Publishers), chapter 1 (pp. 7–44).

- 1995 “Asālīb wa-anmāt al-baḥṡ al-anthrūbūlūjī” [Methods and Styles of Anthropological Research], *Al-anthrūbūlūjiyā: muqaddima ‘āmma* [Anthropology: A General Introduction] (Dubai: Dar Al-Qalam Publishers), chapter 2 (pp. 45–84).
- 1997 “Aḍwā’ ‘alā masīrat anthrūbūlūjī ‘Arabī: ḥiwār ma’a Ḥusayn Fahīm” [Dialogues with an Arab Anthropologist: The Journey of Hussein Fahim], *Al-Baḥrain al-thaqāfiya* 14 (October), pp. 76–87.

His most notable work in this field was his first book, which was a critique of five dominant approaches in political anthropology: genetic-evolutionary, structural functionalism, dynamist, processual, and political economy, with special attention to the structural functionalism and processual approaches due to their broader use. It examined the theoretical principles, historical contexts, and methodologies of each approach, assessing their analytical strengths and relevance. Presented in historical sequence, his study highlighted the intellectual evolution of political anthropology since the 1940s, emphasizing the distinct contributions of each approach despite their limitations.

After Sulayman began his academic career at Kuwait University in 1981, he expanded his research to the Gulf Arab states, starting with the impact of oil wealth on Gulf citizens. He published two notable studies on this theme:

- 1987 “The Emergence of the Oil Welfare State: The Case of Kuwait”, co-authored with Hassan Hammoud, *Dialectical Anthropology* 12.3 (September), pp. 343–357.
- 1992 “Gulf Societies and the Image of Unlimited Good”, *Dialectical Anthropology* 17.1 (March), pp. 53–84.

The first, co-authored with his Kuwait University colleague Hassan Hammoud, examined how oil wealth replaced productive labour and civil society with a state-centered system of redistribution that grants social but not political rights. It explained why the Gulf Arab states, taking Kuwait as a case study, are simultaneously powerful, paternalistic, and disconnected from both production and political accountability. Following on from this, Sulayman published a pioneering study of “the image of unlimited good”, which was a clever inversion of George Foster’s concept of “the image of limited good”:<sup>5</sup> the view in traditional societies of wealth and success as *limited* resources. Sulayman argued that, in the oil-rich Gulf Arab states, particularly Kuwait, the opposite is the case: Gulf society has developed an image of *unlimited* good, where rapid economic growth and state-sponsored wealth distribution have led to Gulf citizens, notably Kuwaitis, seeing their state as a land of *unlimited* resources to which they feel entitled. This is because, in the aftermath of the 1973 oil boom, the Gulf states created vast welfare systems to provide free housing, healthcare, and education, and well-paid government jobs to their small citizen populations. This institutionalized abundance fostered an attitude of entitlement, excessively consumerist lifestyles, and a new national identity tied to privilege and material abundance. The Gulf citizens’ new identity was also shaped in opposition to the growing expatriate

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<sup>5</sup> George Foster, “Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good”, *American Anthropologist* 67.2 (April 1965), pp. 293–315.

communities in the Gulf states, especially migrant labourers, because of the stigmatisation of manual labour: that the Gulf citizens' elite status exempted them from manual work.

Next, Sulayman examined the impact of oil wealth on Gulf cities, a subject on which he published two studies:

1996 "Khaṣā'is al-taḥaddur fī al-madīna al-Khalījīyya" [Characteristics of Urbanization in the Gulf City], *Kitāb al-Rāfid* (Sharjah: Ministry of Culture and Information Publications), No. 5, pp. 39–51.

2006 "The Evolution of the Gulf City Type, Oil and Globalization", in John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, and Mohammed Al-Mutawa (eds), *Globalization and the Gulf* (London: Routledge), chapter 14 (pp. 244–265).

In these studies, Sulayman examined the Gulf Arab governments' reconstruction of their capital cities as modern global metropolises, symbols of modernity and opulence, reinforcing the image of the unlimited good. He framed the Gulf city as a distinctive urban form shaped by oil wealth, rapid modernization, and global integration. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and regional comparisons, he argued that Gulf cities — such as Dubai, Kuwait City, and Doha — represent a new "petro-urbanism" marked by stratified multiculturalism, spatial segregation, and consumption-driven development. He outlined four phases of urban evolution, showing how oil transformed small coastal towns into sprawling, highly planned metropolises with unique social hierarchies and architectural forms. His work on Gulf cities contributed significantly to Gulf urban studies by framing these cities not just as products of wealth, but as complex intersections of global capitalism, local identity, and socio-political stratification.

Finally, Sulayman turned his attention to the Gulf citizens' polar opposite: migrant workers, writing two influential studies about them:

1999 "Migrants' Strategies of Coping and Patterns of Accommodation in the Oil-Rich Gulf Societies: Evidence from the UAE", co-authored with Saad Alkobaisi (UAE University), *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26.2 (November), pp. 271–298.

2010 "Dubai Camel Market Transnational Workers: An Ethnographic Portrait", *City & Society* 22.1 (June), pp. 97–118.

These studies examined how Arab and Asian workers in the UAE navigate life on the margins of Gulf society. The first, written when he was at UAE University and co-authored with his UAEU colleague Saad Alkobaisi, focused on low- and middle-income workers, showing how they use kinship networks, informal economies, and cultural familiarity to cope with legal precarity and structural exclusion. In a subsequent study of transnational camel workers in Dubai, Sulayman extended this analysis to a specific labour niche, highlighting how Sudanese, Pakistani, and Syrian workers rebuild communal life through village-based social norms, kinship solidarity, and shared labor strategies. Together, Sulayman's two studies of migrant workers revealed how they creatively activate traditional social capital to survive within an unequal, globalised order.

It was from this line of enquiry that Sulayman eventually discovered the research subject for which he became best known in Gulf Studies: the Gulf Arab states' (re)invention of their traditions and national identity. These pioneering studies examined the influence of modernity and globalization on the intangible heritage and material culture of the UAE and



Kuwait through case studies of camel racing, falconry, pearling festivals, heritage villages, and national dress. Some of these studies became foundational texts for the newly-emerging field of Heritage Studies within Gulf Studies, while one was an important co-authored submission to UNESCO to inscribe falconry on its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list:

- 1998 “Al-‘awlama wa al-huwiyya al-thaqāfiyya: taṣawwur naẓarī li-dirāsāt namūdḥaj mujtama‘ al-Khalīj wa al-Jazīra al-‘Arabiyya” [Globalization and Cultural Identity: A Theoretical Conceptualization for the Study of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Society], *Al-Majalla al-‘Arabiyya li-l-‘ulūm al-insāniyya* [The Arab Journal of Humanities] 16.61 (Winter), pp. 52–93.
- 1999 “Camel Racing in the Arab Gulf: Notes on the Evolution of a Traditional Cultural Sport”, *Anthropos* 94.1–3 (March), pp. 85–106.
- 1999 “Al-ab‘ād al-maḥalliyya wa al-‘ālamīyya li-iḥyā’ al-turāth: ḥālat sibāq al-hijīn fī al-Khalīj” [Local and Global Dimensions of Heritage Revival: The Case of Camel Racing in the Gulf], in *Waqā’i‘ al-mujtama‘ al-Imārātī fī siyāq al-taḥawwulāt al-maḥalliyya wa al-‘ālamīyya* [Proceedings of Emirati Society within the Context of Local and Global Transformations] conference (Al-Ain: UAE University Publications).
- 1999 “Thaqāfat sibāq al-hijīn fī al-Khalīj al-‘Arabī” [Culture of Camel Racing in the Arab Gulf], *Al-Baḥrain al-thaqāfiyya* 20 (May), pp. 46–56.
- 2000 “Poetics and Politics of Newly Invented Traditions in the Gulf: Camel Racing in the United Arab Emirates”, *Ethnology* 39.3 (Summer), pp. 243–261.
- 2002 “Globalization and Heritage Revival in the Gulf: An Anthropological Look at Dubai Heritage Village”, *Journal of Social Affairs* 19.75 (Fall), pp 277–306.
- 2005 “National Dress and the Construction of Emirati Cultural Identity”, *Journal of Human Sciences* (Bahrain University), Issue 11 (Winter), pp. 230–267.
- 2008 “The Nationalization of Culture: Kuwait’s Invention of Pearl Diving Heritage” in Alanoud Alsharekh and Robert Springborg (eds), *Popular Culture and Political Identity in the Arab Gulf States* (London: Saqi Books), chapter 3 (pp. 40–70).
- 2010 “Dubai Camel Market Transnational Workers: An Ethnographic Portrait”, *City & Society* 22.1 (June), pp. 97–118. *Note:* This article also examines camel racing and the camel market that supports it.
- 2013 *Al-Ṣaqārah: turāth insānī ḥayy. Al-milaff al-duwalī al-mushtarak li-idrāj al-Ṣaqārah fī al-qā’imah al-tamthīliyyah li-al-turāth al-thaqāfi ghayr al-māddī li-al-bashariyyah fī al-Yūniskū* [Falconry: A Living Human Heritage. The Joint International Dossier for the Inclusion of Falconry in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity], co-authored with Nāṣir ‘Alī al-Bākhshī Al-Ḥimyarī (lead author) and Ismā‘īl ‘Alī Al-Fuḥayl (Abu Dhabi: Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, 2013), 458 pages. This was the UAE government’s application to UNESCO to inscribe falconry on its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list in an effort to recognize falconry’s historical and cultural importance and to promote its practice.
- 2017 “An Emirate Goes Global: The Cultural Making of Abu Dhabi”, in Ulf

Hannerz and Andre Gingrich (eds), *Small Countries: Structures and Sensibilities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), chapter 13 (pp. 267–282).



**Figure 10:** Sulayman with H.H. Shaikh Dr Sultan Al-Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, at the opening of a conference at the American University of Sharjah, January 2004

Sulayman often took an interdisciplinary approach to theory and research — something reflected in his publication of papers with scholars from other disciplines, including a social welfare scholar (Hassan R. Hammoud at Kuwait **University** in 1987), a sociologist (Saad Alkobaisi at UAE University in 1999), an historian (James Onley at the American University of Sharjah **[AUS]** and University of Exeter in 2006), an archaeologist (John W. Fox at AUS in 2006), and a political scientist (Nada Mourtada-Sabbah at AUS in 2006). Throughout his career, he actively presented papers and participated in international and regional conferences, symposia, and seminars, including the annual American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES), which enabled him to develop an international academic network. For instance, it was at the 2003 BRISMES conference at the University of Exeter in July that Sulayman first met James Onley, who was based at Exeter’s Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the time. The following month, Onley took up a position at AUS, next door to the University of Sharjah where Sulayman worked. The two soon became close friends and collaborated on their “Shaikhly Authority in the Pre-Oil Gulf” article over the course of the 2004–05 academic year, writing it together on weekends at Sulayman and Barbara’s Dubai home in Jumeirah.



**Figure 11:** Sulayman at his home office in Abu Dhabi, April 2011

Sulayman’s research, listed in **Appendix B** below, has been cited frequently by scholars of the Gulf and Syria, and is required reading for university courses on the Gulf and Syria around the world. His wife, Barbara Hayward, and former PhD student, Maria Kastrinou, who, together, edited and published his PhD dissertation, *Social Change in Syria*, also plan to publish his MA thesis, “Tribal Politics and Leadership in the Raqqa Region of Syria”, and a book of his collected papers on the Gulf Arab states.

## Career

Sulayman worked at 10 universities and a heritage authority over the course of a 40-year academic career. He started as a Teaching Assistant at AUB in 1972, where he taught for three years, and retired as an Intangible Heritage Expert in the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) in 2015.<sup>6</sup> In between, he taught at Chouiefat National College in Beirut (one year), UCLA (two years), Kuwait University (nine years), Stockholm University (half year), UAE University (eight years), Harvard University (one year), the American University of Dubai (half year), the University of Sharjah (five years), and the University of Bahrain (two years). See **Appendix C** for his full academic career. In 2008, he left university life for the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), which became TCA Abu Dhabi in 2012, where he worked for Abu Dhabi’s museums sector for seven years until his retirement.

Sulayman’s first permanent academic appointment was at Kuwait University, in 1981. It was there that he met Barbara Hayward. They married in January 1985 in Kuwait, which became their first home together, and it was there that their two sons, Ramsey and Sami, were born. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, Sulayman, Barbara, and the boys were on summer holiday in England. Unable to return to Kuwait, Sulayman spent half a year at Stockholm University as a visiting professor until he secured his next permanent academic appointment at UAE University in 1991.

In the fall of 1999, Sulayman took up a one-year fellowship at Harvard University, after

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<sup>6</sup> TCA Abu Dhabi was renamed the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT Abu Dhabi) in 2017.



which he returned to the UAE to teach at the University of Sharjah for five years. In 2006, he moved to the University of Bahrain, where he expanded his research to encompass Bahrain, namely Shī'ī religious life and British expatriate social and cultural life, about which he collected a great deal of material and wrote much, but never published. While in Bahrain, Sulayman was invited to Abu Dhabi to consult on the establishment of a museum. This led to him being offered a full-time position in 2008 as an intangible heritage expert with ADACH, later TCA Abu Dhabi, where he coordinated research on intangible heritage in the UAE and worked on many UNESCO submissions.



**Figure 12:** Sulayman at ADACH, March 2009

Between 1995 and 2011, Sulayman kindly served as field supervisor or advisor of 11 PhD dissertations and one MA thesis. He facilitated these students' fieldwork and advised on their work on a voluntary, unpaid basis. He also helped an even greater number of graduate students and early scholars during their fieldwork visits to the Gulf. He did this out of love for his field and the scholarly community to which he belonged. He was generous and inspiring to so many. Because of this, his memory, spirit, and efforts will live on among his global network of friends and colleagues who feel privileged to have known him. A good example of this is Maria Kastrinou. Sulayman served as field supervisor of her PhD on Syria during 2008–11, which she later published as *Power, Sect and State in Syria: The Politics of Marriage and Identity amongst the Druze* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016). The commitment, generosity, and hospitality he extended to her was unsurpassable. His family in Al-Jaiyf and Raqqa treated her like family, and their home became a sanctuary for her from urban life. Later, Maria helped Sulayman complete his last book based on his PhD dissertation, working alongside Sulayman, his wife Barbara Hayward, and his cousin Ali Al-Khalaf. Under Sulayman's guidance, they edited and updated all the material from his PhD dissertation: Barbara and Maria edited it, Ali sent them updates from Raqqa when the Syrian civil war was still raging, and Maria wrote the forward and updated Sulayman's conclusion. Their collaboration with Sulayman on his last publication was an immensely satisfying experience. In 2024, Maria obtained a research grant from Brunel University's Institute of Communities and Society for the *Sulayman Khalaf: Syria and the Anthropology*

of the *Middle East* project to collect, document, and reveal alternative histories of the Raqqa region through Sulayman's life and works. The project aims to develop a digital archive and to pilot a documentary film about Sulayman's life and, through this, an alternative story of heritage, culture, and hope in Syria.



**Figure 13:** Sulayman hosting Maria Kastrinou during her first field visit to Syria: Al-Jaiyf, 2008. Left to right: Maria, Sulayman, Umm Ṭalāl (Myriam, wife of Mamdūḥ Khalaf), Eleftheria Kastrinou (Maria's mother), Abū Ṭalāl (Mamdūḥ Khalaf, Sulayman's eldest brother).

In October 2012, Sulayman suffered a stroke that robbed him of his ability to read, which effectively ended his career. In 2015, he retired to Exeter in England. He spent his final years travelling and socialising with friends, and revising his PhD dissertation for publication with the help of Barbara Hayward, Maria Kastrinou, and Ali Al-Khalaf. He eventually published it with *Routledge's St Andrews Syrian Studies Series* in 2021 under the title *Social Change in Syria: Family, Village, and Political Party*. *The University of St Andrews' Centre for Syrian Studies* held an online launch for the book on 25 June 2021, co-hosted by *Brunel University*, at which many of his friends and colleagues spoke — Raymond Hinnebusch (the Centre's Director), Barbara Hayward, Maria Kastrinou, Dawn Chatty, Abdul Nabi Isstaif, Chris Davidson, Paul Anderson, Haian Dukhan, and Myriam Ababsa — and many others attended, such as Ali Al-Khalaf (his cousin), Ibrahim Al-Meshrif (from one of the family's in his book), Sonia Khuri (widow of Fuad Khuri of AUB), James Onley, Mark Beech, and Josepha Wessels. Sulayman passed away a year and nine months later on 20 March 2023.

## Other interests

Anthropology was Sulayman's life's work. Always the anthropologist, he was fascinated by others' cultures, experiences, and ideas. He loved meeting people, socialising, and long family holidays in different countries with Barbara and the boys. He was also a family

man, and was very proud of his two sons. In his youth at AUB, he was an accomplished athlete and won several trophies for track and field events. He kept up his fitness by playing squash and, later in life, by walking several miles each day. He loved to cook, especially Chinese dishes, and entertain friends at home. He also enjoyed gardening and insisted on planting a palm tree wherever he lived. He planted a garden outside his family's *majlis* in Al-Jaiyf and, after he retired, he and Barbara grew vegetables in their allotment in Exeter. He liked learning languages — he was fluent in French and later studied German and Spanish. He would always listen to music when he was working, and was especially fond of the Lebanese singer Fairuz. He loved art and painted in his youth in Syria, Lebanon, and the US. Many of his paintings from that time decorated the walls of his homes in Kuwait, Al-Ain, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Exeter. He also loved to collect and write poems. He embraced life with fervour, wanted to achieve the best in anything that he tried, and lived life to the full. In his last few weeks the phrase he repeated most was, “Life is wonderful, really wonderful”.



**Figure 14:** Sulayman with his sons, Sami (left) and Ramsey (right), 2019





**Figure 15:** Sulayman's painting of a mother and son, 1964



**Figure 16:** Sulayman's abstract painting a Syrian street scene, n.d.



**Figure 17:** Sulayman's painting of a Syrian village, 1979

### **Testimony from friends and colleagues**

Several of Sulayman's friends and colleagues have kindly offered their impressions and memories of him and his work, which are reprinted below.

*Raymond Hinnebusch, University of St Andrews, Scotland:*

Sulayman Khalaf's masterful study of a Syrian village is the gold standard of how the macro level trends of sociological analysis can be shown to be reflected and adapted at the micro level. It was a *tour de force*: ahead of its time when it was written and today is a classic in its field. I found his work, anthropology at its best, to be enormously revealing about the concrete local consequences of national level policies in Syria. Sulayman was a grandmaster of the ethnographic art and of the life history form.

*Haian Dukhan, Teesside University, England:*

Sulayman Khalaf's work has been a significant influence on my own research in political science. His deep and nuanced understanding of tribal dynamics and social structures within Syria provided crucial insights that have shaped much of my work on the region. His ability to bridge the gap between anthropology and political science was truly remarkable, offering perspectives that have enriched the field and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate socio-political landscapes in the Middle East.

*Dawn Chatty, University of Oxford (retired):*

For Gulf Studies, it is really important to note that Sulayman was the first anthropologist I know of to recognize the immense significance of heritage studies and the way that the Gulf states were manipulating (maybe essentializing and Orientalising) Bedouin customs and traditions. His article on camel racing in the Gulf is extraordinarily prescient to what was to follow with camel beauty contests, camel milk factories, falconry with salukis, and generally (re)creating, (re)imagining, and (re)inserting “Bedouinity” onto urban merchant social groups. He led, in much of his work, the now vibrant sub-discipline of anthropology that focuses on the “Battleground for Belonging” in southeastern Arabia.

*Steven Caton, Harvard University (retired):*

I first got to know Sulayman when he was a visiting scholar at Harvard University back in 1999–2000, and I was instantly captivated by his warmth, charm, and lively wit. We became friends, and over the years my affection and appreciation of him only deepened. What I appreciated most was the range of his talents, the full extent of which I only got to know towards the end of his life. Not only an original anthropologist of the Gulf, but, with the publication of his full-length ethnography of the region he hailed from as a boy, also an important anthropologist of Syria. And that’s only to mark his academic accomplishments. A surprise awaited me when I visited his and Barbara’s home in Exeter: his oil paintings, many of which were of people and places he knew in Syria, a beautiful visual record of his memories. He had come full circle, as it were, though the circle was closed in his fecund imagination. Had Sulayman lived longer, what with the downfall of the Asad regime, closure might have happened in another form, and I can only wonder how my friend might have responded with his characteristic sensitivity and intelligence.

*Christopher Davidson:*

In the early 2000s, Sulayman played a major role in helping me prepare my St. Andrews PhD thesis on the UAE’s political society. We later collaborated on a number of projects when I taught at universities in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. He generously took the time to introduce me to his colleagues and students, while substantially honing my interview and survey techniques, as well as rather sternly testing my Arabic in all too public situations!

Intellectually, beyond Sulayman’s celebrated anthropological scholarship on Syria, his research on tangible and intangible forms of heritage in the Gulf was revelatory and pathbreaking. In particular, writing alongside historian James Onley, his highly cited explanation in “Shaikhly Authority in the Pre-Oil Gulf” (2006) of how earlier Gulf rulers successfully leveraged tribal and religious legitimation (and then buttressed their legitimacy with consensus or consultative politics) has helped educate numerous scholars exploring other non-material aspects of the social contracts or “ruling bargains” in the region. Indeed, this has undoubtedly fed into the broader literature on Arab authoritarianism, demonstrating alternative Gulf forms of contemporary neo-patrimonialism to those witnessed in Egypt, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere.

*Neha Vora, American University of Sharjah, UAE:*



Sulayman Khalaf was one of the first anthropologists I met who worked on the UAE and he had both a personal and academic impact on my work. He was living in Dubai when I arrived as a graduate student to conduct my dissertation research in 2006, and immediately took me under his wing. Knowing I was living on my own on a limited budget, he would regularly invite me over to his home for meals. His scholarship was also seminal to getting me to think about forms of nation-building in the Gulf, and how constructed heritage relied upon the labor of immigrants. Even to this day I continue to utilize his work and recommend it to my own students.

*Ahmed Kanna, University of the Pacific, California:*

I am saddened to hear about the passing of Sulayman. I first met him during the 1999–2000 academic year when he was a visiting scholar at Harvard, where I was a graduate student at the very start of my work on the Arabian Peninsula. He was the first anthropologist I had encountered who was conducting fieldwork in the Gulf, an experience that opened new paths in my thinking and imagining of a project in the region. I still remember fondly his lectures on camel husbandry and his concept of “the image of the unlimited good” in the Gulf. He was also a materialist who centered the working class and labor in his cultural analyses, another approach which inspired my own. Finally, he was a warm and generous host who helped me connect with local scholarly communities in Dubai and Sharjah during my fieldwork and invited me often to his home for coffee and meals. I will miss him very much.

*Abdullah A. Yateem, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International & Energy Studies (Derasat):*

I knew Sulayman Khalaf, as a dear friend and colleague, since I met him in Dubai during one of my visits there in the early 1990s. My relationship with him deepened on an academic and personal level throughout his work, moving between Kuwait, the Emirates, Bahrain, and Britain. Sulayman was generous in his relationships with his colleagues and friends, keen to communicate and maintain the flame of friendship and fellowship even in the last months of his life. Over the years, we have shared many experiences on the challenges of ethnographic fieldwork in Arab societies in the Gulf, as well as experiences and innovative approaches to teaching anthropology in the Arab Gulf universities. I am deeply grateful to Sulayman for the knowledge and experience that I have benefited from.

*Baqer Al-Najjar, University of Bahrain (retired):*

I first met Sulayman Khalaf in the early 1980s when, as a PhD student at Durham University, I visited Kuwait to attend a conference on foreign labour in the Gulf. During my visit, he kindly invited me to talk about my PhD research to his students at Kuwait University. After I joined the University of Bahrain in 1984, we would meet up regularly at conferences in Kuwait, UAE, and Britain, and of course worked together for two years when Sulayman joined my university in 2006. Our first publications appeared together in the same journal, *Majallat al-‘ulūm al-*

*ijtimā' iyya* [Journal of Social Sciences] 13.4 (Winter 1985), published by Kuwait University. Sulayman spent most of his life in the Arab Gulf and was deeply interested in the ways oil has influenced Gulf society. His work on this subject has greatly enriched Gulf Studies, for which he was held in high esteem around the world. He is dearly missed.



**Figure 18:** Sulayman with Abdullah Yateem (anthropologist, right), Baquer Al-Najjar (sociologist, left), and James Onley (historian, far left). Taken in Manama in April 2007, when Sulayman was an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Bahrain

*Charles Price, Ahlia University, Bahrain (retired):*

Sulayman Khalaf and his wife Barbara Hayward, like ourselves, were long-term Gulf residents: they in Dubai and later Abu Dhabi, and we (still) in Bahrain. I first met them in Dubai on 4 March 2005 where, with characteristic generosity, they were hosting the wedding reception of a friend, James Onley, whom I had first met in Bahrain. Little did I know that this was to be the beginning of a long friendship. Not long after that, Sulayman came to work at the University of Bahrain for a couple of years (2006–08), and we found that we had a lot in common, he being a Syrian married to an Englishwoman, and I English and married to a Bahraini. Sulayman became an enthusiastic member of our rambling group here, and even joined us for some sessions of Scottish dancing; and Barbara, although still in Dubai, was able to come to Bahrain to sing with the Manama Singers in a couple of concerts. After Sulayman returned to the Emirates, he and Barbara cemented the friendship by having us to stay a number of times in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and latterly in Exeter, on each occasion taking great trouble to show us many places of local interest. It was therefore with the greatest of sadness that we learnt of Sulayman's stroke while still in the Emirates, and the subsequent loss of a very dear and faithful friend in March 2023.

## Appendix A: Education

- 1972 BA in Sociology and Anthropology (with distinction), American University of Beirut (AUB).
- 1975 MA in Sociology and Anthropology, AUB. Thesis: “Tribal Politics and Leadership in the Raqqa Region of Syria”. Summary: A study of politics and change in two tribal communities, the Fed‘ān and the ‘Afādla tribes, including their traditional tribal structure. Advisor: G.J. (Gerald) Obermeyer, Department of Sociology & Anthropology.
- 1981 PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Dissertation: *Family, Village and the Political Party: Articulation of Social Change in Contemporary Rural Syria*. Summary: A study of Ḥāwī al-Hawā, a rural village in northern Syria 10 kilometers west of Raqqa, during the 1940s–70s. PhD committee: John Kennedy (chairperson), Sally Moore, Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid-Marsot, Carlos G. Vélez-Ibáñez, and George Sabagh.

## Appendix B: Publications

### 1. Books

- 1992 [\*Al-anthrūbūlūjiyā al-siyāsiyya: dirāsa naqdiyya li-al-ittijāhāt wa-al-manāhij fī al-anthrūbūlūjiyā al-siyāsiyya\* \[Political Anthropology: A Critical Study of the Trends and Approaches in Political Anthropology\]](#) (Kuwait: Academic Publications Council, Kuwait University), 97 pages. Summary: This study critiques the five dominant approaches in political anthropology: the genetic-evolutionary approach, the structural-functional approach, the dynamist approach, the processual approach, and the political economy approach. Special attention is given to the structural-functional and processual approaches due to their widespread use among political anthropologists. The study begins by identifying the core theoretical principles and tenets of each approach over the past 50 years. It then examines the historical, economic, and political contexts that underpin the theories and methodologies associated with each approach. Finally, the study assesses the analytical strengths and relevance of each approach. The five approaches are presented in historical sequence to highlight the evolution of intellectual debate surrounding theoretical issues and models in political anthropology since the 1940s. Despite their limitations, each approach has made a distinct contribution to anthropology and the broader social sciences.
- 2013 [\*Al-Saqārah: turāth insānī hayy. Al-milaff al-duwalī al-mushtarak li-idrāj al-Saqārah fī al-qā‘imah al-tamthīliyah li-al-turāth al-thaqāfi ghayr al-māddī li-al-bashariyah fī al-Yūniskū\* \[Falconry: A Living Human Heritage. The Joint International Dossier for the Inclusion of Falconry in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity\]](#), co-authored with Nāsir ‘Alī al-Bākhshī Al-Ḥimyarī (lead author) and Ismā‘īl ‘Alī Al-Fuḥayl (Abu Dhabi: Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, 2013), 458 pages. Abstract: This was the UAE government’s application to UNESCO to inscribe falconry on its Intangible



Cultural Heritage of Humanity list in an effort to recognize falconry's historical and cultural importance and to promote its practice.

- 2021 *Social Change in Syria: Family, Village, and Political Party*, St Andrews Syrian Studies Series (Abingdon: Routledge), 360 pages. Summary: Based on Sulayman Khalaf's 1981 PhD dissertation, this is a study of Ḥawī al-Hawā, a rural village in northern Syria 10 kilometers west of Raqqa, during the 1940s–70s. It examines agrarian transformations in land distribution that deeply affected social and political relations in the village. It mixes historical records with villagers' experience, and the ethnographer's pen with actors' voices, connecting ethnography with social history and political economy in a way that brings to the fore how change and continuity, events and structures, are dialectically related in complex and unexpected ways. *Social Change in Syria* is divided into three parts: (1) a review of the historical, socio-economic, and political changes in Syria since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, (2) life histories of particular actors and their perspectives on social change, and (3) an analysis and an update, which reflects on the impact of the Syrian civil war and the village's occupation by ISIS during 2013–17.

## 2. Articles

- 1985 “Qirā'a naqdiyya li-al-anmāt wa-istikhdāmātihā fī 'anthrūbūlūjiyyat mujtama'āt al-Sharq al-'Awsaṭ” [A Critical Reading of Patterns and Their Uses in the Anthropology of Middle Eastern Societies], *Majallat al-'ulūm al-ijtimā'iyya* [Journal of Social Sciences] 13.4 (Winter), pp. 369–399. Note: A Kuwait University journal.
- 1987 “The Emergence of the Oil Welfare State: The Case of Kuwait”, co-authored with Hassan Hammoud (Kuwait University), *Dialectical Anthropology* 12.3 (September), pp. 343–357.
- 1990 “Settlement of Violence in Bedouin Society”, *Ethnology* 29.3 (July), pp. 225–243; Reprinted in Dawn Chatty and William Young (eds), *Bedouin: MJ04* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, Yale University, 2009), available online at <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu>.
- 1992 “Gulf Societies and the Image of Unlimited Good”, *Dialectical Anthropology* 17.1 (March), pp. 53–84.
- 1991 “Land Reform and Social Classes in Rural Syria”, in Richard Antoun and Donald Quataert (eds), *Syria: The Society, Culture, and Polity* (Albany: State University of New York Press), pp. 63–78. Notes: This edited book is a compilation of papers presented at the *Syria: The Society, Culture, and Polity of a Complex Middle Eastern Nation* conference held at the State University of New York in Binghamton in April 1987. Other contributing authors include Richard Antoun, Philip Khoury, Raymond Hinnebusch, Fuad Khuri, Salih Atoma, Patrick Seale, and Helena Cobban.
- 1993 “Cheikhs, paysans et membres du parti Ba'th: Changements politiques en Syrie du nord” [Shaikhs, Peasants and Members of the Ba'th Party: Political Changes in Northern Syria], in Riccardo Bocco, Ronald Jaubert, and Françoise Métral (eds), *Steppes d'Arabies: États, pasteurs, agriculteurs et commerçants: le devenir des zones sèches* [Steppes of Arabia: States, Pastoralists, Farmers, and Merchants: The Future of Drylands] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, reprinted in 2014 and 2016 by Graduate Institute Publications in Genève), pp. 178–194. Notes: This edited book is a compilation of papers presented at the *Devenir des steppes d'Arabie et du*

- Bilād al-Shām* [The Evolution of the Steppes of Arabia and Bilad al-Sham] conference held at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris in April 1991. Other contributing authors include Soraya Altorki, Olivier Aurenche, Riccardo Bocco, Jacques Cauvin, Donald P. Cole, Ugo Fabietti, Nicolas Gavrielides, Jean Hannoyer, Jörg Janzen, Ronald Jaubert, Michael Jones, Fidelity Lancaster, William Lancaster, Norman Lewis, Françoise Métral, Jean Métral, David Nygaard, Edgard Pisani, Paul Sanlaville, Tareq Tell, Timothy Treacher, Christian Velud, and John C. Wilkinson.
- 1996 “Khaṣā’iṣ al-taḥaddur fī al-madīna al-Khalījīyya” [Characteristics of Urbanization in the Gulf City], *Kitāb al-Rāfid* (Sharjah: Ministry of Culture and Information Publications), No. 5, pp. 39–51. Note: Based on the proceedings of the *The City and Its Peripheries in the Arab Gulf: Cultural Development in Rural and Urban Communities* conference held in Sharjah in November 1995.
- 1997 “Aḍwā’ ‘alā masīrat anthrūbūlūjī ‘Arabī: ḥiwār ma’a Ḥusayn Fahīm” [Dialogues with an Arab Anthropologist: The Journey of Hussein Fahim], *Al-Baḥrain al-thaqāfiyya* 14 (October), pp. 76–87.
- 1997 “Shaykhs, Peasants and Party Comrades: Political Change in Northern Syria”, in Martha Mundy and Basim Musallam (eds), *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), chapter 10 (pp. 110–122). Notes: Also published in Nicholas Hopkins and Saad Eddin Ibrahim (eds), *Arab Society: Class, Gender, Power and Development* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1997), chapter 16 (pp. 311–326). *The Transformation of Nomadic Society in the Arab East* is based on the proceedings of *Devenir des steppes d’Arabie et du Bilād al-Shām* conference held at the Institute of the Arab World in Paris in April 1991. The chapters in this book are different from those in Riccardo Bocco, Ronald Jaubert, and Françoise Métral (eds), *Steppes d’Arabies: États, pasteurs, agriculteurs et commerçants: le devenir des zones sèches* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), in which Sulayman had a similar chapter. Other contributing authors include Paul Sanlaville, Jacques Cauvin, A.V.G. Betts, K.W. Russell, Norman Lewis, John C. Wilkinson, Christian Velud, Ugo Fabietti, Ronald Jaubert, Françoise Métral, Donald P. Cole, Soraya Altorki, Jörg Janzen, M.J. Jones, T.T. Treacher, and Riccardo Bocco.
- 1998 “Al-‘awlama wa al-huwiyya al-thaqāfiyya: taṣawwur naẓarī li-dirāsāt namūdḥaj mujtama’ al-Khalīj wa al-Jazīra al-‘Arabiyya” [Globalization and Cultural Identity: A Theoretical Conceptualization for the Study of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Society], *Al-Majalla al-‘Arabiyya li-l-‘ulūm al-insāniyya* [The Arab Journal of Humanities] 16.61 (Winter), pp. 52–93.
- 1999 “Camel Racing in the Arab Gulf: Notes on the Evolution of a Traditional Cultural Sport”, *Anthropos* 94.1–3 (March), pp. 85–106.
- 1999 “Migrants’ Strategies of Coping and Patterns of Accommodation in the Oil-Rich Gulf Societies: Evidence from the UAE”, co-authored with Saad Alkobaisi (UAE University), *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26.2 (November), pp. 271–298.
- 1999 “Al-ab‘ād al-maḥalliyya wa al-‘ālamīyya li-iḥyā’ al-turāth: ḥālat sibāq al-hijīn fī al-Khalīj” [Local and Global Dimensions of Heritage Revival: The Case of Camel Racing in the Gulf], in *Waqā’i’ al-mujtama’ al-Imārātī fī siyāq al-taḥawwulāt al-maḥalliyya wa al-‘ālamīyya* [Proceedings of Emirati Society within the Context of Local and Global Transformations] conference (Al-Ain: UAE University

Publications).

- 1999 "Thaqāfat sibāq al-hijin fī al-Khalīj al-‘Arabī" [Culture of Camel Racing in the Arab Gulf], *Al-Bahrain al-thaqāfiya* 20 (May), pp. 46–56.
- 2000 "Poetics and Politics of Newly Invented Traditions in the Gulf: Camel Racing in the United Arab Emirates", *Ethnology* 39.3 (Summer), pp. 243–261.
- 2001 "United Arab Emirates", in *Encyclopedia of Countries and Their Cultures* 4 (New York: Macmillan References/Gale Group), pp. 2325–2331, available online at [www.everyculture.com/To-Z/United-Arab-Emirates.html](http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/United-Arab-Emirates.html).
- 2002 "Globalization and Heritage Revival in the Gulf: An Anthropological Look at Dubai Heritage Village", *Journal of Social Affairs* 19.75 (Fall), pp. 277–306.
- 2005 "National Dress and the Construction of Emirati Cultural Identity", *Journal of Human Sciences* (Bahrain University), Issue 11 (Winter), pp. 230–267.
- 2006 "The Evolution of the Gulf City Type, Oil and Globalization", in John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, and Mohammed Al-Mutawa (eds), *Globalization and the Gulf* (London: Routledge), chapter 14 (pp. 244–265). Notes: Based on the proceedings of *The Social Sciences in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Shifting Boundaries and Paradigms* conference held at the American University of Sharjah on 6 February 2005, sponsored by the Sociological Association of the UAE. Other contributing authors include John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Mohammed Al-Mutawa, Steve Smith, Tim Niblock, Ismail Sirageldin, Khaldoun Al Naqeeb, Gaber Asfour, Michael Hudson, Rodney Wilson, Abdulkhaleq Abdulla, Fred Halliday, Paul Dresch, and John Willoughby.
- 2006 "Shaikhly Authority in the Pre-Oil Gulf: A Historical-Anthropological Study", co-authored with James Onley (American University of Sharjah / University of Exeter), *History and Anthropology* 17.3 (September), pp. 189–208.
- 2006 "Ethnography and the Culture of Tolerance in Al-Andalus", co-authored with John W. Fox and Nada Mourtada-Sabbah (American University of Sharjah), *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 7, pp. 146–171.
- 2008 "The Nationalization of Culture: Kuwait's Invention of Pearl Diving Heritage" in Alanoud Alsharekh and Robert Springborg (eds), *Popular Culture and Political Identity in the Arab Gulf States* (London: Saqi Books), chapter 3 (pp. 40–70). Notes: Based on the proceedings of a conference by the same name held at the Middle East Institute in London in February 2007. Other contributing authors include Fred Lawson, Hasan Al-Naboodah, Nadia Rahman, Mohammed Alkhozai, Nimah Ismail Nawwab, Abdullah Baabood, John W. Fox, Nada Mourtada-Sabbah, Mohammed Al-Mutawa, Tim Walters, Christopher Davidson, Amr Hamzawy, and Lubna Ahmed Al-Kazi.
- 2010 "Dubai Camel Market Transnational Workers: An Ethnographic Portrait", *City & Society* 22.1 (June), pp. 97–118.
- 2017 "An Emirate Goes Global: The Cultural Making of Abu Dhabi", in Ulf Hannerz and Andre Gingrich (eds), *Small Countries: Structures and Sensibilities* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), chapter 13 (pp. 267–282).

### C. Textbook chapters

- 1994 "Al-tahawwulāt al-iqtisādiyya" [Economic Transformations], *Al-Mujtama‘ al-*



*‘Arabī al-mu‘āṣir* [Contemporary Arab Society] (Al-Ain: UAE University)

- 1995 “Khaṣā’iṣ al-anthrūbūlūjiyā: taqṣīmātuhū al-far‘iyya wa-ṣilatuhū bi-l-ḥayāh al-mu‘āṣira” [Characteristics of Anthropology: Its Subdivisions and Relevance to Modern Life], *Al-anthrūbūlūjiyā: muqaddima ‘amma* [Anthropology: A General Introduction] (Dubai: Dar Al-Qalam Publishers), chapter 1 (pp. 7–44).
- 1995 “Asālīb wa-anmāt al-baḥṭh al-anthrūbūlūjī” [Methods and Styles of Anthropological Research], *Al-anthrūbūlūjiyā: muqaddima ‘amma* [Anthropology: A General Introduction] (Dubai: Dar Al-Qalam Publishers), chapter 2 (pp. 45–84).
- 1997 “Al-tanmiyya fī al-Imārāt al-‘Arabiyya al-Muttaḥida” [Development in the United Arab Emirates], *Al-takḥṭīṭ wa-al-tanmiyya al-ijtimā’iyya* [Planning and Social Development] (Al-Ain). Co-authored.

#### D. Book reviews

- 1984 Review (in Arabic) of Jacqueline Ismael, *Kuwait: Social Change in Historical Perspective* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), in *Majallat al-‘ulūm al-ijtimā’iyya* [Journal of Social Sciences] 12.3 (Autumn), pp. 257–268.
- 1986 Review (in Arabic) of Ishaq Al-Qutub, *Urban Growth and Development in Gulf States* (Al-Matbouat Press, 1980) in *Al-Majalla al-‘Arabiyya li-l-‘ulūm al-ijtimā’iyya* [The Arab Journal of Social Sciences] 1.2, pp. 361–362.
- 1987 Review (in Arabic) of *Fields of Anthropology: Selected Essays in Cultural Anthropology*, translated by Al-Sayed Hamed and Aliya Hussein, in *Majallat al-‘ulūm al-ijtimā’iyya* [Journal of Social Sciences] 15.2 (Summer), pp. 288–296.
- 1987 Review (in Arabic) of Claude Levi-Strauss, *Race and History* (Paris: Unesco, 1958), in *Al-Majalla al-‘Arabiyya li-l-‘ulūm al-insāniyya* [The Arab Journal of Humanities] 5.18, pp. 220–230.
- 1992 Review of Emrys L. Peters, *The Bedouin of Cyrenaica: Studies in Personal and Corporate Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), in *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 57.1–2, pp. 108–110.
- 1997 Review (in Arabic) of Maha Al-Muqaddam, *Village Society: A Study of Traditionalism and Modernization* (Beirut: University Publishing Establishment, 1995), in *Al-Majalla al-‘Arabiyya li-l-‘ulūm al-insāniyya* [The Arab Journal of Humanities] 58, pp. 312–321.

## Appendix C: Academic career

### 1. Positions

- 1972–1974 Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, American University of Beirut (AUB)
- 1975–1976 Teacher of Social Science subjects, Choueifat National College, Beirut
- 1976–1977 Instructor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, AUB
- 1978–1979 Associate Teaching Assistant, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

1979–1980	Fellowship, Department of Anthropology, UCLA
1981–1990	Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Kuwait University
1991	Visiting Professor, Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, Sweden
1991–1992	Visiting Professor, Department of Sociology, United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)
1992–1994	Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology, UAEU
1994–1999	Associate Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology, UAEU
1999–2000	Visiting Scholar, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University
2000	Visiting Professor, Department of International Studies, American University of Dubai
2001–2006	Associate Professor of Anthropology, Department of Sociology, University of Sharjah
2006–2008	Associate Professor of Anthropology, Department of Social Sciences, University of Bahrain
2008–2015	Expert on Intangible Heritage, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), which became the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) in February 2012. TCA Abu Dhabi was renamed the Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT Abu Dhabi) in 2017.

## 2. Fieldwork

Summer 1972	Tribal leadership among the Fed‘ān and ‘Afādla tribes of the Jazira, northern Syria
Summer 1973	Tribal leadership among the Fed‘ān and ‘Afādla tribes of the Jazira, northern Syria
Summer 1974	Research on Ḥāwī al-Hawā village on the Euphrates River, Raqqa region, Syria
1981–1990	Social and cultural topics in contemporary Kuwaiti society
1991–2015	Global culture and its effects on Gulf Arab society in the UAE
Summer 1992	Alexandria School of Social Anthropologists, Egypt
1998–2007	Migrant workers in the UAE
2008–2015	Heritage and nation building in the UAE
2006–2008	Shī‘ī religious life and rituals in Bahrain
2007–2008	British expatriate social and cultural life in Bahrain

## 3. PhD and MA supervision

1995–1997	Local supervisor for Robert Lovelace, a Canadian part-time PhD student at the University of Central England, Birmingham, UK, whose research project was entitled <i>A Culturally Sensitive Framework for Use in the Design of Individualized Management Programs for UAE Nationals</i> .
1997–1999	Local research supervisor for Pernilla Ouis, a PhD student from Lund

University, Sweden, whose research project was entitled *Human Ecology in the UAE*.

- 2001–2002 Local research advisor for Christopher Davidson, a PhD student from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, whose research project was entitled *United Arab Emirates: A Study in Survival*.
- 2002–2003 Local research advisor for Bernard Ghoul, a PhD student from the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po), France, whose research project was entitled *Globalization and the Evolving Polity of Dubai Emirate*.
- 2002–2004 Local research advisor for Ahmed Kanna, a PhD student from Harvard University, USA, whose research project was entitled *Globalization, Malls, Culture and Identity in Dubai*.
- 2006–2007 Local research advisor for Neha Vora, a PhD student from the University of California, Irvine, USA, whose research project was entitled *Participatory Exclusion: The Emirati State, Forms of Belonging, and Dubai's Indian Middle Class*.
- 2008–2009 Local research advisor at ADACH for three PhD students and one MA student and conducting fieldwork on the history, anthropology, and media of the UAE.
- 2008–2011 Local research supervisor for Maria Kastrinou, a PhD student at Durham University, UK, whose research project was entitled *Intimate Bodies, Violent Struggles: The Poetics and Politics of Nuptiality in Syria*.

#### **4. Courses taught**

*American University of Beirut, 1972–74 & 1976–77:*

- Introduction to Anthropology
- Introduction to Sociology
- Peasant Society
- Religion and Society
- Cultural Change

*Chouiefat National College, Beirut, 1975–76:*

- Social Science subjects

*University of California, Los Angeles, 1978–79:*

- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

*Kuwait University, 1981–90:*

- Introduction to Anthropology
- Anthropological Theory
- Economic Anthropology
- Introduction to Sociology
- Arab Society and Culture
- Bedouin and Peasant Societies
- Culture and Personality
- Social Control



*Stockholm University, 1991:*

- The Middle East

*United Arab Emirates University, 1991–99:*

- Introduction to Anthropology
- Social/Cultural Anthropology
- Social Anthropology
- Folk Heritage
- Arab Society
- Emirates Society
- Bedouin and Rural Societies
- Social Structure
- Contemporary Social Issues
- Sociology of Development

*American University in Dubai, 2000:*

- Heritage Revival in the Gulf

*University of Sharjah, 2001–06:*

- Introduction to Anthropology
- Introduction to Sociology
- Sociological Texts in English
- Introduction to Social Research Methods
- Popular Culture
- Arab Society
- Ethnic Relations and Minorities
- Contemporary Social Issues

*University of Bahrain, 2006–08:*

- Social and Cultural Anthropology
- History of Anthropological Thought
- Ethnography
- Supervising graduating students' research projects

## **5. Work at Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), 2008–15**

- Expert/consultant on heritage and culture.
- Supervised junior researchers conducting research on heritage topics.
- Organised research training seminars and workshops.
- Organised and participated in conferences on heritage-related issues and topics.
- Prepared the UAE's "elements of intangible cultural heritage" submission to UNESCO for inscription on its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.
- Worked for two years (2008–10) as a heritage expert in the UNESCO Subsidiary Body that evaluated Intangible Cultural Heritage nominations.
- A member of five UAE delegations to major UNESCO meetings.

## Appendix D: Websites

**Sulayman Khalaf's website and CV:**

[www.sulaymankhalaf.com](http://www.sulaymankhalaf.com)

**Sulayman Khalaf's Academia.edu page:**

<https://adach.academia.edu/SulaymanKhalaf?swp=rr-ac-1415914>