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# The Living in History Effect and the Intergenerational Transmission of Memories

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# **The Living in History Effect and The Intergenerational Transmission Memories**

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# The Living in History Project

- Under most circumstances, people employ personally-defined autobiographical periods to date their memories (marriage, illness, children, trips)
- In contexts of collective upheaval individuals date their memories according to historically-defined autobiographical periods.
  - Historically-Defined Autobiographical periods

# Historically-Defined Autobiographical Periods and their Psycho-Social Relevance

Historical events deeply shape the temporal structure of autobiographical memories

Historical and personal memories are deeply intertwined in memory networks and thus can be easily invoked in contexts of group or interpersonal conflict.



# The Two staged Cueing Procedure-Phase 1

- **Materials:**

- 20 neutral cue words:

*automobile, bag, ball, book, box, bread, chair, coat, dog, pencil, piano, pill, radio, river, snow, spoon, stone, street, tree, window*

- **Task:**

- recall an autobiographical event
  - related to cue word
  - specific
  - at least one week old
- write brief description on index card

# Phase 2 Event Dating Categories

## Date your autobiographical memories

*Coding of the dated memories*

- *Personal/generic*
- *Historical*
- *Pop/sports/weather*
- *Displacement/Migration*

TABLE 2

Examples of reported memories, verbal dating protocols, and their assigned content categories

<i>Phase 1</i>		<i>Phase 2</i>		
<i>Cue</i> →	<i>Reported Memory</i> →	<i>Verbalised Date Estimates</i>	<i>Response Type</i>	<i>Sample</i>
Suitcase	I forgot my suitcase in front of a store and it had important papers in it.	It was before the Aoun war approximately . . . uh in 87. It was before the war. In 1985 or 1986.	Historical	Beirut
Coat	Brother borrowed my newly bought coat and took it with him when he went to Greece.	I bought it when I first went to the USA . . . I know the date because I went in 1975	Displacement	Beirut
Chair	The chair . . . also during the war I bought a rocking chair . . . this reported event related to the humorous aspect of when women get together, they tend to forget what's around them.	In the Sanayeh area, the section close to El Entabli and the Law College, they used to display furniture for sale during the war. I bought a rocking chair for \$125. After some time, we had kids, and my wife was busy attending to her sister. The 2 older children, my daughter and her cousin, sat on the chair, which was turned over, pretending it was a slide. The chair broke. It was nice . . . bamboo, and whoever saw it would say that it was a loss. it was really nice. Only few people would pay \$125 for it	Spontaneous historical landmarking and phase 2 historical landmarking	Bi'qa
Radio	We were coming back from Syria to Beirut and I was listening to the "radio East" when I guy reported that he was on the Manara and there was a big explosion.	Yes, that was the <i>Eid</i> (member of the Lebanese parliament) explosion, in six no. it was in seven. 2007. It has been a year since the assassination.	Spontaneous historical landmarking and phase 2 historical landmarking	Beirut
Snow	Slipped and hurt head when it was snowing	In the year 1990 there was so much snow . . . it did not snow that much again . . . at that time it snowed a lot . . . Allah Akbar . . . it snowed a lot in 1990 and it did not snow that much again. they had to clear the snow	Pop culture/ Weather/ sport	Bi'qa
Rock	Some kids were chasing a mixed nuts salesman with rocks and I was hit	It was about 1963. I went into the army in 1965 and it was either before or after that	Military	Bi'qa

# Three empirical questions and a Method

1. Is the LiH effect stronger in groups who have experienced chronic upheaval?
2. Does the LiH effect wax and wane with the intensity of upheaval over time?
3. Are individual war experiences related to the strength of the LiH effect?

Location	N	# of women	Mean age	Age Range/Median
Beirut, Lebanon	22	10	56 years	51-77/ 57 years
Bi'qa, Lebanon	22	3	58.7 years	49-69/ 60 years



Figure 1. The percentage of dating protocols types per year for all dated events for the Beirut and Bi'qa samples

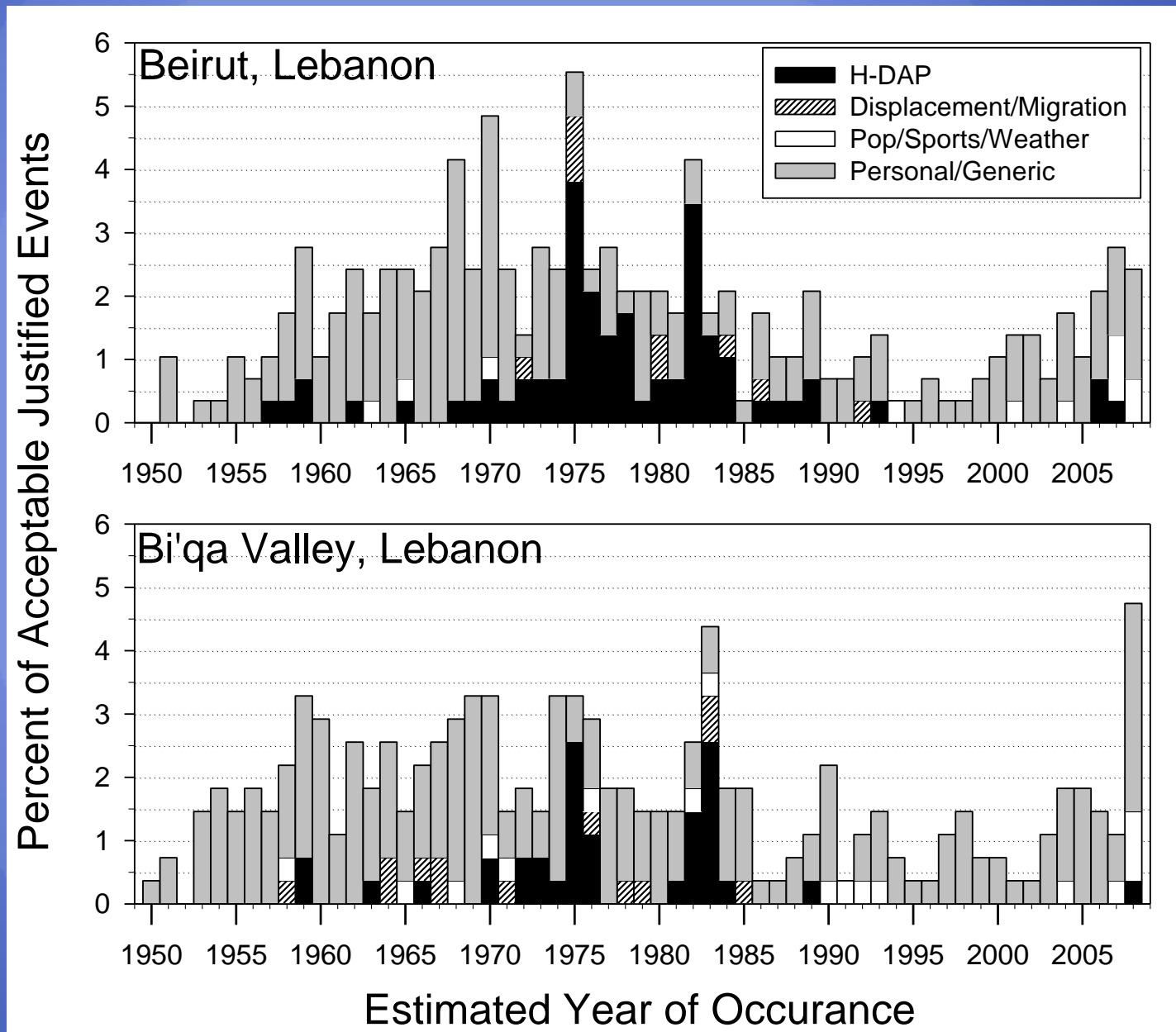


Table 4

*Severity and frequency of reported war events broken down by the 3 WEQ Composite Scores*

	<b>Beirut</b>		<b>Bi'qa</b>	
	Severity Scores	Frequency of Reported Events	Severity Scores	Frequency of Reported Events
	Mean(SD)		Mean (SD)	
<b>Close-Other Exposure Composite</b>				
House Damage	6.68(6.5)	38	5.00(5.8)	28
Bodily Injury	3.60(3.6)	22	8.90(6.6)	46
Kidnapping	1.50(2.7)	16	3.90(3.8)	37
Business Loss	2.50(3.3)	22	2.30(2.5)	19
<b>Sum</b>	<b>14.20</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>20.10</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Self Exposure Composite</b>				
House Damage	3.18(1.7)	23	2.10(2.4)	15
Bodily Injury	0.18(.58)	6	0.18(.58)	2
Kidnapping	0.09(.42)	1	0.45(1.5)	6
Business Loss	1.87(2.9)	16	1.82(1.5)	1
<b>Sum</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Displacement Composite</b>				
Number of Moves	1.80 (1.3)	40	0.77 (.81)	17
War Related Reasons for displacement	2.20(1.6)	8	0.77(.81)	1
<b>Sum</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>18</b>

# Three empirical questions

1. Is the LiH effect stronger in groups who have experienced chronic upheaval?

YES

2. Does the LiH effect wax and wane with the intensity of upheaval over time?

YES

3. Are individual war experiences related to the strength of the LiH effect?

**YES**, but only specific personalised experiences seem to be related to the LiH effect.

# Study 2

## Young Adults Living in Chronic Conflict and H- DAP formation

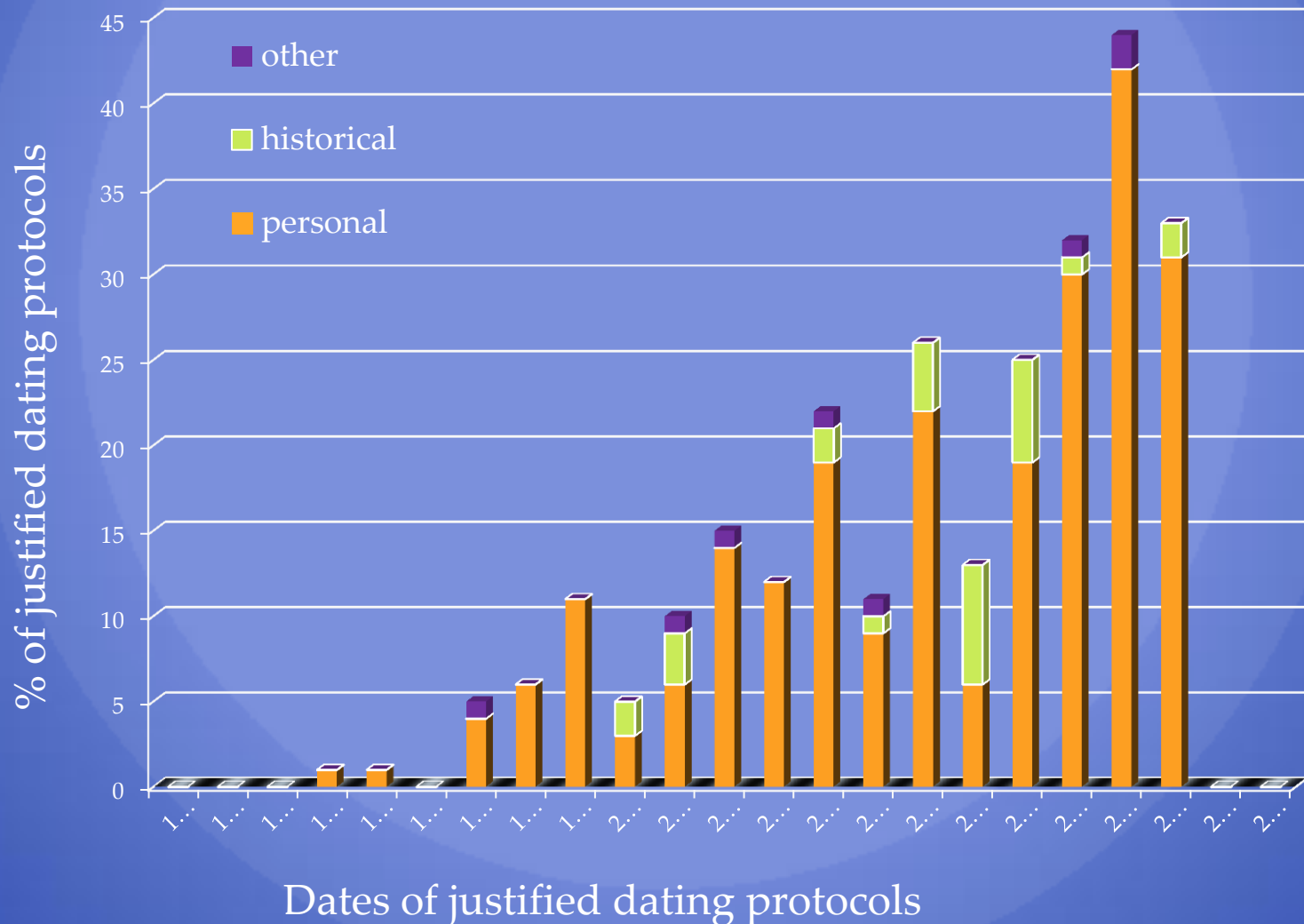
- 1) Do young adults living in contexts of chronic conflict show an LiH effect ?
- 2) Do youth in these contexts recall parents' transmitted historical memories and do they use H-DAPs to date these memories?

# Youth and the Living in History Effect

Location	N	Mean age	Age Range/Median
South, Lebanon	19	21years	17-24 years



# LiH-young adult sample



# Intergenerational Transmission Task: Study 3

**Phase 1**: recall the 10 most important memories that your mother and father have passed on to you.

**Phase 2**: while talking aloud, estimate the date in which the events in the memory originally occurred.

**Phase 3**: judgments about each memory

# Study 3: Highlights

*Percentage of a Memories Recalled (n=271) from both Parents' Lives*


<b>Event</b>	<b>%</b>
Education/Career*	21.0
Immigration	--
Birth of Children*	3.7
Death of Family Member*	1.4
Marriage*	8.8
Historical	10.7
Children's Accomplishments	5.5
Gain/Loss of Possessions	--
Weather	.4
Friendship	5.2
Family Related	30.3
Military	--
Car Accident	2.6
Health – Self*	2.9
Health – Other	.4
Big Trip*	1.4
Grandchildren*	--
Religious/Cultural Events	1.8
Divorce*	--
Sports	2.6
Pets	1.1





# Study 3: Highlights

*Percentage of Dating Strategies (n=234) Used for Estimating Event Dates from Both Parents' Lives*

<b>Dating Strategy</b>	<b>%</b>
Calendar Knowledge ( <i>Age, Birthday</i> )	80.3
Transitions ( <i>Marriage, Immigration</i> )	6.8
Possessions ( <i>House, Car</i> )	--
Contemporary Culture ( <i>Sports, Weather</i> )	.8
Historical Reference ( <i>War/conflict, displacement</i> )	12.0 

### Mean Responses on 4 rating scales\* for Transmitted Memories

	Frequency of Transmission?	Material Impact	Psychological impact	Related to Public event
Non-Historical Memories	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.8
Historical Memories	2.4	3.5	3.0	3.7

\* Not at All

1

2

3

4

5

A Lot

# Summary

- Historical events can be transformed into cognitive landmarks which shape the temporal structure of autobiographical
- Historically-defined autobiographical periods are significantly present in adult and youth samples living in contexts of protracted conflict.
- Youth groups that show a strong LiH effect also report more historically transmitted memories (from parents) and use historical landmarks to date these memories.

Thank you

Slides-if need be for  
discussion and Q and A



Table 3

Mean H-DAPs by Group and Time Period

	Pre Civil War (pre 1975)	Civil War (1975-1991)	Israeli Invasion (1982-1985)	Post Civil War (1991-2008)
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Beirut	.59(.95)	1.95(1.8)	.86 (1.2)	.14(.35)
Bi'qa	.40(.66)	.68(1.0)	.59(.85)	.05(.21)