

AUC Press: *What book(s) are you currently reading?*

I just finished a biography in French of Czar Nicholas II—an amazing period in Russian history—and I am reading *Heureux Comme Dieu en France* by Marc Dugain, a novel about the French Resistance, plus Alaa Al Aswany's *Nadi al-sayyarat* (The Automobile Club) in English translation. (I had started it in Arabic, but I am too slow a reader!)

AUC Press: *What is it about your field of expertise that really fascinates you?*

Cities in developing countries, especially their spatial expansion and metamorphoses, and the oftentimes ridiculous juxtaposition between the filthy rich, the 'middle classes,' and everyone else.

AUC Press: *How much time goes into research before you sit down to write a book?*

I first do a lot of reading on the subject, and then once I have an outline I do a round of research for each chapter or subject. Then I begin writing, and I usually find I need to do more fine-grained research to support my arguments. My own past experiences and related material are also sources of information.

AUC Press: *What were some of the biggest challenges you faced while writing your books?*

Trying to get useful facts about a subject and a balanced range of opinions. The internet is a very useful tool, but one needs to be very careful about selecting what pops up on Google.

AUC Press: *If you were writing your autobiography, what would the title be?*

I haven't thought of one, simply because I hardly think anyone would want to read the story of my life.

AUC Press: *What advice would you give to somebody starting in your field?*

Really, I can't think of useful advice.

AUC Press: *What book would you have liked to have written and why?*

I'm still producing books, so I hope to have time to eventually write pretty much all that pleases me. But then, more subjects always come up.