Cosmopolitanism and Urban diversity: 
Exploring dynamics of coexistence, inclusion and exclusion

City University of New York, Graduate Center
Sociology Lounge, 6th Floor 
365 5th Avenue New York, NY
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2-6 pm

Sponsored by the Magmet Séminaire, The CUNY Graduate Center, Office of the President and the Doctoral Programs in Sociology and Earth and Environmental Science, Masters Programs in Middle East Studies and International Migration Studies, and the Immigration Working Group.
Program

Welcome and Introduction: Philip Kasinitz, CUNY GC Sociology & Catherine Lejeune (Université Paris Diderot/USPC).

SESSION ONE. 2PM - 2:45PM.

Catherine Lejeune (Université Paris Diderot/USPC) & Camille Schmoll (IUF/Université Paris Diderot/USPC):

Paris and the « Migrant Crisis »: Is the French Capital a Welcoming or a Neutral city?

The UE is currently facing drastic changes in terms of migration/refugee flows and subsequent policy responses. The so-called “migrant crisis” starting in 2014 could have generated a turn in the definition of a common policy framework towards migrants and asylum seekers, but solidarity and cooperation between EU members totally failed. The crisis has only encouraged nationally-centered positions and produced an increasing securitization of migration issues. In contrast, some municipalities have emerged as “solidarity” or “refuge” cities while others have openly voiced their opposition to migrants’ hospitality. Based on a study of the State of the Art in current migration research, this paper examines the evolution of responses to the so-called “crisis” at the local level, and most particularly the role of the city of Paris in this changing landscape of migration policy. We claim that in order to fully understand the city responses to the presence of migrants and refugees, we need to look beyond the migrant issue and examine more general aspects of urban change such as gentrification, increasing inequalities, as well as the banal cosmopolitanization of certain specific areas.

Discussants: John Mollenkopf (CUNY GC, Political Science); Maura McGee, (CUNY GC Sociology).

SESSION TWO. 2:45PM - 3:30PM.

Laure Assaf (New York University in Abu Dhabi):

Second-generation Arab youths in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates: Urban practices, Status and Belonging in a Diverse Society
Despite being frequently labeled “transit states”, Gulf countries are host to many long-term foreign residents who do not have access to citizenship. These foreign residents, who in the United Arab Emirates account for a large majority of the total population (around 85%), are also the most visible inhabitants of a constantly-transforming urban space. Using the case-study of second-generation Arab youths in Abu Dhabi, my research explores the complexity of national hierarchies as they are intersected with tribal origin, ethnicity, gender and class, and their consequences on everyday interaction. At the same time, urban sociabilities in a cosmopolitan context contribute to create new forms of identification and belonging.

Discussant: **Kathryn S. Poots** (The Middle East Institute of Columbia University and CUNY ARC).

**Coffee Break 3:30 - 3:45pm.**

**SESSION THREE. 3:45PM - 4:30PM.**

**Amin Moghadam** (Princeton University):

*Cultural Entrepreneurship and Transnational Competences (Tehran-Dubai)*

The constitution of an international social capital is not self-evident for the elites of the Arab countries of the Gulf nor for the emerging post-revolutionary elite in Iran. The growth of these new urban elites corresponds to the emergence of new spheres of influence in which, what could be broadly defined as culture, is a useful instrument. Arts, education or even the promotion of new ways of consumption, constitute an ideal locus for the formation of new social and symbolic capitals that have contributed to the shaping of a new generation of cultural entrepreneurs in Iran as well as in the Arab countries of the Gulf. At the local level, the choice and legitimization of cultural activities that these individuals have embarked on have a direct relation with urban spaces where they are deployed. This is not surprising given the familiarity of the emerging cultural entrepreneur of this region with similar past experiences in the western context and the role of arts in urban transformation processes. In this presentation, I will take a closer look at the role of cultural entrepreneurs involved in the development of the art scene and its socio-spatial impact at the urban level.

Discussants: **Sharon Zukin** (CUNY GC, Sociology); **Anna Akasoy** (CUNY GC, Liberal Studies).

**SESSION FOUR 4:30PM - 5:15PM.**

**Yasser Elsheshtawy** (Columbia University) & **Delphine Pagès-El Karoui** (INALCO/USPC):

*Mapping Logics of Segregation in Dubai*
With 91% of its residents being foreigners, Dubai presents an extreme case of super-diversity, embedded in a non-integrative context, where non-nationals have no access to citizenship. Dubai is usually described, like other Gulf cities, as a strongly cosmopolitan/multicultural but segregated city (Elsheshtawy 2004, Kathiravelu 2016). The multiples narratives of Dubai as the non-western paragon of the emergent global city and of the post-modern metropolis built according to the « enclave » model (Davis 2006, Kanna 2011) have obscured the needs to empirically measure and map the concrete and contemporary dynamics of segregation. The renewal of studies of urban segregation (Pfirsch, Semi 2016) have not yet reached Gulf cities. Indeed, in-depth analysis of urban segregation in the Gulf are rare. In Dubai it is usually examined in a segmented perspective, through its more extreme urban forms: gated communities and labor camps. But even on these subjects, we lack very basic information: how many Dubai residents live in labor camps or gated communities? Are these types of housing dominant among Dubai inhabitants? The fact that social geographies of Gulf cities remain overlooked, is partly explained by the fact that access to quantitative data – and in particular at the intra-urban scale – are very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain, especially if it concerns foreign population which remains largely taboo. How can we map and measure urban segregation in Dubai?

Discussants: David Halle (CUNY GC Sociology); Syed Ali (Sociology, Long Island University-Brooklyn).

Reception 5 :15- 6 :00pm

Dinner for Participants, 7 :30pm.

Who we are

We are members of an international network of scholars working on the nexus between migration, cities and globalization. We come from a number of disciplines (geography, sociology, anthropology, urban planning, political science) and the universities we work at are based in various places: France (USPC), the US (Princeton, Columbia), the Gulf/UAE (NYU Abu Dhabi).

What we do

We are all engaged in a comparative perspective intending to participate in and enlarge the theoretical debate on the place and the role of migrants in the city, and on the way migrants contribute to place-making.

1. While we all investigate the fabric of diversity in the city, some of us (three in our group) are specialists of the Gulf region and are members of a research program called GulfDivercities. We have applied to grants from the French Agency of Research.
GulfDiversities
Urban diversity under tension in the Gulf:
Exploring dynamics of coexistence, inclusion and exclusion

Famed for spectacular cityscapes, Gulf cities are host to demographic, linguistic and religious plurality. However, unlike in Europe or North America, most foreign residents (30-90% of Gulf populations) cannot obtain citizenship. Given this non-integrative context, shaped by national and ethnic hierarchies and gender and class divisions, how does this extreme diversity produce complex everyday dynamics of coexistence, inclusion and exclusion in urban space? Using a multidisciplinary, comparative and multi-scalar approach, we will explore the local daily practices of interaction, integration and segregation in 5 Gulf cities (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Kuwait City, Manama). We aim to provide in-depth analysis of these fast-changing urban societies and to contribute to broader theoretical debates on urban diversity and the urban impact of international migrations. The project is coordinated by INALCO and the two other partners SUAD and NYUAD are based in the Emirates.

2. **MAGMET seminar**: we have set up a seminar called Magmet (Migrants in the Global Metropolis) held every two months, jointly organized by four of us: Delphine El Karoui (Inalco/USPC), Hélène Thiollet (Sciences Po), Catherine Lejeune & Camille Schmoll (Université Paris Diderot/USPC).

The seminar aims at articulating urban change, migration and globalization to better understand the fabric of world-cities with a high percentage of foreign-born and immigrant populations. It is open to the study of any world region and encourages theoretical debates and empirical research which intersects migration studies and urban studies with a view to capturing the making of urban diversity. International prominent scholars are regularly invited to share their on-going research and innovative thoughts with us. In the past two years, we have had presentations by such prominent speakers as Brenda Yeoh (National University of Singapore), Philip Kasinitz (CUNY), Ash Amin (Cambridge), Jennifer Robinson (University College London), Franck Mermier (CNRS, Paris) and Suzanne Hall (London School of Economics). We also hosted several international conferences in Paris: *Urban Cosmopolitanism: Methodological and Theoretical Issues* in 2016, *Cosmopolitanism Revisited: Comparative Perspectives on Urban Diversity from the Gulf and Beyond* in 2017 (Elijah Anderson from Yale and Philip Kasinitz from CUNY-Graduate Center participated in the conference).

3. **Academic collaboration** with the National University of Singapore

Two conferences were jointly organized both in Paris and Singapore: *Migrants in Global Cities: Experiences from Asia, the Middle East and Europe* (2017); *Migrants in the Globalizing city: spaces, places and mobiliteis in Asia, Europe and the Middle East* (2018). The collaborative
research with NUS includes co-publishing in major international journals (one special issue of City is due by the end of January 2019).

*The Sociétés plurielles website detailing the above mentioned conferences can be accessed in English at: https://societesplurielles.fr/en/research-topics/world-cities-comparative-approaches-to-cosmopolitanism-and-migration/

About the Workshop

1. Objectives
   We are here to present our current research hoping to share with scholars working on similar or related themes in different cultural and geographical settings. Our intent is to appreciate the extent to which our work resonates with their interests and whether CUNY scholars would be interested in engaging in collaborative research projects with us.

2. Format of the workshop
   Four presentations (20 mins each); one discussant for each paper (10mins X4); questions and answers (30 mins); discussion/exchanges over possible future collaboration (30mins).

About the participants

Syed Ali is Professor of Sociology at Long Island University-Brooklyn. His research interests are broadly focused on issues surrounding migration, immigrant assimilation, ethnic identity, and social inequality. He is the author of Dubai: Gilded Cage, and is currently working on a book with Margaret M. Chin called The Peer Effect: How to Build Better Schools and Improve Our Educational System.
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Laure Assaf is Assistant Professor of Arab Crossroads Studies and Anthropology at New York University Abu Dhabi, and member of the MAGMET seminar. Her research interests include youth, urbanity and migration in contemporary Emirati society and the broader Gulf region.
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Anna Akasoy is professor of Islamic intellectual history at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She teaches classes on Islamic intellectual history and the history, literature and culture of the Islamic world. Her research interests include the intellectual history of the medieval Islamic world, in particular the relationship between mysticism and philosophy, as well as contacts between the Islamic world and other cultures. Her current research projects include a study of the religious dimension of Alexander the Great in the Islamic tradition within the larger context of the classical heritage of the Middle East and Asia.
Contact: aakasoy@gc.cuny.edu
**Yasser Elsheshtawy** is a Professor of Architecture specializing in urban research in the Middle East and member of the MAGMET seminar. His scholarship focuses on urbanization in developing societies, informal urbanism, urban history and environment-behavior studies. He has a PhD in Architecture from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a Master in Architecture from Penn State and a Bachelor of Architecture from Cairo University. In addition to teaching at United Arab Emirates University he was appointed as the curator for the UAE Pavilion at the 15th Venice Architecture Biennale in 2016. He has authored more than 70 publications including Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle. Additionally, he edited The Evolving Arab City which received the 2010 IPHS (International Planning History Society) best book award and Planning Middle Eastern Cities. Most recently two chapters were published in the widely known City Planning and Urban Design Readers. His blog dubaization has been hailed by The Guardian as one of the notable city blogs in the world. Elsheshtawy is currently working on a book about the Arab Gulf City provisionally titled: “Temporary Cities.” He was invited to present his research at numerous international institutions and has been interviewed by many notable news and media outlets including National Geographic, The Guardian, Boston Globe and ArchDaily. Contact: ye2195@columbia.edu


**Catherine Lejeune** is associate professor of American studies at Paris Diderot University. She holds a PhD in American and Ethnic Studies from Paris Diderot. Her recent research lied with the determinants of irregular migration in a comparative perspective (reflected in the publication of “The Fabric of Irregular Labor Migration in 20th Century Western Europe and North America: a Comparative Approach”, *Labor History*, Vol.56, 2015, Iss 5). Her current interests lie with undocumented migrants in global cities, with a focus on US immigrant youths, their lives as almost ordinary city residents in a highly diverse context and as emergent political subjects. In the multidisciplinary program *Sociétés Plurielles* (Plural Societies/USPC, 2014-2019), she coordinates with Delphine El Karoui the research axis «World-Cities: Comparative Approaches to Cosmopolitanism». The project operates at the intersection of global studies, urban studies and migration research with a view to analysing urban change by linking it to mobilities and migration and gaining an understanding of the construction mechanisms of global cities. More specifically, it attempts to reflect on the concept of cosmopolitan cities and to record the empirical manifestations of cosmopolitanism through an approach that is multidisciplinary, comparative (in particular by varying the focus between the migratory contexts of integration and non-
integration in Europe, the United States and the Gulf) and situated (with a focus on the spaces constructed by cosmopolitan situations).
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Philip Kasinitz is Presidential Professor of Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center. He is currently director of the program in International Migration Studies (IMS). He chaired the CUNY doctoral program in Sociology from since 2001-2011 and 2014-2017. He specializes in immigration, ethnicity, race relations, urban social life, cultural sociology and the nature of contemporary cities. Among his publications are Caribbean New York for which he received the Thomas and Znaniecki Book Award in 1996, the co-authored book Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age received the Eastern Sociological Society’s Mirra Komarovsky Book Award in 2009 and the American Sociological Association Distinguished Scholarly Book Award in 2010, Global Cities, Local Streets (with Sharon Zukin and Xiangming Chen) and most recently Growing up Muslim in Europe and the United States (co–edited with Mehdi Bozorgmehr). He has also edited a special issue of the journal Ethnic and Racial Studies on Migration, Popular Music and the City, to be published later this year.
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Maura McGee is a doctoral student in the Sociology program at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her research focuses on immigration, race/ethnicity, and urban change in the United States and France. Her dissertation examines commercial gentrification in immigrant and racial minority neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Paris.
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Amin Moghadam is an Associate Research Scholar at the Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at Princeton University. He holds a PhD in Geography and Urban Studies from Lyon 2 University in France. Amin lectured on Urban and Migration Studies at Princeton University, Aix-Marseille University, Inalco (Institut National des langues et civilisations orientales) and Sciences Po Paris. His research and publications have focused on migration policy and practices, diaspora studies, circulation and regional integration in the Middle East, with the particular focus on the Gulf region (especially Iran and the United Arab Emirates). His current research centers around spatial dynamics related to artistic practices and the circulation of artists and cultural entrepreneurs in several cities of the Middle East. Besides his research and teaching activities, he has been consulting for several organizations such as the Louvre Abou Dhabi.
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John Mollenkopf is Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Sociology and Director of the Center for Urban Research at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He has authored or edited eighteen books on the role of immigration, race, and ethnicity in urban America, as well as urban policy and politics, including Unsettled Americans, co-edited with Manuel Pastor (Cornell University Press, 2016). His study of educational attainment, labor market outcomes, and political and civic involvement among second generation immigrant and native minority young adults in metropolitan New York, Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age, with Philip Kasinitz, Mary Waters, and Jennifer Holdaway (Russell
Sage Foundation Press, 2009) received the Distinguished Book Award from the American Sociological Association. He is completing a book on the impact of the rise of new immigrant communities on electoral politics in New York City from 2001 to the present. Contact: jmollenkopf@gc.cuny.edu

**Delphine Pagès-El Karoui** is an Associate Professor in geography at INALCO (National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations), in Paris, and member of the MAGMET seminar. She teaches Middle East geography at the Arabic Studies Department. Her research addresses Egyptian migrations (transnational networks and diasporas in Europe and the Gulf, imaginaries in literature and cinema...); the spatial dimensions of Arab revolutions; urban diversity and cosmopolitanism in Gulf cities. She recently obtained two grants to foster collaboration and organize conferences about Migrants in Global Metropolises, with the Asian Research Institute (ARI) of National University of Singapore (NUS). Since Oct. 2017, she has been working part-time as a project officer on for the General Directorate for Research and Innovation (DGRI) at the French Ministry of Higher Education. Contact: d.pageselkaroui@googlemail.com

**Kathryn Spellman Poots** is an Advance Research Collaborative (ARC) Fellow at CUNY's Graduate Center. She is also a Visiting Associate Professor at Columbia University's Middle East Institute and Associate Professor at Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations in London. Her research interests include Muslims in Europe and North America, the Iranian diaspora, transnational migration and gender studies. Her publications include the monograph: Religion and Nation: Iranian Local and Transnational Networks in Britain (Berghahn, Oxford and New York, 2005); the co-edited volumes: Gender, Governance & Islam: Women, Islam and the State Revisited (Edinburgh University Press, 2018); The Political Aesthetics of Global Protest: The Arab Spring and Beyond (Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and Ethnographies of Islam: Ritual Performances and Everyday Practices (Edinburgh University Press, 2014); and book chapters: “Second-Generation Muslims and the Making of British Shi’ism” in Kasinitz, P. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds.) Growing Up Muslim in Europe and North America, Routledge; and Spellman Poots, K. & Gholami, R. (2018) “Iranians in Great Britain: Integration, Cultural Production and Challenges of Identity” in Mobasher, M. (ed.) Iranians in Diaspora: Comparative Perspective on Iranian Immigrants in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe, University of Texas Press. Contact: kp2692@columbia.edu

**Camille Schmoll** is an associate professor in geography at University of Paris Diderot, member of the CNRS team “Géographie-cités” and a fellow of Institut Convergences Migrations. In 2017 she was also a visiting member of the scientific commission in charge of the permanent exhibition at Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration. Her research topics include migration policies; urban approaches to migration patterns; cosmopolitanism and borders; gender, generation and the family in international migration; qualitative methods. She published several articles in this field in international journals and co-edited the following books: Méditerranée. Frontières à la dérive (2018, Le Passager Clandestin); Migrations en Méditerranée (with Wihtol de Wenden and Thiollet, 2015, CNRS), Gender Generations and the Family within International Migration (with
Sharon Zukin is professor of sociology at the Graduate Center and Brooklyn College. Her work focuses on urban culture and economic change and includes the books *Loft Living*, *Landscapes of Power*, *The Cultures of Cities*, and *Naked City*. With Philip Kasinitz and Xiangming Chen, she directed a transnational project on local shopping streets that was published as *Global Cities, Local Streets: Everyday Diversity from New York to Shanghai*. Contact: SZukin@gc.cuny.edu