

## Cities and circulations: Challenging theoretical frameworks in Gulf histories and geographies Workshop proposal

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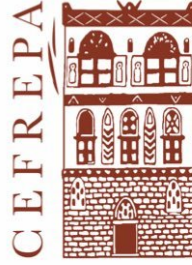
The workshop takes up Frederick Cooper’s challenge to bring “historiographies of Africa, Latin America and Asia into relationship with each other, avoiding the assumption that interaction simply means borrowing from apparently more developed historiographies.”<sup>1</sup> Beyond colonial times, various spaces and geographies may be entangled in the circulation of material and immaterial goods, services, and knowledge to and from the Gulf and the mobility of people. And while literature on these geographies claim to move beyond simple dichotomies since the writing of Cooper’s seminal text, scholars in this workshop interrogate the persistence of dichotomous theoretical frameworks such as coloniser-colonised, resistance-collaboration, modernity-tradition, western-non-western. To bring a more nuanced understanding of socio-political and economic processes that have shaped and still shape contemporary societies in the Gulf, they seek comparative insights from historiographies of other regions and focus on trans-regional circulation of people, ideas and information, capital and techniques, material and political cultures, etc.

By notably looking at circulations and mobilities across the so called “Global South” regions and societies, participants in this workshop will move beyond conservative notions of knowledge *appropriation* as well as liberal concepts of *inclusion* and *representation*. The workshop seeks to recentre the Gulf within larger imperial and colonial modes of administration (economic, cultural, linguistic, racial and administrative) and relations between and across empires. It also seeks to localise and historicise theoretical discussions in empirical contexts that have been less studied by post-colonial scholarship.

By doing so, the workshop revisits historical processes of knowledge production, immigration, and cultural exchange in colonial and post-colonial geographies of the Gulf. It also uncovers histories of community, migration, language/dialect, and hinterland denials in both the making of Gulf cities and the production of their histories. The aim is to foster novel investigations that question the positionality of different actors, that humanise the landscape, and that deconstruct persistent myths, material and immaterial structures, spaces and systems that limit a critical reading on the Gulf.

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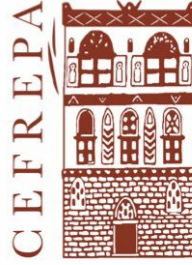
<sup>1</sup> Frederick Cooper, 1994. “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No. 5, pp. 1516-1545.



The curators invite scholars to contend with six broad themes within their fields and examine how these ideas shape their research.

1. Challenging the dichotomy between colonisers-colonised; resistance-collaboration as exclusive historical processes to understand how **institutions, cities, political economies** of the Gulf countries etc. were shaped as complex phenomena of **hybridisation notably through South-South circulations**
2. Recentring **Gulf cities** within the analysis of colonial- and post-colonial histories and uncovering the webs of connections, transfers and conflicts *within* empires (including non-British empires, pre-and post-British empires) but also *across* empires.
3. Questioning the **continuities and critical junctures in colonial and post-colonial histories** while looking for commonalities and metamorphoses of institutions, configurations, legislation, etc. and excavating remaining threads of colonial orders and mapping their transformation across these landscapes.
4. Questioning the **spaces** in which the Gulf/ Kuwait is considered to be part of and studied: Oceanic turn and the Middle-East, pre and post-colonial circulations from and to Africa, Gulf as an “exception”, relations with Europe-USA vs relations China and India, Cold War spaces of circulation of ideologies and models from Eastern Europe etc.
5. Discussing **immaterial circulations and transformations**: languages and literature; the different approaches and scholarly networks of writing history.
6. Revisiting and relocating **Gulf architecture and urban planning processes, ideas, and models** within global, regional, and local planning systems, land use governance and access to draw out continuities and exceptions that speak to their circulations and that go beyond oil development.

**A working meeting followed by scientific sessions will take place in Kuwait on 19 November 2023, followed by a three-day conference on 29-31 May 2024 in Paris.** The closed working meeting followed by a public scientific session in Kuwait will take place with relevant stakeholders to describe the themes and goals of the workshop and the broader mission of building an interdisciplinary network of Gulf scholars that breaks academic, institutional, and research silos. The outcomes of the working meeting and scientific sessions in Kuwait will inform the three-day event in Paris that brings together dedicated Gulf scholars around the six broad themes.



## Cities and circulations: Challenging theoretical frameworks in Gulf histories and geographies Workshop Program

Sunday | 19 November 2023 | CEFREPA, Dasman, Kuwait City

Kuwait City |  
Kuwait

|                    |       |   |
|--------------------|-------|---|
| Working Meeting    | 09:00 | Closed Working Meeting   Coffee   |
|                    | 09:15 | Welcome Makram Abbès   CEFREPA  |
|                    | 09:20 | Introduction   Asseel Al-Ragam   KU   SciencesPo  |
|                    | 09:25 | Introduction   Hélène Thiollet   CNRS SciencesPo  |
|                    | 09:30 | Introduction   Chantal Verdeil   INALCO   |
|                    | 09:35 | Introduction   Eric Verdeil   SciencesPo  |
|                    | 09:40 | Mohammad Aljassar   NCCAL<br>Adil Al-Mumin; Shaikha Al-Mubarak; Talal Alrashoud; Mae Al-<br>Ansari   KU   College of Architecture |
|                    | 09:45 | Workshop on Themes, Deliverables, and Commitments   |
|                    | 09:50 |   |
| 11:00 Refreshments |       |   |

|                    |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Scientific Meeting | Round Table (G20, Administration Building Sabah Al-Salem<br>University City, Al-Shadadiya)               |   |
|                    | <b>Cities and circulations: Challenging theoretical frameworks in<br/>Gulf histories and geographies</b> |   |
|                    | 13:40  | Opening Remarks<br>Shaikha Al-Mubarak<br><i>Talking across research sites, periods and disciplines</i><br><i>Curators' perspectives</i>   |
|                    | 13:45  | Asseel Al-Ragam   KU   SciencesPo<br><i>Agents of Change: Legacies, Encounters, and Urban Development in<br/>Twentieth Century Kuwait</i> |
|                    | 14:00  | Chantal Verdeil   INALCO<br><i>History of Education in the Middle East: An Overview</i>   |
|                    | 14:15  | Eric Verdeil   SciencesPo<br><i>Planning histories in the Arab World</i>  |
|                    | 14:30  | Hélène Thiollet   CNRS SciencesPo   |



جامعة الكويت  
KUWAIT UNIVERSITY



*Migrants, States and Cities: Cosmopolitanism in Exclusionary Contexts*

14:45 **Discussion**

Moderator | Talal Al-Rashoud | KU

Moderator | Mae Al-Ansari | KU

Participant | Hend F. Alawadhi | KU

Participant | Benyameen Ghareeb | KU

Participant | Dhari Alrasheed | KU

Participant | Ali AlYousefi | KU

Participant | Sarah Malek | KU

Participant | Mohammad al-Habib | Independent Scholar

Participant | Asaiel Alsaeed | Independent Scholar

16:45 Q&A

17:15 Closing Remarks

Mae Al-Ansari | KU

19:00 Reception with H.E. Claire Le Flecher, Ambassador of France at CEFREPA

20:00 Dinner