



## Resilient Residents: Immigration and Migration Policy in Saudi Arabia

Thursday 24 April, 14-16h. - Badia Fiesolana, Seminar Room 2.

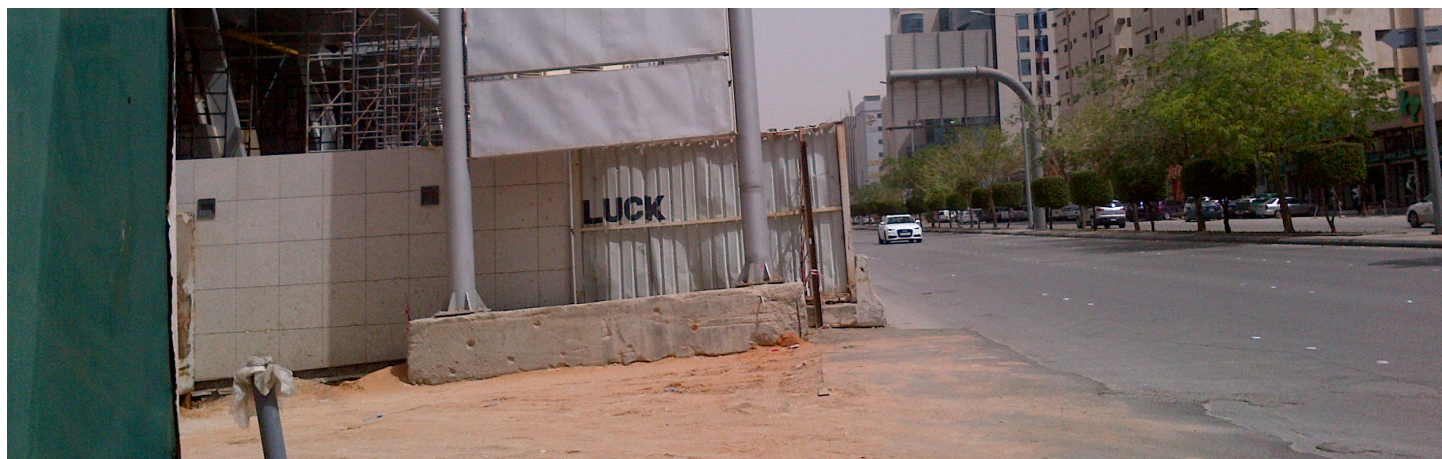
**Hélène Thiollet**

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Discussant:

**Prof. Philippe Fargues (EUI)**

This presentation focuses on migrants' communities settled in the GCC countries or transiting through them and on State/migrants' relations. Its main finding is to conceptualize migration as a social transformation process in the Saudi (and GCC) context. In the context of immigration and labour market policy reform, I emphasize the growing importance of long term residence of documented and undocumented migrants, contrary to popular discourses and representation of immigration as a short-term phenomenon. Political and social models of the GCC countries have designed migration as temporary with little or no prospect of legal integration, citizenship and permanent settlement, strongly emphasizing the social and spatial segregation of both categories. Researchers have emphasized the efficiency of the segregation models, of patterns of social exclusion and xenophobia. However, I collected recent data which allow us to discuss the consequences of "incipient diasporas" in the Gulf. One of the premises of both research and political discourses on migration to the Gulf is that immigrants have very little interaction with their host societies, considering both the policy efforts of the GCC states and 'the exceptional closure of local societies'. Migration theory on the contrary has long been demonstrating the social impact of mobility on both host and home societies, and on migrants' communities, looking both qualitatively and quantitatively at the consequences of material, cultural, financial, informational transfers on individuals and groups. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data my research explores the dynamics of social, demographic, political and cultural change induced by long-term sojourn of immigrants and the formation of migrants' communities in the GCC countries.



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