



CCIS | Center for Comparative
Immigration Studies

Belonging in Dubai: Temporary Migrants and Cosmopolitanism

Tuesday, October 4, 2022 | 11:00AM - 12:30PM Pacific Time

In-person Event Only | ERC Conference Room 115



Hee Eun Kwon

Hee Eun Kwon is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of California San Diego. In her dissertation and book project, entitled *Performance of Cosmopolitanism: Temporary Migrants and their Sense of Belonging in Dubai*, Kwon uses 32 months of ethnographic research to explore cosmopolitanism as a social performance that conceals systems of categorical inequality. As a Graduate Teaching Consultant at the UCSD Engaged Teaching Hub, Kwon is also passionate about bridging her research with her teaching, and actively implements antiracist teaching pedagogies in her classroom that allows students to connect their lived experiences with sociological inquiry.

When states paradoxically implement policies of segregation and political projects of tolerance, how do temporary migrants feel a sense of belonging? Building on 32 months of immersive and extended ethnography in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, I examine temporary migrants' sense of belonging through a framework of "performance of cosmopolitanism." This illustrates how temporary migrants adopt and perform governmental claims of cosmopolitanism to build their homes in the legal, social, and temporal sense in Dubai. Social tensions and segregation notwithstanding, such performance allows the residents – both the nationals and non-nationals alike – to engage with one another in a spirit of civility. In doing so, this study takes an in-depth and often personal look at the everyday lives of temporary migrants who manage to feel that they belong despite the quotidian hierarchical inequalities.

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