



On Tuesday February 4, 2025 at 2pm at CEDEJ, **Franck Mermier** will be presenting his book *L'anonymat urbain est-il universel ?*

The presentation will be dedicated to the presentation of the book *L'anonymat urbain est-il universel ? Une anthropologie comparative de la cidadinité* (Karthala, 2024) co-edited by Franck Mermier and Virginie Milliot. It will focus on the concept of Urban anonymity and its use as a criteria for comparative anthropology. A whole sociological tradition, from Georg Simmel to Richard Sennett and Robert Park, has insisted on the liberating virtue of the big city, populated by individuals, where the triptych of modernity, anonymity and cosmopolitanism can be found. This positive vision of the big city as a space of individualisation and freedom is accompanied by a supposedly universal conception of anonymity as a form of individual adaptation and social regulation in a dense, heterogeneous environment. At a time when the urban condition is widespread, this book re-examines these assumptions on the basis of a comparative ethnographic analysis of the experiences of city dwellers. The contributions in this book take us behind the scenes of the city, revealing the role of anonymity in defining urbanity. They explore the boundaries between the intimate, the private and the public, as well as the constraints of role and status and the ways in which these can be circumvented through the pursuit of anonymity.

Franck Mermier is an anthropologist, senior researcher at the CNRS (IRIS) in France. He was Director of the French Center for Yemeni Studies in Sanaa from 1991 to 1997 and Director of the Contemporary Studies Department at the French Institute for Near East (IFPO) in Beirut from 2005 to 2009. His research has focused on Sanaa, Aden and Beirut and on urban societies, as well as cultural production in the Arab space. Among his publications: *Le Cheikh de la nuit. Sanaa, organisation des souks et société citadine* (Actes Sud, 1997), *Le livre et la ville. Beyrouth et l'édition arabe* (Actes Sud, 2005), *Récits de villes: d'Aden à Beyrouth* (Actes Sud, 2015). He also co-edited, with Christophe Varin, *Mémoires de guerres au Liban* (Actes Sud, 2010), and with Charif Majdalani, *Regards sur l'édition dans le monde arabe* (Karthala, 2016), and with Virginie Milliot, *L'anonymat urbain est-il universel ? Une anthropologie comparative de la cidadinité* (Karthala, 2024).