



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service in Qatar  
Center for International and Regional Studies



ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES  
IN THE GCC

SUMMARY REPORT

### **About the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar**

Founded in 1789, Georgetown University is a student-centered international research university offering highly ranked undergraduate, graduate and professional programs preparing the next generation of global citizens to lead and make a positive impact in the world. The outstanding students, faculty, alumni and professionals of Georgetown are dedicated to real-world applications of research, scholarship, faith and service. For more information, please visit the website: [www.georgetown.edu](http://www.georgetown.edu).

Founded in 1919, the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service (SFS) is a premier school of international affairs. At Georgetown's Washington, D.C. and Doha, Qatar campuses, SFS provides a rigorous education combining theory and practice while instilling the values of men and women in the service of others. At SFS-Qatar, students have the opportunity to major in Culture and Politics, International History, International Economics, and International Politics with the same curriculum as that available to students in Washington. For more information, please visit the website: [qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu](http://qatar.sfs.georgetown.edu).

### **About the Center for International and Regional Studies**

Established in 2005, the Center for International and Regional Studies at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar is a premier research institute devoted to the academic study of regional and international issues through dialogue and exchange of ideas, research and scholarship, and engagement with national and international scholars, opinion-makers, practitioners, and activists.

Guided by the principles of academic excellence, forward vision, and community engagement, the CIRS mission revolves around five principal goals:

- To provide a forum for scholarship and research on international and regional affairs
- To encourage in-depth examination and exchange of ideas
- To foster thoughtful dialogue among students, scholars, and practitioners of international affairs
- To facilitate the free flow of ideas and knowledge through publishing the products of its research, sponsoring conferences and seminars, and holding workshops designed to explore the complexities of the twenty-first century
- To engage in outreach activities with a wide range of local, regional, and international partners

### **About the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to a knowledge economy. It does this by unlocking human potential for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by HH the Father Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. QF carries out its mission via three strategic pillars: education, science and research, and community development. For more information, visit [www.qf.org.qa](http://www.qf.org.qa)

This publication is made possible by the generous support of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE GCC  
WORKING GROUP SUMMARY REPORT

© 2015 Center for International and Regional Studies  
Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar

*Summary Report No. 12*  
ISSN 2227-1686

## ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE GCC WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANTS AND CONTRIBUTORS



Rogaia Abusharaf  
*Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Abdullah Alajmi  
*Arab Open University in Kuwait*



Mohammed Al Waqfi  
*United Arab Emirates University*



Mahfoud Amara  
*Loughborough University*



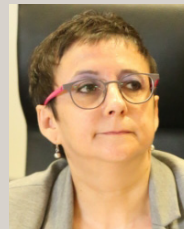
Zahra Babar  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Matt Buehler  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



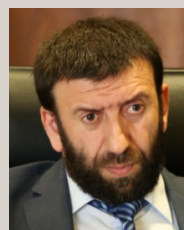
Harry Cook  
*International Organization  
for Migration*



Françoise De Bel-Air  
*Migration Policy Centre, Florence  
and Gulf Research Centre, Geneva*



Nerida Dimasi  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Ismail H. Genc  
*American University of Sharjah*



Barb Gillis  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Manal A. Jamal  
*James Madison University*



Mehran Kamrava  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Sulayman Khalaf  
*Abu Dhabi Tourism and  
Culture Authority*



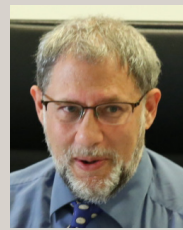
Susan Kippels  
*Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi  
Foundation for Policy Research*



Garret Maher  
*Gulf University for Science  
& Technology*



Susan Martin  
*Institute for the Study of International  
Migration, Georgetown University*



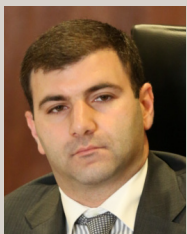
David Mednicoff  
*University of Massachusetts,  
Amherst*



Suzi Mirgani  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Heba Nassar  
*Cairo University*



George Naufal  
*American University of Sharjah*



Michael Newson  
*International Organization  
for Migration*



Gwenn Okruhlik  
*Trinity University*



Firat Oruc  
*Georgetown University  
School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Dwaa Osman  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
 School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Natasha Ridge  
*Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi  
 Foundation for Policy Research*



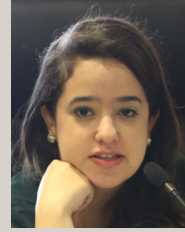
Dax Roque  
*International Organization  
 for Migration*



Nasra Shah  
*Kuwait University*



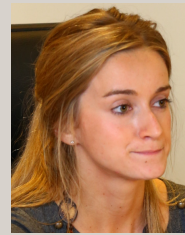
Soha Shami  
*Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi  
 Foundation for Policy*



Nada Soudy  
*Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar*



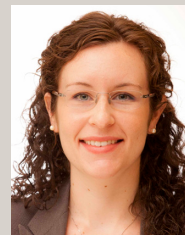
Paul Tacon  
*United Nations Economic and Social  
 Commission for Western Asia*



Abbie Taylor  
*Institute for the Study of International  
 Migration, Georgetown University*



Carlos Vargas-Silva  
*University of Oxford*



Elizabeth Wanucha  
*CIRS, Georgetown University  
 School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Karl Widerquist  
*Georgetown University  
 School of Foreign Service in Qatar*



Luciano Zaccara  
*Georgetown University  
 School of Foreign Service in Qatar*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PAPER SYNOPSES

- Introduction: Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC  
Zahra Babar, *Center for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar*
1. Working for the Neighbors: Arab Migrants in Qatar  
Zahra Babar, *Center for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar*
  2. Arab Migrant Teachers in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar: Challenges and Opportunities  
Natasha Ridge, Soha Shami, and Susan Kippels, *Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research*
  3. The Model Immigrant: Second Generation Hadramis in Kuwait and the Legacy of “Good Reputation”  
Abdullah Alajmi, *Arab Open University in Kuwait*
  4. “The Egyptian Invasion of Kuwait”: Navigating Possibilities among the Impossible  
Abbie Taylor, *Georgetown University*; Nada Soudy, *Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar*; and Susan Martin, *Georgetown University*
  5. The “Other Arab” and Gulf Citizens: Mutual Accommodation of Palestinians in the UAE in Historical Context  
Manal A. Jamal, *James Madison University*
  6. Yemeni Irregular Migrants in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Implications of Large Scale Return: An Analysis of Yemeni Migrants Returning from Saudi Arabia  
Michael Newson, Dax Roque, and Harry Cook, *International Organization for Migration*
  7. An Emerging Trend in Arab Migration: Arab Highly-Skilled Females in the GCC Countries  
Françoise De Bel-Air, *Migration Policy Centre, Florence and Gulf Research Centre, Geneva*
  8. High-Skilled Lebanese Transnational Migrants: A Kuwait Perspective  
Garret Maher, *Gulf University for Science and Technology in Kuwait*
  9. Sport Labor Migrant Communities from the Maghreb in the GCC  
Mahfoud Amara, *Loughborough University*
  10. Attitudes of Students in the GCC towards the Arab Spring: A Case Study of Students in the UAE  
Georges Naufal, *American University of Sharjah*; Ismail Genc, *American University of Sharjah*; and Carlos Vargas-Silva, *University of Oxford*

## *Introduction: Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC*

**Zahra Babar**

Increasingly, over the past few decades, the cross-border mobility of people and international migration has become a central and dynamic hallmark of human existence. While migration is by no means a recent phenomenon, present-day migratory experiences are increasingly informed by national and international policy settings, and by the needs of the global labor market. In contemporary times, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates have emerged as the third largest hub of international labor migration.

In recent years, migration to the GCC has attracted increasing journalistic attention, and a growing body of scholarship from academics. What has gone almost completely unnoticed, however, is the regional, intra-Arab aspect of the phenomenon. Migration into the Gulf region from other Arab countries by far outdates more recent, and comparatively more temporary, migratory patterns from South Asia and Western Europe. Not only are Arab migratory patterns into the GCC comparatively and qualitatively different from other similar patterns, the historical setting within which they have unfolded, the processes through which they have taken place, and their economic, sociological, and political consequences have all been different. This book examines the dynamics involved in the emergence of Arab migrant communities in the Gulf region, focusing specifically on how they came about, their overall sociological compositions and economic profiles, and the causes, processes, and consequences of their interactions with, and integration within, the host countries.

The Middle East displays high levels of inequality, where countries with very different economic, political, and social resources live side by side. For much of the recent past, the primary marker differentiating the developmental conditions amongst Middle Eastern states has been the natural endowment, or lack thereof, of petroleum resources. The difference in economic strength between neighboring states has had a profound impact on the dynamics of intra-regional migration. Migration has largely been from the less wealthy states of the Arab world to the sheikhdoms of the Gulf. This pattern of migration has been facilitated by the particular demographic features and economic needs of the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

From the middle of the last century, and with staggering rapidity, petroleum derived wealth transformed the six GCC states from some of the poorest countries within the region to some of the wealthiest in the world. These conditions stood in clear contrast to the non-oil Arab states, where rapidly increasing youth populations, limited local opportunities, statist policies, and stagnant economic development placed increasing pressure on the absorptive capacity of domestic labor markets. As a consequence, in the non-oil states, labor out-migration evolved into a critical lifeline for both individuals seeking economic traction, as well as policymakers concerned with providing employment opportunities for their citizens. The wealthier GCC states whose burgeoning development agendas outstripped local labor supplies served as a natural regional draw for labor migrants from within the Arab world.

Both economic and political factors have shaped historical patterns of migration to the Gulf, and led to the transition from a predominantly Arab expatriate labor force to one that is more Asianized and international. Although reliable data is not readily available, recent figures suggest that there are about 2.4 million Arab foreign workers present in the GCC, and Arab migrants contribute 33 billion dollars in



remittances to their homelands on an annual basis. Despite the transition in the Gulf's expatriate labor force, the continued employment opportunities provided to Arab migrants in the GCC are still of vital importance, particularly so as the Middle East is once again in the throes of high levels of instability and conflict. While the Gulf may not be amenable to hosting refugee populations from neighboring Arab states, the desire of Arab workers to find employment in the GCC can only have increased as a result of the violence and warfare they are experiencing at home.

Sensitivities in some of the GCC states regarding the public disclosure of information on their demographic conditions means that simply obtaining accurate numbers of Arab-origin migrants present in the region has been a persistent challenge. The absence of adequate data on the region's Arab migrant communities has meant that in-depth studies that examine various aspects of Arab migrants' lives in the Gulf are almost non-existent. This volume addresses some of these gaps in the literature by providing empirically-rich analyses on Arab migrant communities in the GCC. The chapters in this book use multi-disciplinary views that provide original material on the historical and contemporary dynamics of Arab migration to the Gulf, and unravel the ways in which particular social and cultural practices of Arab migrants interact with the host states. Amongst other things, specific contributions allow us to consider the particular socioeconomic and political factors that have historically shaped the character of the Arab migratory experience, the sorts of work opportunities that Arab migrants have sought in the region, what their work conditions and lived experiences have been, and whether we are able to discern any patterns of sociocultural integration for Arab non-nationals.

Together, the contributions in this volume help unpick assumptions about the Gulf's and the Arab world's exceptionalism insofar as the study of global migration is concerned. The same broader dynamics that undergird the causes, processes, and consequences of migration elsewhere in the world are at work in the Gulf region. Vast economic disparities, chronic political instability, linguistic and cultural affinities, and a jealous guarding of finite economic and citizenship benefits inform push and pull factors and integration possibilities in the Gulf region as they do elsewhere in the world. Recent scholarship continues to enrich our understanding of the phenomenon of labor migration to the Gulf. This book takes that understanding one step further, shedding light on one specific, and up until now largely understudied, community of migrants in the region.

---

**Zahra Babar** is Associate Director for Research at the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS), Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. Previously, she worked in the international aid, community development, and poverty alleviation sector. Babar has served with the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme. She also spent several years working in Pakistan with the Sarhad Rural Support Programme, one of Pakistan's large multisectoral rural development organizations. She has edited, with Mehran Kamrava, *Migrant Labor in the Persian Gulf*, and with Suzi Mirgani, *Food Security in the Middle East*. Babar received her BA in Government from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and her MA from the School of International Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

## ***1. Working for the Neighbors: Arab Migrants in Qatar***

**Zahra Babar**

Over the course of the past four decades, the expatriate presence across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has seen a gradual change in terms of its national-ethnic composition. Whereas in the 1970s almost 70-75 percent of the foreign workforce comprised of non-Gulf Arabs, today that number has declined to under 25 percent. This shift has occurred as a result of deliberate and careful labor migration policymaking in the Gulf labor receiving states, which preferences Asian labor over Arab labor, and has been driven by a combination of economic, political, and sociocultural concerns.

This chapter examines Arab-origin migration to Qatar, reviewing how the state has negotiated the entry and control of “alien” Arabs. The chapter examines the evolution and transformation of migration patterns to the Gulf Cooperation Council, and assesses policies adopted by the states to better manage their regional labor markets and control the flow of foreigners. Particular attention is given to scrutinizing how and why Qatar has become more selective and politicized in negotiating labor migration, and how this has impacted on the Arab expatriate population. Articles within the Labor Law of Qatar privilege Arab workers, yet the drive for less-skilled workers who are willing to accept lower wages has led to an increasing reliance on migrants from less developed countries further afield. The forces and factors driving regional migration have become more complex over time, and traditional explanations for the motivations, attraction, and selection of migrants are no longer sufficient in the study of migration to the Persian Gulf. Qatar, which in the last decade has emerged as one of the Middle East’s fastest-growing economies, provides a sound case-study for discussing some of the emerging dynamics of regional labor migration.

With vast hydrocarbon resources available at its disposal, the State of Qatar has seen extraordinary growth in per capita incomes in recent years. However, the improved standard of living for citizens has come at a price, as an ever growing development agenda has led to an increasing dependency on imported labor. In 1970, the population of Qatar was deemed to be around 111,000 people; currently it is estimated at more than fifteen times that amount at 2 million. This growth has been as a direct result of the expansion of the migrant stock in the national population. While the economic downturn of the 1990s temporarily stemmed the incoming flow of labor migrants, and saw a marginal decrease in the rate of nationals to migrants in Qatar’s total population, from the turn of the century onwards the numbers of migrants have been steadily increasing. Currently, the percentage of foreigners vis-a-vis nationals in Qatar’s population stands at a historic apex.

As recently as 2007, the active labor force in Qatar stood at 831,886 people, consisting of 768,292 non-nationals and a mere 63,594 Qataris. According to the Qatar Statistics Authority, by the middle of 2013, the country’s labor force had grown by more than an additional 600,000 people to 1,465,949. While the number of Qatari citizens engaged in the national labor force has grown over the past five years to 84,895, foreigners occupy the remaining 1,381,729 jobs. The expectation is that by 2017 the population will need to grow to a total of 2.4 million in order to meet projected labor market needs. Foreign workers, who dominate the national labor force, range from large cadres of lower income migrants populating jobs in the construction sector, to smaller numbers of the skilled and highly skilled working in technical and

professional fields. As elsewhere in the GCC, the national labor market in Qatar is highly segmented, with nationals predominantly occupying positions in the public sector, while the private sector is almost entirely composed of foreign workers. Anticipated development needs combined with a segmentation of the labor market which places nationals in public sector jobs and non-nationals in the private sector, means that, for the foreseeable future, Qatar will continue to rely on importing labor regardless of the demographic pressures that result.

Broader, strategic development plans for the state are embedded in the notion of creating a knowledge economy. Efforts towards this end have driven up the need to bring in a range of skilled and highly skilled foreign workers to populate jobs in higher education, scientific institutions, and the technology sector. Official statements suggest that as Qatar's plans to establish a knowledge-based economy bear fruit, the labor market will move towards greater numbers of skilled workers and fewer numbers of the low skilled. Policy documents do recognize that in the short term there will still be a need for many foreign workers to occupy positions in construction and associated infrastructural development sectors. The longer-term goal presented through the guiding policy document of Qatar National Vision 2030 seeks to change the qualitative nature of the foreign workforce in Qatar, to make it more appealing and attractive to the highly skilled, and to perhaps seek ways of retaining them for longer durations within the national labor market.

Obtaining data on the national and ethnic compositions of Qatar's migrant population has proven a real challenge for academics and researchers. Data availability, data accessibility, and data reliability have proven to be limitations to researchers attempting to assess the dynamics of national labor migration. Many breakdowns of national-ethnic compositions of Qatar's migrant population remain at best a "guesstimate." Data on migrants disaggregated according to nationality and further broken down by age, gender, income and educational levels, and labor market integration are largely unavailable. There is almost a complete absence of time-based data on nationality breakdowns of the Arab expatriate presence in Qatar, making a historically nuanced and dynamic understanding of the ebb and flow of Arab migrants to the state impossible. The Arab Labor Organization provided data in 2007 stating that 40 percent of Qatar's non-national population was Arab; a much higher percentage than reflected in other GCC labor markets. There is no information on how Arab migrants in Qatar have been integrated into the national labor market, what sorts of jobs they were previously engaged in, and what their lived experiences have been. A few figures exist which suggest that, in 2002, there were 35,000 Egyptians and 50,000 Jordanians and Palestinians working and living in Qatar. Publicly available data for the same timeframe providing insight on the number or occupations of other Arab nationalities in Qatar are unavailable. In the absence of available data on Qatar, one has to assume that the conditions of the national labor market have historically replicated the pattern present across the Arabian Peninsula. One assumes that in Qatar in the 1960s and 1970s the majority of the foreign workforce was most likely of Arab origin, but that, over recent decades, the national-ethnic composition changed.

The chapter presents original, previously unpublished data that provides a statistical breakdown for current Arab expatriates in Qatar by their nationality and labor force participation. The analysis suggests

that Arab migrants populating lower income jobs in Qatar have gradually been replaced by Asians, and that, in percentage terms, Arab migrants currently tend to occupy positions in sectors which are at higher income and at higher skill levels than their Asian counterparts. The causal reasons for this variation may well be the cultural and linguistic skills and abilities that Arab migrants bring to those positions. The need for Qatar to recruit and retain highly trained and highly skilled migrants is consistently recommended by policymakers, and, interestingly, there has also recently been discussion on how to amend immigration laws to attract more skilled workers. This is significant because if Qatar aims to transition to a knowledge-based economy, then chances are that there will be an increasing need to hire and retain skilled Arab expatriate labor who clearly occupy a significant portion of jobs in particular sectors.

## 2. *Arab Migrant Teachers in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar: Challenges and Opportunities* Natasha Ridge, Soha Shami, and Susan Kippels

The discovery of oil in the mid-twentieth century in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) instigated decades of rapid economic development in the region. Key to this development agenda was the use of migrant labor to build infrastructure and to fill middle management roles. Over time, as national populations became more educated, the majority of public sector positions were filled by nationals. However, the education sector has been unable attract nationals in sufficient numbers, and continues to depend on migrant teachers. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 90 percent of teachers in boys' government schools and 20 percent of teachers in girls' government schools were expatriate Arabs as of 2010/2011. In Qatar, Arab migrant teachers comprised approximately 87 percent of teachers in government schools in 2013.

Globally, studies on migrant teachers have tended to focus on Africa and Asia, while the topic of teacher migration in the Middle East in general, and in the Gulf in particular, has not been examined before. Studies from elsewhere point to factors such as security, better employment opportunities, and higher salaries as motivators for teacher migration. However, they also find that teachers seek greater professional development opportunities and workplace satisfaction when making decisions to migrate. The lack of research on this topic in the Middle East, given the large and continued demand for Arab migrant teachers in the Gulf, means that local policymakers have little to guide them in terms of considering how to get the best out of these teachers, and, as a result, many Arab migrant teachers are failing to fully engage. The cost of their disengagement is high as they are teaching the future generations of these countries and, as such, there is a need to look more closely at these teachers to understand why they have come to the UAE and Qatar, what retains them, and how they might be better motivated in their work.

This study examines the status of Arab migrant teachers through both an educational and institutional lens. The research employs a mixed-methods comparative approach to investigate contractual agreements, employment experiences, and social integration of Arab teachers in Qatar and the UAE. The first stage of the study involves surveying a total of 48 teachers employed in the UAE and 43 teachers employed in Qatar on their personal and professional backgrounds, recruitment, compensation and benefits, integration, and overall experience in the UAE or Qatar. The second stage involves conducting in-depth interviews with seven Arab migrant teachers, five based in the UAE and two based in Qatar, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of some of the challenges that arise as a result of reduced salaries, shorter-term contracts, and fewer promotional opportunities for Arab expatriate teachers compared to their national counterparts.

The results of the study are consistent with literature on the economic motivation behind migration. Arab migrant teachers come to the Gulf largely in order to make money and, in turn, to be able to provide for their families. While economic motivation was the primary factor in teachers choosing to come to the UAE and Qatar, professional development and career opportunities were also greatly important in their choice. This was particularly true for males, and approximately 28 percent of teachers in the UAE and 33 percent in Qatar ranked professional development opportunities as the draw to teach in the two countries. This is consistent with previous literature on international migration of Indian teachers; opportunities for professional development were found to be the single most important determining factor in the migratory decision. This desire for career progression and professional development indicates that, for many of these

teachers, they have not simply come to the Gulf to take a paycheck, but that they have come as part of a career move whereby they not only make more money but also have the chance to improve their skills and to potentially rise through the ranks. If this does not happen, it could reasonably be hypothesized that these teachers become demotivated and disengaged.

In addition to examining the motivations for migration, the study also found that the majority of Arab migrant teachers come to the Gulf with the intention of living and working for significant periods of time. They are also a unique and indispensable part of the Gulf population due to their shared language, culture, and religion. Despite their significance in the education system, responses from the interviews indicated that the precarious status of Arab migrant teachers as temporary workers may be creating perverse outcomes in the education sector, whereby they are highly invested in the present rather than the future. As such, the teachers become more incentivized to engage in additional income-generating activities such as private tutoring, and not holding national students to high standards but, rather, taking the path of least resistance. With that, there are real benefits to host countries, national students, and teachers alike in considering these teachers less as temporary workers and more as permanent residents. Examining issues such as how the uncertain employment conditions for expatriate Arab teachers manifest in their commitment to teaching, the chapter concludes by providing policy recommendations for improving the conditions and output of Arab migrant teachers in the UAE and Qatar.

---

**Natasha Ridge** is Executive Director of the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research. Prior to this, she was the Acting Director of Research at the Dubai School of Government. She has a number of publications including *Education and the Reverse Gender Divide in the Gulf States: Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local*. Ridge holds a Doctorate of Education in International Education Policy from Columbia University and a Masters in International and Community Development from Deakin University. She is a founding board member and former president of the Gulf Comparative Education Society.

**Soha Shami** is a Research Associate at the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research where she has conducted research on secondary school male dropouts in the UAE, gender and education in the GCC, and teachers in the UAE. She holds a BA in Economics from the American University of Sharjah with a minor in International Studies.

**Susan Kippels** is a Research Associate at the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research. Prior to this, she conducted research for UNICEF, did advocacy work with an international NGO in Uganda, and managed a private sector business in Lebanon. Kippels has an MA in International Education Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

### 3. *The Model Immigrant: Second Generation Hadramis in Kuwait and the Legacy of “Good Reputation”* Abdullah Alajmi

This chapter is the result of an ethnographic fieldwork research examining how a new generation of Hadrami immigrants understand their own experience in relation to their fathers and their Kuwaiti sponsors. Unlike Hadrami and Arab immigrants in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, those in Kuwait never had effective or perceptible roles in Kuwait’s migration. In the early 1950s, Kuwait underwent rapid urbanization during which first-generation Hadramis were swiftly absorbed into Kuwaiti urban houses assuming domestic service roles. Many old Hadramis working in Kuwait, or retired in Hadramawt, continued to be totally dependent on the houses they once served. It is argued that the socioeconomic path of house-serving shaped the Hadrami character and experience of the “model immigrant” as we know it today. However, the study also demonstrates how a Hadrami migratory practice of dependency on the local family and sponsor was inspired by a Kuwaiti cultural and official categorization process of different immigrant groups in which the Hadramis were depicted as loyal, easily satisfied, and non-subversive. At the same time, that Hadrami model developed as a result of first-generation performance, hence reproduction of practices of total dependency on a Kuwaiti house or a Kuwaiti *mu’azzib* (sponsor).

To the first-generation Hadramis, Kuwait represented an enduring source of income as well as a system of social security after retirement. This faith in the endurance of Kuwait as a source of income is contested by sons of immigrants, many of whom have experienced the harshness of the 1991 Gulf War when their families had to flee Kuwait empty-handed and forced to live as refugees on their own homeland. While Hadramis were initially absorbed in the domestic sphere of Kuwaiti urban houses, the majority no longer work as actual family servants. However, past domestic experience was crucial in understanding the range of relationships that developed under migration between Hadrami fathers and their sons and their current Kuwaiti sponsors. Old Hadramis in Kuwait today accept, as an unfortunate situation, that their dependency on Kuwaiti houses had fettered them by unequal socio-moral exchanges with Kuwaiti individuals. On the other hand, second-generation Hadramis saw their fathers’ bonding with the Kuwaiti *mu’azzib* as an incompetency resulting from prolonged reliance on Kuwait.

Second-generation Hadramis believed that their fathers’ dependency was reinforced over years of being socially proximate to Kuwaiti houses and receiving Kuwaiti support for even the most basic of needs. This chapter analyzes the ways in which the whole experience was conceptualized and contested in daily interaction of the two generations. While dependency was valued by old Hadramis as a resource and as a form of social capital, it also continued to inform the perceptions, expectations, and actions of the second-generation Hadramis. Young Hadrami perceptions and actions are seen in the ways young Hadramis work within a social-triad of “sponsor-family-generation.” All young Hadrami sponsorship is based on an extension of a previous relation of a father or kin with a Kuwaiti *mu’azzib*. The majority of young Hadramis are reasonably educated, and yet assume or inherit jobs similar to what their fathers had once fulfilled for the same sponsor’s house or business, or that of the sponsor’s family members. Commonly, new-generation Hadramis work as couriers, drivers, cashiers, peons, guards, and special servants—a quasi-domestic job. In all these occupations, young Hadramis work in proximity to local families, but are not integrated into Kuwaiti society. Unlike other Arab immigrants, Hadramis are excluded from Kuwaiti citizenship or tenable government employment.

Working for a Kuwaiti sponsor, a young Hadrami has to maintain a constant and clearly dependent connection with the sponsor or his family. For the Kuwaiti sponsor, a Hadrami may be replaced by any other worker from another nationality. However, as the study shows, a Hadrami's presence is important in certain symbolic social settings that are meaningful for the *mu'azzib*. Therefore, in practice, young Hadramis are required to consider sponsorship as a deed of generosity and lenience by the *mu'azzib*. This is despite the fact that many Hadramis are becoming increasingly aware that such practice of sponsorship situates them in an inferior socioeconomic status that, in most cases, does not match their actual expectations. Young Hadramis have to deal with pressures coming from their retired or accompanying seniors and from family and friends at home. Hadramis have to put up with unrelenting kin demands because they are expected to regularly remit in goods or cash in order to maintain stable social relations in two different places. Being a working immigrant in Kuwait becomes a burden in itself, which has led some Hadramis to return home permanently to evade the unyielding family demands. Young Hadramis' daily relationships with their fathers is characterized by respect, but there is also mounting forms of incongruences, tensions, and conflicts regarding the objectives of migration and the value and the meaning of their work for a sponsor. Father-son encounters on issues of income and security or reliance on sponsors' intents to order their lives are shown to be the result of a certain type of "kin relationship" that emerged in such multi-generation migratory contexts.

In this Hadrami case, the first generation emphasized the importance of maintaining the image of model immigrants, and the "good reputation" of non-economizing workers and of loyalty to Kuwaitis. Today, such reputation clearly resonates with the depiction Kuwaitis have always retained about Hadramis and Yemenis in general. The chapter shows that while more young Hadramis continue to seek work in Kuwait, they recognize that aspiring to the "good reputation" is becoming an impediment to individual future promotion. Young Hadrami ambitions are shattered by unrelenting Kuwaiti and older Hadramis' anticipations about their behavior and mobility compared with other sponsored Arab employees, particularly Egyptians and Lebanese. This study reveals that young Hadramis' daily activities in Kuwait, and their aspirations for individual self-sufficiency and mobility, can only be carried out by maintaining a difficult balance between the social-triad, and by managing, or perhaps preserving, the legacy of "good reputation."

---

**Abdullah Alajmi** is Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and teaches various courses on development and social sciences at the Arab Open University in Kuwait. He is an anthropologist with interests in ethnohistory, economic culture, development, migration, sociolinguistics, and the problematics of ethnographic interpretation. Initially he was trained in anthropology and oral history and has worked in the American South in a major project to collect the oral history of the civil rights movement in Mississippi. At the London School of Economics, his PhD was an ethnographic research among Hadrami immigrants in Kuwait. He wrote a number of articles on migration in Kuwait, among them "House-to-House Migration: The Hadrami Experience in Kuwait" in *Journal of Arabian Studies*.



#### 4. *“The Egyptian Invasion of Kuwait:” Navigating Possibilities among the Impossible* Abbie Taylor, Nada Soudy, and Susan Martin

Throughout the bustling Kuwaiti residential and commercial areas of Hawally and Salmiya, working- and middle-class Egyptians, Jordanians, Lebanese, Syrians, and Indians live alone, or with their families, in apartment blocks. Many of these buildings employ an Egyptian security guard, or *barwab*. Since the construction of Saint Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Church in Hawally, more members of its congregation—the vast majority of them Egyptians—are vying to move into the area. Small businesses and restaurants run by non-Kuwaitis are nestled among shopping malls and restaurant chains, including a “Cairo Pharmacy” and “Tahrir Square Restaurant.” The phrase “Egyptians are everywhere” is not uncommon in Kuwait, and, when asked, people often surmise that the number of Egyptians is double the government estimate of one million, or “equal to the number of Kuwaitis.” Jokes exist among Kuwaitis regarding the “Egyptian invasion of Kuwait,” while Egyptians, for their part, quip that “between every Kuwaiti and Egyptian in Kuwait, there is another Egyptian.”

Numbers provide a point of entry into this study of Egyptians in Kuwait, as with other studies of Arab and non-Arab migrant communities in the Gulf. Egyptian consular statistics from 2012 suggest some 480,000 Egyptians are living in Kuwait. From the same year, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior’s General Administration for Immigration indicate that almost half a million (456,000) Egyptians—a slight increase from 453,000 in the previous year—reside throughout the city and work in a variety of occupations. Egyptians constitute the largest Arab expatriate community in Kuwait, and the second largest non-Kuwaiti population after some 653,000 Indian migrants. Together, these communities make up more than half of the number of migrants, which in turn constitutes almost two-thirds of the total population of Kuwait. Egyptians compose around 15 percent of the total population, while Kuwaitis make up 35.5 percent or 1,089,969, according to the 2011 census.

Egyptians are woven into Kuwait’s landscape, and have been for decades. By virtue of their omnipresence and lived investment in the country, Egyptians are both heavily reliant upon and intrinsic to Kuwait, its citizenry, and its various forms of social, political, and economic production. In this chapter, drawing upon extensive interviews with Egyptians and Kuwaitis, we explore three main questions: How has Egyptian migration to Kuwait changed over time? In what ways do Egyptian migrants and their Kuwaiti hosts perceive and interact with one another against official ideology, and within the time limits placed on migrants’ lives in Kuwait? And what, if any, are the implications of political and socioeconomic instability in Egypt on the wellbeing and migration trajectories of Egyptian migrants in Kuwait? In response to these questions, our findings encourage adaptations within the parameters of existing state responses to inter-regional migration that could reduce longstanding human insecurities among Arab migrants in Kuwait, the latter of which have been exacerbated since the start of the Arab uprisings in 2011.

Implicit throughout the chapter is the framing paradox identified by Neha Vora in her study of the Indian diaspora in Dubai: namely, the ways in which Egyptians as impossible citizens suspended in a state of permanent temporariness experience, narrate and negotiate their existence in Kuwait. In making sense of these intricacies, in particular the ways in which Egyptians manipulate and are manipulated by the structures in which they find themselves, we also draw upon Attiya Ahmad’s “Beyond Labour: Foreign Residents in the Persian Gulf States.” This analytical lens that extends outside the limitations and obfuscations of labor commands focus on the various forms and processes of the production of space that are visible through the everyday experiences of Egyptian migrants and their Kuwaiti hosts at sites of exclusion and inclusion, respectively.

The research upon which this study is grounded includes interviews conducted with Egyptians and Kuwaitis recruited through a snowball sample of key informants identified within our personal and professional networks. Additionally, during fieldwork in August and September of 2013, we convened group discussions with Egyptians, participated in Egyptian and Kuwaiti social gatherings, and attended meetings with experts and officials. Following a brief review of the research methodology, this chapter begins by narrating the “Egyptianization” of inter-regional Arab migration to Kuwait in the twentieth century, describing the ways in which migration opportunities sponsored by the Egyptian state laid foundations for an evolving but enduring legacy of temporary migration to Kuwait. From this, we discern that Egyptian migration to Kuwait escaped, though not unscathed, from the de-Arabization of labor amid shifting regional alignments and increasing wealth disparity. After exploring the logics and informal structures of governance within Kuwait today, we then demonstrate ways in which Egyptians can and do navigate a degree of social and economic mobility in Kuwait, although rarely do these negotiations succeed in extending or eroding the prejudices or existential time limits placed on their lives in Kuwait.

---

**Abbie Taylor** is a Research Associate at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University. She holds a Master of Arts in Arabic and International Relations from the University of Saint Andrews and a Master of Arts in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. Research on Egyptians in Kuwait is a continuation of her interest in the experiences of Arab migrants within the broader realm of Arab intra-regional migration and displacement. She is co-editor of *Humanitarian Crises and Migration: Causes, Consequences and Responses*.

**Susan Martin** is the Donald G. Herzberg Professor of International Migration, and Director of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University. She co-directs the Certificate in Refugee and Humanitarian Emergencies and the Certificate in International Migration Studies. Martin earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and her B.A. from Douglass College, Rutgers University. She is the immediate Past President of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration. Recent books include: *A Nation of Immigrants*; *The Migration–Displacement Nexus: Patterns, Processes and Policies*; *Humanitarian Crises and Migration: Causes, Consequences and Responses* (ed.); and *International Migration: Evolving Trends from the Early Twentieth Century to the Present*.

**Nada Soudy** is a Research Associate and Project Manager at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, undertaking an education project that targets different populations in Qatar Foundation, including migrant workers. Soudy obtained an MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. She spent four months conducting qualitative research on Egyptians living in the US and in Qatar for her MA thesis titled, “Expatriates Versus Immigrants: A Comparative Study of Second-Generation Egyptians in Qatar and the United States.” She is a graduate of Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar.

## 5. *The “Other Arab” and Gulf Citizens: Mutual Accommodation of Palestinians in the UAE in Historical Context* Manal A. Jamal

Much of the extant literature on migrants in the Gulf, especially in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has focused on South and East Asian laborers. Far less academic scholarship has addressed the changing circumstances of the various Arab communities in that region, especially Palestinian communities, and particularly those in the United Arab Emirates. The literature on the Palestinian communities of the Gulf has overwhelmingly focused on Palestinians in Kuwait in light of their 1991 expulsion. Though preferred for reasons pertaining to cultural affinity, the “other Arabs” have also been perceived as a destabilizing force in many GCC states. According to existing laws in the UAE, Arab migrants have assumed preference both in terms of their employment opportunities, and their prospects for attaining citizenship. With this background in mind, this research seeks to place this discussion in a more germane historical context. In particular, I explore the fate of Arabs of Palestinian origin in the UAE, establishing a more historically sensitive political chronology, culminating in events surrounding the first Gulf War and the Arab uprisings. The specific questions this project addresses include: In the context of the UAE, which factors have historically shaped and changed the position of “other Arabs” over time? How have Palestinians, including younger generations, negotiated and addressed their sometimes tenuous relationship with the UAE? What do current dynamics portend for future relations between Emiratis and Arabs of Palestinian origin who live in the UAE.?

This project relied on archival material and extensive primary interviews with residents of the UAE who are of Palestinian origin. Interviewees were carefully selected to represent the different Emirates, as well as different socioeconomic backgrounds, and migrants of Palestinian origin from different Arab and Western countries. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, and addressed the changing status of the Palestinian community in the Gulf. The final sample included migrants from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, the US, and Canada, as well as a number of Palestinians born in the UAE—some whose families managed to obtain Emirati passports or citizenship, and others who had employment visas. I also interviewed officials at the Palestinian consulate in Dubai and the Palestinian Embassy in Abu Dhabi. I conducted interviews in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Ras al-Khaimah, and Al-Ain during separate visits. The first research trip took place in July 2013 for two weeks, and the second trip was for three weeks between December 2013 and January 2014.

The chapter is divided into four sections. I first discuss the changing demographics of the Palestinian community, and issues related to official data. The following section discusses why, almost across the board, Palestinian migrants over-stayed their initial plan of residing in the country for two to three years, and how their circumstances compare to Palestinian migrant communities in other Arab countries. I then discuss broader political developments and their impact on the treatment of the Palestinian community in the UAE. In the third section, I assess generational differences as they pertain to integration/socialization, trust, belonging, and their relationship to Palestine. The concluding section addresses citizenship and naturalization.

Two important observations emerged from this research which challenged existing assumption about the status of Arabs in the UAE and the GCC more generally. First, there is an important generational divide which challenges many preconceived notions surrounding relations between locals and expatriates, sense of belonging, and issues of trust. Younger generations, both Emirati and expatriate, view their position in the world differently than older generations, and hence are more open to the changing circumstances and the possibilities of meeting,

socializing, and interacting with each other. The guardedness and caution that characterized earlier generations did not appear as salient or relevant for the younger generation. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this research reaffirmed the primacy of privilege associated with class and social status as it relates to citizenship. Although Emirati citizenship itself was not necessarily sought after, the attainment of legal citizenship in a stable country remained significant for the lives of Palestinian migrants. Facilitated by globalization, more privileged Palestinians in the UAE were able to resolve the vulnerability of their statelessness by maintaining their residency in the UAE, even if not permanently, and obtaining legal citizenship of another country.

A number of scholars have argued that, in many ways, globalization has rendered legal citizenship irrelevant. Highly skilled individuals have attained citizenship-rights in cross-national contexts, while less skilled individuals are further devalued and marginalized. As I explain in more detail, however, highly skilled middle class and upper middle class Palestinians living in the UAE have been persistent about acquiring legal citizenship elsewhere. Almost across the board, they have managed to secure citizenship in other countries, often in more than one country, as a back-up plan. In most cases, they and their children plan to be in the UAE indefinitely. Yet, legal citizenship, even if not Emirati, remained crucial and not a substitute for their integration. This contrasts sharply with less privileged Palestinians who are at the mercy of changing UAE government policies. For all, however, the expulsion of Palestinians from Kuwait in 1991 was a stark reminder of their vulnerability and statelessness.

Although there is a marked distinction in perception and attitudes between the older generation and the newer generation of Palestinians, especially those who were born and raised in the UAE, the undercurrent of insecurity is real for all. The changes in attitudes of younger Emiratis and Palestinians, however, challenges the way we see GCC states, and the region more generally. Narrow discussions about pan-Arabism do not fully capture how this newer generation views itself vis-a-vis a changing global position of the UAE—whether it be real or imagined. These changing dynamics will likely also compel the UAE to re-assess its relationship to these migrant communities, especially the “other Arabs.” The importance of socioeconomic class to this discussion, however, cannot be under-appreciated.

---

**Manal A. Jamal** is Associate Professor of political science at James Madison University, and during the 2014-2015 academic year, a research fellow at Harvard Kennedy School’s Middle East Initiative. Her most recent publications have appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*; as well as chapters in edited volumes, and commentaries in *Al-Abram Weekly* and *Bittlerlemons*, among others. She is currently completing her first book manuscript, *Democracy Promotion in Distorted Times: the Limits of Western Donor Assistance to Civil Society*, drawing from research for which she won the best fieldwork award of the comparative democratization section of the American Political Science Association. Prior to joining the faculty of JMU, Jamal was a Sultan post-doctoral fellow at UC Berkeley’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, a research fellow at the Dubai School of Government, and a visiting scholar at Harvard University’s Dubai Initiative at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

6. *Yemeni Irregular Migrants in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Implications of Large Scale Return: An Analysis of Yemeni Migrants Returning from Saudi Arabia*

**Michael Newson, Dax Roque, and Harry Cook**

Labor migration between Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been happening in significant numbers for decades. In many cases, Yemeni migrants to KSA have remained in the country for decades, establishing strong communities while maintaining linkages to their communities of origin in Yemen through the transfer of financial remittances, as well as occasional returns to Yemen for periods of time. These flows, however, have largely been carried out through informal and irregular processes. While many Yemeni workers in KSA have gone through the formal channels and are legally authorized to work in KSA, many more have engaged in informal employment, sometimes over the course of a number of years.

In 2013, the Saudi government embarked on a nationwide strategy to restructure its labor market and its policies towards the recruitment of foreign workers. These changes are in line with the implementation of Saudi Arabia's *Nitaqat* system which aims to better regulate foreign labor in the country and to reduce the number of irregular workers in the Kingdom. Based on recent estimates, foreign workers comprise more than 50 percent of the employed population in KSA and make up more than 80 percent of the workforce in the private sector.

As a result of these changes in policy and implementation, there have been large-scale deportations of irregular workers—along with their family members, in some cases—from KSA beginning in mid-2013 and continuing up to the time of writing. These changes have had a dramatic impact not only on foreign workers in KSA and their families back home, but also on the migrant communities in KSA and the communities they return to. Businesses in KSA that once relied on foreign workers as clients now face a declining clientele, while communities of origin are doubly impacted having to absorb returning workers into their labor force while at the same time losing the economic stimulus of financial remittances these workers used to send from KSA.

Yemeni workers in KSA have been particularly hard hit by these policy changes due to the largely informal nature of labor migration flows that have existed between KSA and Yemen for the past few decades. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) more than 400,000 Yemeni migrants have been returned to Yemen from KSA since the new policies were implemented in late 2013. While accurate estimates on the numbers of Yemenis in KSA, and the size of remittances sent to Yemen are difficult to come by, some estimates suggest that the Yemeni population in KSA in 2013 exceeded one million, and over \$1.4 billion in remittances were being sent from KSA to Yemen on an annual basis. There is no doubt that the Yemeni community in KSA is sizeable, and their social and financial linkages to communities in Yemen have often served as an essential lifeline to support family members and communities of origin in Yemen.

This chapter aims to shed some light on the historical patterns of labor mobility from Yemen to KSA and the effects of this phenomenon in both Yemen and KSA. The chapter explores the possible implications of the recent labor policy changes in KSA for Yemeni and host communities in KSA, as well as for returning workers, their families, and communities of origin in Yemen.

In October 2013, IOM's office in Yemen established a presence at the Al Tuwal border crossing in the Hajjah Governorate of Yemen, which is the major border crossing point between KSA and Yemen representing an estimated 90-95 percent of all returns from KSA. IOM's operations at the border have consisted of monitoring the returning flows, providing food and non-food item (NFI) assistance to returnees, and providing healthcare to those in need of immediate assistance. At the time of writing, IOM counted over

370,000 returnees coming through the Al Tuwal border; it provided food to over 150,000, and healthcare assistance to over 23,000. In addition, IOM's researchers at the border have continuously collected short surveys of a sample of returnees in order to establish a profile of the population, their time and work in KSA, their links to communities in Yemen, and their needs and expectations upon return. At the time of writing, over 15,000 such surveys had been completed of a representative population of returnees. The survey questionnaire consists of fifteen questions that reveal important information about the sample population including their length of stay and occupation in KSA, their communities of origin in Yemen, the amount of remittances they sent back to Yemen on a monthly basis, etc.

Using this rich dataset, as well as background research on Yemen-KSA labor migration flows and interviews with key stakeholders, this study aims to paint a picture of the historical relationships between Yemenis in KSA and communities of origin in Yemen. It also assess the likely disruptive impact new labor mobility policies and their implementation in KSA will have on this transnational network. The chapter concludes with several recommendations on how to effectively address the challenges these disruptions will cause and how to build new avenues to support the transnational linkages between Yemeni migrant workers in KSA and their communities in Yemen.

---

**Michael Newson** is currently based in Cairo as the Regional Thematic Specialist for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for the Labour Migration and Human Development (LHD) Division, with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). He is responsible for providing technical support, policy expertise, capacity building, and training to governments, IOM officials, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the MENA region. Newson has a BA in Philosophy & English Literature from the University of British Columbia, and an MA in Social & Political Philosophy from York University (Toronto).

**Dax Roque** is currently based in Cairo as a consultant for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). He is responsible for providing research and project development support to the Labour Migration and Human Development Division. Prior to joining IOM, Roque worked for seven years at the American University in Cairo Press. He holds a BA in Business Administration from Florida International University and is currently pursuing an MA in International Development at Deakin.

**Harry Cook** is the Research Officer for the International Organization for Migration's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). He is responsible for research into migration trends and related issues in the region and their impact on development and humanitarian objectives. He also works on the development of policy and regional migrant assistance and labour migration projects. Recent research areas in the region include migrant well-being, how to mainstream migration into development planning, expatriate engagement in development, and irregular migration flows. Cook has an MSc in Comparative Political Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a BA in Philosophy from King's College London.

## 7. *An Emerging Trend in Arab Migration: Arab Highly-Skilled Females in the GCC Countries* Françoise De Bel-Air

Despite the common misconception that it is mostly men who migrate, half of the 195 million international migrants worldwide were found to be women in the late 2000s; a proportion which was on the rise. In the Middle East, the development of female migration from and to the region is also being increasingly studied. Yet, the “gender” angle on the migration issue usually goes hand-in-hand with a focus on abuse and trafficking which, for evident reasons, became the main target of international policy-making.

Abuses against female migrants in the Arab region—predominantly Asian female domestic workers, but also trafficked sex-workers from Morocco and, more recently, from conflict-ridden countries such as Iraq or Syria—are a reality. However, this convergence of interests not only underscores the agency of migrant females; it is also likely to hide other characteristics of migration involving women. Indeed, the scale and characteristics of female intra-regional mobility, mostly directed at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, remain little known. The growing share of skilled and highly-skilled, often unmarried, young Arab women is generally un-documented. Shedding some light on this population, therefore, will not only emphasize a new phenomenon, but it also, first, points at a new structural trend within Arab populations: the emergence of educated female professionals in Arab societies characterized by low female activity rates. Second, it challenges the dominant assumption that Arab migration to Gulf countries is a “male-only” phenomenon in which women are married dependents.

The contribution aims at laying some ground to bridge the knowledge gap regarding Arab female highly-skilled workers in the Gulf. Relying mostly on macro-demographic and survey data, it provides elements for describing this population in the Gulf countries, their integration into the labor force, and their patterns of migration to the region. Highly-skilled migration is defined as the migration of persons with tertiary-level education, whether they achieved that level before or after migration.

Data and studies on Arab migration to the Gulf countries remain very scarce, from sending as well as from receiving countries. The study is of an exploratory nature that questions the predominant data used, including demographic and macro data, that does not delve beyond comparing male and female migration and employment patterns. This study first pinpoints existing gaps in the literature and the demographic data on Arab female migration, and proposes some insights regarding the reasons behind such a lack of available material on this emerging trend. Politics are found to be the driver for concealing information on this issue. This chapter then sketches a macro-demographic picture of the highly-skilled Arab women, relying on macro-data on population, labor force, and residency permits in Kuwait and Bahrain. The underlying concern is whether a female vs. male pattern of residency and labor can be pinpointed. In the third section, the chapter attempts at emphasizing some of the inner characteristics of this population, using the results of a sample survey targeted at Lebanese highly-skilled workers, most of them residing in the UAE. The underlying question is that of the existence of a gendered pattern of skilled Arab female migration to GCC countries, as opposed to a career-based pattern. Survey data also provide some insight on networks and recruitment channels used by Arab female migrants to the Gulf, which are compared to emerging channels used by skilled and semi-skilled workers from other Arab countries. The last section of the chapter examines the proximate determinants and structural factors pushing skilled Arab females out of their countries of origin, as well as bringing them to the Gulf.

The study concludes on a relative failure to pinpoint a clear-cut gendered pattern in explaining Arab migration to the Gulf. This may be due to the type of macro-demographic data processed for the purpose of the article, and shortage thereof. It has also to be noted that economically active Arab female migrants are still a minority among Arab migrants in the Gulf states. However, three factors emerge as drivers for designing Arab migration patterns to the GCC countries. First, in the receiving state: in Kuwait and Bahrain, females and males do not display similar residency and labor patterns, which suggest the role of labor market characteristics and country-specific residency and labor policies in designing migration trends. Second, the effect of the sending country, or the nationality factor: seen from Kuwaiti data, the nationality variable was discriminant in designing migration patterns. With the exception of Egyptians who somehow display a gender-based profile—men perform unskilled activities, while females can be found in middle-range professional activities such as education—other Arab nationalities, such as Lebanese and Jordanian expatriates, showed similar labor and migration patterns for males and females.

Third, the results of a field survey on Lebanese highly-skilled migrants in the Gulf states did not emphasize consistent elements of a gender-specific migration or career pattern. Yet, the question should be asked if this similarity is actually specific to Lebanese migrants, or if it means that highly-skilled migrants, as such, escape the constraints encountered by other, less-skilled female migrants. Indeed, these results contradict, to some extent, the views expressed by other interviewees in Middle Eastern countries, especially Jordan, on reasons to migrate.

The study explores the proximate determinants—raise in age at marriage, development of female celibacy in the Arab world, expansion of female education levels—and structural conditions compelling an increasing number of Arab citizens, males and females, to seek better future abroad. Structural determinants include Arab economies' structural adjustment, the end of public employment outlet for graduates, the devaluation of salaries in most Arab labor markets, and social control and patriarchal pressures on women professionals. The latter issue of the patriarchal pressure as a spur, and as an obstacle, to emigrating was denied by the Lebanese females in our sample. Such findings thus question the categories used, including Arab, female, and Gulf migration patterns. The study also concludes that such partial results beg to be completed by a wider-scale survey involving highly-skilled female migrants from several Arab countries and systematically comparing their migratory patterns and experience.

---

**Françoise De Bel-Air** is a sociologist and demographer specializing in the political demography of Arab countries. Currently she is part-time professor in charge of the CARIM-South Project at the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute in Florence. De Bel-Air is also the scientific coordinator for the Demography and Economy module in the Gulf Labour Markets and Migration (GLMM) Programme, co-organized by the Gulf Research Centre in Geneva and the MPC. She has been a research fellow at the French Institute for the Near East (IFPO) in Damascus and later in Amman, Jordan, for several years. De Bel-Air has published extensively about Arab population issues including a contribution in the Arab Human Development Report 2015. She has also edited a book on *Migration and Politics in the Middle East* (Beirut: IFPO, 2006).



## **8. *High-Skilled Lebanese Transnational Migrants: A Kuwait Perspective***

**Garret Maher**

Within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries there has been unprecedented economic growth in recent decades, even with the recent global economic downturn, most of these countries have continued to grow and develop, leading to a strong demand for migrant labor. International migration streams have become increasingly important in supporting economic growth, particularly in countries where the local labor force is too small, or unwilling to work in specific types of employment. All of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries share a strong reliance on foreign labor. Qatar, for example, has a non-national population of close to 90 percent, the highest in the world. Kuwait is no different.

When independence was granted to Kuwait in 1961, at least half of the population at that time consisted of non-Kuwaiti nationals, hence a large proportion of the population has always consisted of foreign nationals, averaging between 60-70 percent of the total population since the mid-1960s. Although much has been written about these migrants, the recent focus has mainly been on low-skilled immigrants from South Asia and other Arab countries, and there is limited research data relating to high-skilled transnational labor migrants of a specific nationality. Despite the concerns of the Kuwaiti government that there are too many non-nationals taking employment in the country, there is a large and ever-increasing demand for highly skilled Arab migrants throughout the region. They are defined as those in possession of a tertiary degree or extensive specialized work experience, and include architects, financial experts, engineers, technicians, scientists, health professionals, and specialists in information technology (IT).

This chapter provides new information relating to aspects of transnational migration among high-skilled Lebanese migrants from a dual country perspective; that of the sending country, Lebanon, and of the receiving country, Kuwait. By using a dual, home and host country perspective, the chapter shows a more complete picture of some specific aspects of transnational migration, in particular, the motivations and drivers of migration, and why migrants chose Kuwait as a destination, as opposed to other GCC countries. It then explores aspects of integration and socialization to first identify if the Lebanese in Kuwait, according to this research sample, are integrated into Kuwaiti society, and to see if a transnational community was formed among and between other Lebanese in Kuwait. The chapter proceeds to explore temporal aspects of migration to discover how long migrants plan on staying in Kuwait as well as presenting data on returned migrants and the reason for their return to Lebanon. Finally, it explores remittances, which form a key feature of transnationalism, before presenting some conclusions.

The focus of this chapter on Lebanese migrants is especially interesting due to the fact that Lebanon is considered one of the world's most emigration-prone countries, with a multi-generational diaspora projected to be 15 million, which far exceeds the estimated 4.5 million Lebanese residing in Lebanon. The GCC countries became particularly attractive for Lebanese migrants during the oil boom years of the 1970s, coupled with the civil war in Lebanon between 1975 and 1989, during which an estimated 500,000 Lebanese migrated to the GCC countries. As far back as 1975, Kuwait was the main destination for Lebanese migrants, with over 25,000 living there at that time. More recently, estimates suggest that between 1997 and 2007, about half of those who emigrated from Lebanon went to one of the Gulf states. Currently in Kuwait,

there exists is a vibrant Lebanese community of approximately 42,000 people. Of these, it is estimated that over 60 percent are considered to be highly-skilled migrants. As highlighted, there are numerous push-factors leading many to emigrate from Lebanon. The continued political instability, arguably linked with the ongoing Syrian crisis, has seen more than one million Syrian refugees enter Lebanon, putting a strain on jobs and an already weak infrastructure. Some of the structural push-factors include successive governments' economic policies, which focused on the development of tertiary sectors such as tourism and finance, thus limiting growth and job creation. The geography of the region has also seen it trapped in an economic and political system that does not produce enough job openings for its people.

---

**Garret Maher** is a Senior Teaching Fellow at the Centre for Professional Education at the University of Warwick. Prior to taking up this position he worked as a lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and as Assistant Professor of Geography at Gulf University for Sciences and Technology in Kuwait. He has also worked as a private Research Consultant in Dubai with a focus on Demographic and Economic issues. His primary research interests relate to transnationalism, in particular, transnational labour migration, recruitment, social networks, cultural adaptation, and remittances, especially the effect of remittances in the receiving country; in addition to aspects of demography and population studies. Maher has a strong interest in pedagogy and often utilizes the most up-to-date teaching and assessment methods in his courses to enhance student learning. His most recent publication, co-authored with Mary Cawley, is entitled "Short Term Labour Migration: Brazilian Migrants in Ireland," published in one of the top-ranked demography journals: *Population, Space and Place*. He received his Ph.D. in Geography from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and his MA from University College Dublin.

## 9. *Sport Labor Migrant Communities from the Maghreb in the GCC*

**Mahfoud Amara**

Sport is becoming an increasingly important component for development and urban regeneration in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Qatar and the UAE in particular are emerging as a new destination for sport labor migration, including from the Maghreb and the Maghrebi community in Europe, which is the focus of this chapter. Specifically, the study examines the patterns and motives of sport labor migration in three sectors: professional football, elite sport development, and sport TV broadcasting.

For the past twenty years, there has been a significant influx of professional athletes, sport administrators, coaches, and scientists, as well as Physical Education (PE) teachers and sport journalists to the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council GCC. This pattern may increase in the next few years as the region—particularly Qatar, the UAE, and Bahrain—is becoming a center of the sport industry, including sport events, sport tourism, and hospitality. Sport is also employed in the branding and image-making of cities such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Manama, and Doha. These cities are associated today with sport entertainment and are promoted as a must-see destination for tourists and fans of golf, jet skiing, sailing, and car racing, to name a few. New development projects were built, or are under construction, around sport themes. Sport is at the heart of neoliberal (and postmodern) urbanization policies of coastal cities in the Gulf region.

Migration flows in sport can be understood as a legacy of colonial history, or a dependency of former colonies upon former colonizers in social, cultural, economic, and sport domains. Sport migration is also a product of globalization characterized by increased interconnectedness between territories due to advancements in the means of transportation and communication.

In applying exiting typologies in the literature on sport labor migration, one can argue that migration of professional athletes from the Maghreb and the Maghrebi community in Europe can be classified as follows:

- “Mercenary”: those who are young or close to retirement and who are looking for a short-term lucrative contract, or a temporary passport, to play in wealthy professional clubs, and even national teams, in Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.
- “Nomadic cosmopolitan”: those who are attracted by a cosmopolitan lifestyle as well as Arab-Islamic cultures. This seems to be appealing to Europeans of Maghrebi decent who enjoy the Gulf region’s mixture of Western culture, or at least access to consumer society, and Arab-Islamic culture. Moreover, playing in Saudi clubs offers Muslim professional athletes the opportunity to be close to Islamic holy cities in order to perform umrah and hajj.
- “Settler”: those who choose to settle in the Gulf region to pursue their career as coaches or consultants for sport TV channels. For example, Jamel Belmadi, the current manager of the Qatar national football team, has been living in Qatar for ten years. It should be noted here that while settlement in the form of permanent residency or citizenship is more accessible in Europe and North America, it is more difficult in the Gulf region because of restricted legislations on employment, residency, and citizenship.

For sport scientists from the Maghreb, or of Maghrebi origin, sport academies such as the Qatar-based Aspire, the Sport Medicine and Rehabilitation Center (Aspitar), and Anti-Doping Laboratory, offer top of the range equipment for research and testing.

In addition, the GCC is developing to be the new center of media production and satellite broadcasting in the Arab world. It is attracting sport journalists, match commentators, and media technicians from the Maghreb who want to be part of the mega project of sport TV broadcasting in the region, particularly in Qatar and the UAE. Important financial resources are invested into sport broadcasting technology, equipment, studios, and marketing. Many well-known retired athletes, coaches, and sport celebrities from the Maghreb (Aouita, Al-Guerroudj, Madjer, and Khalef, to name a few) are now living between Doha, Dubai, and their country of origin. They contribute with their match commentaries to the “glocalization” or “Arabization” of international sport competitions, particularly high profile football matches such as the Spanish El Clásico match between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona (both clubs sponsored by two airline companies from the region, Emirates and Qatar Airways respectively).

To conclude, the GCC is emerging as a new center in the international network of sport migration and the business of sport, attracting coaches, athletes, and sport scientists from all over the world, including from the Maghreb. The GCC, particularly the UAE, Qatar, and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, are in need of skilled migrants in the field of sport to contribute to the development of the industry, whether elite sport, professional sport, or the transfer of knowledge in sport sciences, and development through sport regarding the sporting community, branding of the region through sport, and the commercialization of sport. While it is becoming more difficult to migrate to Europe and North America, sport migrants from the Maghreb, like other Arab communities, are attracted to the GCC because it offers both material facilities and the familiarity of Arab and Islamic cultures.

More empirical work need to be undertaken to examine the patterns, motivations, and experiences of male and female Maghrebi sport migrants as compared with Arab communities from the Mashriq, as well as to make these comparisons between different sports. This would contribute to the study of global migration and, more specifically, global migration in sport.

---

**Mahfoud Amara** is a Lecturer in Sport Policy and Management at Loughborough University. Since 2012, he has also served as Deputy Director of the Center for Olympic Studies and Research. Amara’s principal research area is comparative sports policy, with a specific interest in sport in Arab and Muslim contexts. He has published on the politics of the Pan-Arab Games, sport in colonial and post-colonial Algeria, and other issues as they relate to sport and development in the Gulf and the Arab world. His other research interest is the interaction between sport business, culture, and politics, and sport, multiculturalism, and intercultural dialogue. He recently published *Sport, Politics, and Society in the Arab World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

**10. *Attitudes of Students in the GCC towards the Arab Spring: A Case Study of Students in the UAE***  
**George S. Naufal, Ismail H. Genc, and Carlos Vargas-Silva**

The Arab world has experienced an upsurge of anti-government protests and civil conflict since December 2010. This phenomenon has become known as the “Arab Spring.” While the academic literature on the Arab Spring is growing at a fast pace, more research is needed to account for the complex and multiple dimensions of this phenomenon. The purpose of this chapter is to present new empirical research on the Arab Spring and, specifically, to focus on the attitudes of residents of one country in the Middle East towards the Arab Spring.

This research was conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has been one of the main migrant destinations in the world for the last two decades. In 2013, the UAE had the fifth-largest international migrant stock in the world. Moreover, the UAE attracts migrants from many countries around the globe. This allows for comparisons regarding attitudes towards the Arab Spring across individuals from different regions of origin such as GCC, South Asia, and Western countries.

The analysis is focused on university students. The attitudes of university students are important because the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has experienced a substantial increase in the 17 to 23 years of age population. Existing reports suggest that, by far, those involved in Arab Spring protests were young individuals. In fact, previous studies suggest that one of the key reasons for the Arab Spring was that the major expansion of education in the Arab world was matched with poor labor market prospects for educated young people. Students in the UAE are an ideal group for study given that, during the last two decades, the UAE has become one of the leaders in the provision of higher education in the region. The analysis places particular emphasis on the correlation of attitudes towards the Arab Spring with three key aspects: religiousness, attachment to the GCC countries, and attachment to country of origin.

Evidence from the Arab Barometer suggests that young Arabs in the region have lower levels of religiosity compared to the older generation. In theory, this could be linked to increased support for secularization, but the data suggest otherwise. The empirical evidence predates the Arab Spring by several years. Therefore, it is important to use recent data to further explore how religiosity relates to views about the Arab Spring. In addition, analysis that involves individuals from diverse regions of origin is important as it compares the views of those who are affected by the Arab Spring directly in their home countries and the UAE, to those who are only affected by the fact that they live in the UAE. Finally, we also look at the attachment to the GCC countries, an emerging group of stable countries in an otherwise turbulent region.

Students were asked to rank, on a scale of ten, a list of potential consequences of the current events. The list included whether the Arab Spring was the beginning of democracy in the region; an excuse to bring lawlessness and violence; a revolution against dictators and corruption; an opportunity to establish a stricter religious code; or another form of interference by the West.

Our findings regarding the students’ views on the Arab Spring can be summarized as follows:  
1) Most students agree with the statements that the Arab Spring is a revolt against dictatorships and

corruption, and the beginning of democracy in the Middle East. In this sense, the general view of the Arab Spring is positive. This was particularly the case of students of Egyptian descent who were very optimistic about the Arab Spring. This could come as a surprise given the high levels of violence in Egypt close to the period of the survey (Fall 2013); 2) Attachment to GCC countries (proxy by the preferred region for raising children) do not seem to have a major impact on attitudes towards the Arab Spring. This could also come as a surprise as those more attached to the GCC countries have more at stake regarding the outcome of the Arab Spring; 3) Those with higher levels of religiousness (proxy by the likelihood of performing morning prayers, and preference for religious books over other books) are significantly less likely to see the Arab Spring as revolution against dictators and corruption, and also less likely to see it as another form of inference by the West.

When interpreting the results, the composition of the sample was considered. Students at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) come from a relatively wealthy background, and study in a co-educational environment, which is a relatively new opportunity in the Gulf region. Students in this research sample represent a small share of young people in the region enrolled at a private American-style tertiary educational institution. In this sense, the conformity of the results is not surprising as most AUS graduates face better labor market opportunities than the average Middle Eastern youth. For all these reasons, one needs to use caution while extrapolating the results here for the general youth population in the Middle East.

---

**George S. Naufal** is Assistant Professor of Economics at the American University of Sharjah, and a research fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). He received a Ph.D. in Economics from Texas A&M University. His primary research includes migration and its consequences, and the impact of remittances on the remitting countries in the Middle East and North Africa, with an emphasis on the Gulf countries. He is the co-author of *Expats and the Labor Force: The Story of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). He also has published several journal articles and book chapters. His work has been cited by regional and international media outlets, including *The National*, *Gulf News*, and *The New York Times*.

**Ismail H. Genc** is Professor of Economics, and head of the Economics Department, at the American University of Sharjah. Genc received a Ph.D. in economics from Texas A&M University. He also served as Vice-President of the Southwestern Economics Association, sits on various editorial boards, and provides testimony to policy/decision makers in industry and governmental bodies. His work has appeared in a number of academic outlets such as journals and books, and has been recognized with grants and contracts as well as several awards/honors.

**Carlos Vargas-Silva** is an Economist and Senior Researcher at COMPAS, and a member of the Migration Observatory team. He is also a member of Kellogg College. His research interests include the economic impact of immigration on migrant receiving countries and the link between migration, including forced migration, and economic development in migrant sending countries. Vargas-Silva has been a consultant on for several international and policy agencies including the Asian Development Bank, European Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, UK Home Office, and the United Nations University. He is an Associate Editor of the journal *Migration Studies*.



CIRIS

CENTER FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
AND REGIONAL  
STUDIES

---

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE IN QATAR





*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*

*School of Foreign Service in Qatar  
Center for International and Regional Studies*

P. O. Box 23689, Qatar Foundation  
Doha, State of Qatar  
© 2015

<http://cirs.georgetown.edu>  
[cirsresearch@georgetown.edu](mailto:cirsresearch@georgetown.edu)

Tel +974 4457 8400  
Fax +974 4457 8401