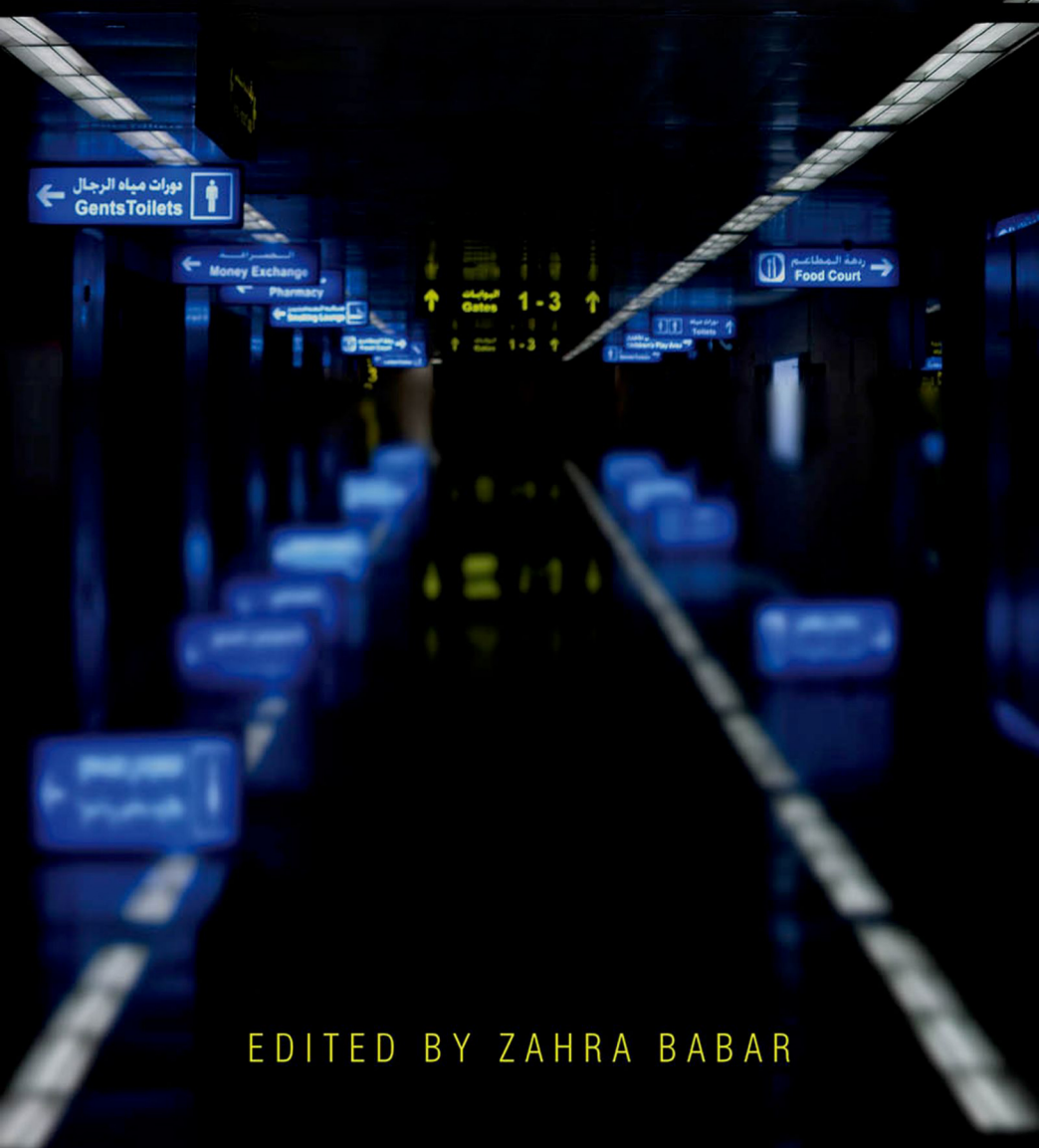




# ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE GCC



EDITED BY ZAHRA BABAR



# ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE GCC



ZAHRA BABAR

(*Editor*)

# Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC



جامعة جورجتاون قطر

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY QATAR

Center for International and Regional Studies

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide.

Oxford New York  
Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi  
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in  
Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece  
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore  
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press  
in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by  
Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Copyright © Zahra Babar 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available  
Zahra Babar.

Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC.  
ISBN: 9780190608873

Printed in India on acid-free paper

## CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>		vii
<i>Contributors</i>		ix
<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>		xvii
1. Introduction	<i>Zabra Babar</i>	1
2. Working for the Neighbours: Arab Migrants in Qatar	<i>Zabra Babar</i>	19
3. Arab Migrant Teachers in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar: Challenges and Opportunities	<i>Natasha Ridge, Soha Shami and Susan Kippels</i>	39
4. The Model Immigrant: Second Generation Hadramis in Kuwait and the Legacy of a 'Good Reputation'	<i>Abdullah Alajmi</i>	65
5. The Egyptian 'Invasion' of Kuwait: Navigating Possibilities among the Impossible	<i>Abbie Taylor, Nada Soudy and Susan Martin</i>	85
6. The 'Other Arab' and Gulf Citizens: Mutual Accommodation of Palestinians in the UAE in Historical Context	<i>Manal A. Jamal</i>	111
7. 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	<i>Harry Cook and Michael Newson</i>	133
8. An Emerging Trend in Arab Migration: Highly Skilled Arab Females in the GCC Countries	<i>Françoise De Bel-Air</i>	169
9. Highly Skilled Lebanese Transnational Migrants: A Kuwait Perspective	<i>Garret Maher</i>	197

## CONTENTS

10. Sport Labour Migrant Communities from the Maghreb in the GCC	<i>Mahfoud Amara</i>	217
11. Attitudes of Students in the GCC Region towards the Arab Spring: A Case Study of Students in the UAE	<i>George Naufal, Ismail Genc, and Carlos Vargas-Silva</i>	235
Appendix: Survey of Students' Attitudes in the GCC Towards the Arab Spring (November 2013)		247
<i>Notes</i>		251
<i>Index</i>		297

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume emerged as the result of a grant-driven research initiative undertaken between 2012 and 2014 by the Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS) at Georgetown University in Qatar. From the very early stages of this project a number of scholars provided their intellectual input in crafting this study of Arab migrant communities in the GCC. Grateful acknowledgement goes to the participants of the two working groups that were held in Doha, in particular to Mohammad Al-Waqfi, Sulayman Khalaf, Heba Nassar, Ramzi Nasser, Ganesh Seshan, Nasra Shah, and Paul Tacon. My own two chapters in this volume benefited significantly from the intellectual and practical input of my colleagues at the CIRS, without whom the task of editing this volume would have been impossible. For all their encouragement and assistance, I would like to offer a heartfelt thanks to Haya Al-Noaimi, Misba Bhatti, Matthew Buehler, Nerida Child Dimasi, Islam Hassan, Mehran Kamrava, Dionysis Markakis, Suzi Mirgani, Dwaa Osman, Nadia Talpur, and Elizabeth Wanucha. Barb Gillis, who is no longer physically with us at CIRS, is missed greatly each and every day. My two student research assistants, Hazim Ali and Umber Latafat, provided me with invaluable support in multiple ways, but I owe them a particular debt of gratitude for sorting out the data into decipherable charts and figures. I would also like to thank officials at Qatar's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs for providing me with access to the data that makes Chapter 2 of this volume possible. Finally, grateful acknowledgement goes also to the Qatar Foundation for its support of such research endeavours.

From my birth, my parents, Maryam and Bashir Khan Babar, dragged me to all corners of the earth, and thus deserve a good portion of the blame for my enduring fascination with questions of mobility, alienation, and the search for roots and belonging. For that and for many other reasons, I dedicate this volume to them.

*Zahra Babar*



## CONTRIBUTORS

**Abdullah Alajmi** is Professor of the Department of General Studies and also Assistant Director of Academic Affairs at the Arab Open University in Kuwait. He is an anthropologist whose research interests include ethnohistory, economic culture, development, migration, sociolinguistics, and the problematics of ethnographic interpretation. While completing his Master's degree in the US, he examined the production of Bedouin Nabat poetry in Kuwait as a politico-cultural practice in relation to state politics. While completing his MSc and PhD at the London School of Economics, he carried out ethnographic research among Yemeni immigrants in Kuwait, focusing particularly on the Hadrami service in the domestic sphere of Kuwaiti households.

**Mahfoud Amara** is Assistant Professor in Sport Management and Policy at the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University. Prior to joining Qatar University, from 2004 until 2015, he was Assistant Professor in Sport Policy and Management and Deputy Director of the Centre for Olympic Studies and Research in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, at Loughborough University. His research interests focus on sport business, culture, and politics in Arab and Muslim contexts. He has published on the politics of the Pan-Arab Games, sport in colonial and post-colonial contexts, sport and the business of media broadcasting, the sport and modernization debate, and sport development and development through sport. His other research interests include sport, multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue, including the provision of sport for ethnic minorities, sport and social inclusion, and sport and integration. Dr. Amara has carried out research for a range of national and international bodies including the British Academy, the European Commission, and UNESCO. He was a member of an external

## CONTRIBUTORS

assessment panel of the BBC's regional sports coverage in 2007, and has been invited to speak on his research at a number of national and international conferences, particularly in relation to sport in the Middle East and North African region, and on sport and multiculturalism debates in Europe. In 2012, he published a book entitled *Sport Politics and Society in the Arab World*, (Palgrave Macmillan). He has also served as co-editor with Alberto Testa of *Sport in Islam and in Muslim Communities* (Routledge, 2015).

**Zahra Babar** is Associate Director for Research at the Center for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University in Qatar. Previously, she served with the International Labor Organization and the United Nations Development Programme. Her current research interests include rural development, Gulf migration and labour policies, citizenship in the Persian Gulf states, and GCC regional integration. Her recent publications include: with Andrew Gardner, 'Circular Migration in the Gulf States', *Impact of Circular Migration on Human, Political and Civil Rights: A Global Perspective*, eds. Carlota Sole et al (Springer, 2016); with Dwaá Osman, 'Women, Work, and the Weak State: A Case Study of Pakistan and Sudan', *Fragile Politics: Weak States in the Greater Middle East*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Hurst/Oxford University Press, 2016), 'Population, Power, and Distributional Politics in Qatar', *Journal of Arabian Studies* (Vol. 5, Issue 2, 2015), and 'The Cost of Belonging: Citizenship Construction in the State of Qatar', *Middle East Journal* (Vol. 68, No. 3, 2014). She has co-edited, with Mehran Kamrava, *Migrant Labor in the Persian Gulf* (Hurst/Columbia University, 2012) and, with Suzi Mirgani, *Food Security in the Middle East* (Hurst/Oxford University Press, 2014).

**Harry Cook** is Data Management and Research Specialist for IOM (International Organization for Migration)'s Migrant Assistance Division at IOM Headquarters in Geneva. He serves as the Organization's primary reference point for data on human trafficking and vulnerable migrants, developing standard operating procedures, policies, tools, and technology solutions for the collection, management, and analysis of such data. He was previously Research Officer for IOM's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, responsible for research into migration trends and related issues in the region and their impact on development and humanitarian objectives. Harry 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.

**Françoise De Bel-Air** is a researcher and consultant based in Paris, France. A social demographer by training, she specialises in the political demography of

## CONTRIBUTORS

Arab countries and has published extensively on her areas of research. She is currently the Scientific Coordinator for the demography module of the Gulf Labor Markets and Migration Program with the Gulf Research Center in Geneva and Dubai, and the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. She has previously served as part-time Professor at the Migration Policy Centre, and was for several years Research Fellow and Programme Manager at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Jordan.

**Ismail Genc** is currently Professor of Economics and the head of the Economics Department at the American University of Sharjah. He previously served as Associate Professor at the University of Idaho, and as Vice President of the Southwestern Economics Association. He currently sits on various editorial boards, and provides testimonies to policy- and decision-makers in industry and governmental bodies. His expertise is broadly in applied monetary economics, economic development, and remittances, and his work has appeared in a number of academic journals and books.

**Manal A. Jamal** is Associate Professor of Political Science at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Her most recent publications have appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, and *International Migration Review*, as well as in a number of edited volumes. She recently completed her first book, and is beginning a second, multi-year project. In her first book, *Democracy Promotion in Distorted Times*, which draws on research for which she won the Best Fieldwork Award (Comparative Democratization section) of the American Political Science Association, she examined the impact of the political settlements and the mediating role of Western donor assistance on political movements and emergent civil society groups in El Salvador and the Palestinian territories, culminating in Hamas' 2006 election victory and the political aftermath that transpired. In her new project, *The Arab Uprisings & Movement Mobilization in Cross Regional Perspective*, she evaluates the political-economic determinants of social movement organisation that led to these moments of upheaval in Egypt and Tunisia, compared to their predecessors in Latin America, such as in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.

**Susan Kippels** is a Research Fellow at the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research. She previously conducted research for UNICEF, undertook advocacy work with an international NGO in Uganda, and managed a private sector business in Lebanon. With UNICEF, she

## CONTRIBUTORS

researched non-formal education strategies as well as early learning in emergency contexts. Her current research interests include philanthropy and education, private education in the Gulf, and Arab migrant teachers. Susan holds a dual Bachelor's degree in Economics and Arabic from the University of Notre Dame as well as a Master's degree in International Education Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Garret Maher** has worked in the higher education sector for more than a decade. He joined the University of Exeter in February 2016, as Assistant Head of International Partnerships with a key focus on the wider European Region. Previously he worked at the University of Warwick to advance international links in Central Asia; 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, has led research operations in Brazil, Ireland, the USA, the UAE, Kuwait, and Lebanon, and has published in a number of highly ranked journals. He received his PhD in Geography, and his BA, from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and his Master's Degree from University College Dublin.

**Susan Martin** is the Donald G. Herzberg Professor Emeritus in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. She previously served as the Director of Georgetown's Institute for the Study of International Migration. She currently serves as the Chair of the Thematic Working Group on Environmental Change and Migration for the Knowledge Partnership in Migration and Development (KNOMAD) at the World Bank. Before coming to Georgetown, she served as the Executive Director of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, established by legislation to advise Congress and the President on US immigration and refugee policy. Her most recent book publications include *International Migration: Evolving Trends from the Early Twentieth Century to the Present*; *Migration and Humanitarian Crises: Causes, Consequences and Responses* and *A Nation of Immigrants*. She received her MA and PhD in the History of American Civilization from the University of Pennsylvania, and previously taught at Brandeis University and the University of Pennsylvania.

**George Naufal** is Senior Research Associate at the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A & M University and Research Fellow at the Institute of Labor Economics (IZA). Previously he was the technical director at Timberlake Consultants in London. He was also Assistant/Associate

## CONTRIBUTORS

Professor of Economics at The American University of Sharjah (2007 to 2014) in the United Arab Emirates. His primary research focuses on the Middle East and North Africa region with an emphasis on the Gulf countries. He has served as a consultant on issues related to the Middle East and has published on expats and the labour force in the GCC.

**Michael Newson** is currently based in Vienna as IOM's Labour Mobility and Human Development Specialist for South Eastern & Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region. From 2012 to 2016 he held the same position in the Middle East North Africa Region at IOM's Regional Office in Cairo. He provides technical support, policy expertise, capacity building, and training to governments, IOM officials, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the MENA region. Michael has previously worked with IOM in Bogotá and Mauritius, focusing on the development and implementation of labour migration programmes, and has served as Senior Policy Advisor in the Labor Market and Immigration Division of the Government of British Columbia in Canada, where he focused on policy issues relating to both temporary foreign workers and permanent economic immigration streams. Michael holds an MA in Social and Political Philosophy from York University in Toronto and an MBA from the Warwick Business School at the University of Warwick in the UK.

**Natasha Ridge** is currently Executive Director of the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research. She previously served as Acting Director of Research at the Dubai School of Government. Natasha's latest research focuses on the role and impact of Arab father involvement, philanthropy and education, and access and equity in the Gulf education sector. She wrote a book entitled *Education and the Reverse Gender Divide in the Gulf States: Embracing the Global, Ignoring the Local* and has a number of other publications, including chapters for the World Education Yearbook, the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and UNESCO and working papers for the Dubai School of Government and the Al Qasimi Foundation. Natasha holds a Doctorate of Education in International Education Policy from Columbia University and a Master's in International and Community Development from Deakin University, Australia.

**Soha Shami** previously worked as a Research Associate at the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research, where she conducted qualitative and quantitative education research on secondary school male dropouts in the UAE, gender and education in the GCC, the role of Arab fathers, and

## CONTRIBUTORS

teachers in the UAE. Prior to joining the Foundation, she was a teaching assistant in the Economics Department at the American University of Sharjah (AUS), where she employed her background in economics to assist in teaching coursework to undergraduate students. She also conducted qualitative market research and consumer studies in the UAE and Qatar for The Nielsen Company. Soha holds a Bachelor's degree in economics from the AUS with a minor in International Studies, and her background includes economic policy, labour economics, and development. She is currently pursuing an MSc in Economics for Development at the University of Oxford.

**Nada Souady** is a Senior Associate at Teach For All in Qatar, supporting the network's partner engagement and growth efforts in the Middle East and North Africa. Previously, she was a Research Associate and Project Manager at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, undertaking an education project that targeted different populations, including migrant workers in Qatar. Her interest in Arab migration is inspired by her own experience as an Egyptian born and raised in Qatar after her parents migrated to Qatar in the eighties. Nada recently obtained her MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University. She conducted qualitative research on Egyptians living in the US and in Qatar for her MA thesis and recently published an article entitled 'Home and belonging: a comparative study of 1.5 and second-generation Egyptian "expatriates" in Qatar and "immigrants" in the U.S.' in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. After graduation, she spent the summer working as a Research Assistant at the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University on a project focusing on Egyptians in Kuwait.

**Abbie Taylor** is a graduate of the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and co-authored her chapter in this volume while working as a Research Associate at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration. During her time at Georgetown, her research focused on the Levant, where she contributed to efforts to advocate for displaced Iraqis, Palestinians and Syrians, focusing on the histories and trajectories of both refugees and neighbouring host populations, as well as perceptions of the future and prospects of return among those displaced. The research on Egyptians in Kuwait served as a continuation of her interest in the experiences of both Arab migrants and host communities within the broader sphere of Arab intra-regional migration.

**Carlos Vargas-Silva** is Senior Researcher at the Center on Migration, Policy, and Society and a member of the Migration Observatory team at the University of Oxford. He primarily works on the labour markets cluster. He

## CONTRIBUTORS

previously served as a consultant on migration-related projects for several international and policy agencies including the Asian Development Bank, the European Commission, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the UK Home Office, and the United Nations University. 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. He is also Associate Editor of the *Migration Studies* journal.



## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

### *Tables*

Table 1.1: National and foreign populations in the GCC (by most recent year available)	2
Table 1.2: Total Arab migrant populations in the GCC region (% of total population)	3
Table 1.3: Arab expatriate populations in the GCC region	3
Table 2.1: Arab dependants in Qatar	30
Table 4.1: Cost comparison of a typical immigrant's income and expenses	79
Table 4.2: Breakdown of typical marriage expenses	80
Table 7.1: Education level indicated by respondents	148
Table 7.2: Occupation of respondents	149
Table 7.3: Occupation of employed respondents	150
Table 7.4: Indicated communities of return of respondents	152
Table 7.5: Duration of stay in Saudi Arabia by governorate of return	153
Table 7.6: Expected livelihood strategy of respondents by governorate of return (percentage)	155
Table 7.7: Education level of respondents by governorate of return	156
Table 7.8: Amount of monthly remittances to Yemen	157
Table 7.9: Amount of monthly remittances to Yemen by non-short-stayer respondents	158
Table 7.10: Remittances value cross-tabulated with respondents' level of education	159
Table 7.11: Remittance value correlated with duration of stay in Saudi Arabia	159

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 7.12: Differential regional impact of <i>nitaqat</i> policy changes	162
Table 8.1: Highly skilled, employed and total (15–64 years) populations (Bahrain, 2010; Kuwait, 2012)	176
Table 8.2: Non-Kuwaiti population by sex, migration status and country or region of citizenship of holder (December 2012)	179
Table 8.3: Distribution of respondents to the survey residing in the Gulf States by country of current residence in the Gulf and sex (Summer 2012)	181
Table 8.4: Highest university degree obtained by respondents in Lebanon and abroad (Summer 2012)	183
Table 9.1: Profile of Kuwait interviewees' monthly earnings	204
Table 10.1: Professional football players of Maghrebi origin playing in GCC clubs	225
Table 11.1: Descriptive statistics of students	238
Table 11.2: Country of birth and passport usage (%)	240
Table 11.3: Preferred location to raise children	241
Table 11.4: Proxies for religiousness	242
Table 11.5: Correlation matrix among religiousness proxies	242
Table 11.6: Mean and standard deviation of responses, by country of birth	243
Table 11.7: Mean and standard deviation of responses by religiousness	244

### *Figures*

Figure 2.1: Qatar's population breakdown (1990–2010)	25
Figure 2.2: Qatari labour force breakdown (2013)	28
Figure 2.3: Arab nationalities as a percentage of non-local Arabs in the labour force	29
Figure 2.4: Arab nationalities as a percentage of total Arab residents	29
Figure 2.5: Labour force sectoral breakdown: education (by country of origin)	32
Figure 2.6: Labour force sectoral breakdown: finance and insurance activities (by country of origin)	33
Figure 2.7: Labour force sectoral breakdown: legal and law enforcement activities (by country of origin)	33
Figure 2.8: Labour force sectoral breakdown: managerial and administrative services (by country of origin)	33

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 2.9: Labour force sectoral breakdown: media and journalism (by country of origin)	34
Figure 2.10: Labour force sectoral breakdown: professional and technical activities (by country of origin)	34
Figure 2.11: Occupation of non-local Arabs in Qatari labour force	35
Figure 2.12: Resident Arabs vs. other resident nationalities	36
Figure 2.13: Expatriate Arabs vs. other expatriate nationalities	36
Figure 3.1: UAE–Arab migrant educators by nationality—male (2008)	48
Figure 3.2: Qatar–Arab migrant educators by nationality—male and female (2013)	49
Figure 3.3: Push and pull factors	53
Figure 3.4: Challenges of teaching experiences in the UAE and Qatar	55
Figure 3.5: Factors that encourage teachers to stay in UAE/Qatar	56
Figure 3.6: World cloud of the ninety-one most frequently used words in interviews	57
Figure 7.1: Percentage of total respondents by length of stay reported in Saudi Arabia, over time	144
Figure 7.2: Number of respondents by age (in years)	146
Figure 8.1: Arab employed population by main occupation group and sex (Bahrain, 2010; Kuwait, 2012)	177
Figure 8.2: Respondents’ marital status by sex (2012)	182
Figure 8.3: Respondents’ field of education by sex (2012)	184
Figure 8.4: Main economic occupation of respondents, by sex (2012)	185
Figure 8.5: Respondents’ professional status, by sex (2012)	186
Figure 8.6: Ownership of the company employing respondents (2012)	187
Figure 8.7: Size of the company employing respondents (2012)	188
Figure 8.8: Respondents’ first job in the Gulf: recruitment channels, by sex (2012)	189
Figure 8.9: Reasons for leaving Lebanon, by sex (2012)	192



## INTRODUCTION

*Zahra Babar*

Increasingly, 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 labour market. In contemporary times, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have emerged as the third-largest hub of international labour migration.

This migration has attracted increasing journalistic attention and a growing body of scholarship from academics.<sup>1</sup> 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 and South-East Asia, and Western Europe. Not only are Arab migratory patterns into the Gulf 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

## ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE GCC

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 their host countries.

Table 1.1: National and foreign populations in the GCC (by most recent year available)

<i>GCC states</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Nationals</i>	<i>Foreigners</i>	<i>Total population</i>
Bahrain	2013	614,830	638,361	1,253,191
Kuwait	2011	1,089,969	1,975,881	3,065,850
Oman	2014	2,260,705	1,732,188	3,992,893
Qatar*	2013	177,666	1,592,608	1,770,274
Saudi Arabia	2007	17,493,364	6,487,470	23,980,834
UAE	2005	825,495	3,280,932	4,106,427

\* In Qatar the only publicly available data on population states for those '15 years and above', so this total does not include minors under the age of 15.

The Middle East displays high levels of inequality, where countries with very different economic, political, and social resources live side by side.<sup>3</sup> Over the past fifty years, 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 neighbouring 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 small sheikhdoms of the Gulf. The particular demographic features and economic needs of the states of the GCC have facilitated this pattern of migration.

From the middle of the twentieth 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 labour markets. As a consequence, in the non-oil states labour out-migration evolved into a critical lifeline for individuals seeking economic traction, as well as policymakers concerned with providing employment

## INTRODUCTION

opportunities for their citizens.<sup>5</sup> The wealthier GCC states, whose burgeoning development agendas outstripped local labour supplies, served as a natural regional draw for labour migrants from within the Arab world.

Table 1.2: Total Arab migrant populations in the GCC region (% of total population)<sup>6</sup>

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	
	<i>1995</i>	<i>2004</i>
Bahrain	12	15
Kuwait	33	30
Oman	11	6
Qatar	21	19
Saudi Arabia	30	33
UAE	10	13

Table 1.3: Arab expatriate populations in the GCC region<sup>7</sup>

<i>Country of origin</i>	<i>Bahrain 2002</i>	<i>Kuwait 2004</i>	<i>Oman 2003</i>	<i>Qatar 2004</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia 2002</i>	<i>UAE 2004</i>
Egypt	30,000	260,000	30,000	35,000	900,000	140,000
Yemen	–	–	–	–	800,000	60,000
Sudan	–	–	–	–	250,000	30,000
Jordan/Palestine	20,000	50,000	–	50,000	260,000	110,000
Syria	–	100,000	–	–	100,000	–
Bidoon (stateless)	–	80,000	–	–	–	–

As is the case in other parts of the world, particular structural push and pull factors have prompted migration within the Middle East. In addition to these existing structural factors, the region has seen its share of cyclical patterns of regional migration resulting from economic crises, conflict and war.<sup>8</sup> While the economic push factors in the Arab labour-sending countries have not radically changed, the numbers of Arab migrants present in the Gulf have significantly decreased.<sup>9</sup> Although substantive and detailed data is limited, scholars agree that the ethnic and national composition of the GCC expatriate work force has changed dramatically. In the 1960s and 1970s the bulk of the foreign work force was Arab, but gradually Asian workers replaced Arabs. In 1975, 72 per cent of the GCC expatriate workforce were Arabs. By 1985

this had decreased to 56 percent, and by 2009 this figure had further dropped to 23 percent.<sup>10</sup> Asians are now estimated to constitute more than double the number of Arab expatriates in the GCC's labour force.<sup>11</sup> Some estimates suggest that in the private sector workers not of Arab origin comprise 96 per cent of Qatar's work force, 98 per cent of the UAE's, and 90 per cent of Kuwait's.<sup>12</sup>

Economic and political factors have shaped historic patterns of migration to the Gulf, and led to the transition from a predominantly Arab expatriate labour force to one that is more 'Asianised' and international. Although reliable data is not readily available, figures suggest that about 2.4 million Arab foreign workers are present in the GCC,<sup>13</sup> and Arab migrants contribute US\$33 billion in remittances to their homelands on an annual basis.<sup>14</sup> Despite the transition in the Gulf's expatriate labour force, the continued employment opportunities provided to Arab migrants in the GCC are still of vital importance, particularly because 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 neighbouring 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.

#### *Intraregional mobility: economic drivers*

During the 1960s, Arab policymakers attempted to lay down the foundations for a common understanding of how to manage intraregional mobility, emphasizing that doing so would increase regional economic integration.<sup>15</sup> Several protocols were put forward, including the Arab Economic Unity Agreement of 1964 and the Arab Agreement for Mobility of Arab Labour No. 2 of 1967. A lack of consensus and limited political will on managing regional mobility was demonstrated by the two agreements only being ratified by fourteen countries, none of them GCC members.<sup>16</sup> Historically, GCC labour-receiving countries have considered pan-Arab market solutions not to be in alignment with their interests, and non-oil Arab states have primarily driven efforts to develop a unified regional agreement on labour mobility. While there are indications that during the 1960s the Gulf states attempted to develop migration policies sensitive to the pan-Arabist sentiments of the time, and original policies were worded in ways that privileged the hiring of Arabs, in reality these were never broadly implemented.<sup>17</sup>

As part of their socialist ruling bargains, many non-oil Arab states began investing heavily in education from the 1950s, but these efforts were more

## INTRODUCTION

successful in expanding access to rather than quality of education.<sup>18</sup> The end result was that a greater number of young people across the Arab world obtained secondary and tertiary education, but lacked the fundamental skills to match the needs of the labour market.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the continuously increasing population levels and the stream of young people entering the job market led to a situation where, despite economic growth in the non-oil countries, simply not enough jobs were available in the domestic sector.<sup>20</sup>

While Arab-origin migrants were present in the GCC states in earlier decades, the real wave of intraregional labour migration occurred in the 1970s—particularly after 1973—when astronomical increases in oil revenues led to unprecedented infrastructural development in all of the GCC states.<sup>21</sup> With small local populations unable to meet the ensuing labour demands, the region was a natural draw for Arabs from neighbouring countries with less robust economies and large numbers of the educated unemployed. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen emerged as the four countries with the highest numbers of their citizens working in the Gulf.<sup>22</sup> By the middle of the 1970s there were 1.4 million Egyptians working in the Gulf region, and by 1983 the figure had reached 2.9 million.<sup>23</sup> By 1980 almost 300,000 Jordanians (approximately 30 per cent of the Jordanian labour force) were employed in the GCC.<sup>24</sup> Yemen also served as a key exporter of its citizenry, particularly to Saudi Arabia, and in the 1980s it was estimated that close to 1 million Yemenis were living and working in one of the six oil states of the Gulf.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the changes in the number of Arab migrants, there have been historic transitions in the skills and qualifications of Arab expatriates present in the Gulf, and the way that they have been integrated into the GCC's labour markets. During the 1950s and 1960s the bulk of Arab workers in the region were skilled workers, engaged primarily in professions such as medicine, education and engineering. But by the 1970s this had changed, and Arab workers were visible throughout the labour market, including in less-skilled and lower-paying jobs.<sup>26</sup> Migration policy has not only been implemented in the GCC states to restrict people's entry, it has also been used by Arab states interested in controlling their citizens' exit. When Egypt lifted restrictions on emigration in 1973, many more Egyptians began seeking jobs in the GCC. In the 1960s, the majority of Egyptians working in the Gulf came from educated, white-collar, professional backgrounds. But by the 1970s, with changes in emigration policy, a massive wave of unskilled Egyptian migrants began to populate the region.<sup>27</sup> Post-1980s, with the influx of cheaper Asian labour to compete for jobs at the lower end of the Gulf labour market, the pattern of Arab migration to the region changed again.<sup>28</sup>

## ARAB MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE GCC

From the 1980s onwards, several Arab states began facing increasing rates of unemployment. Economic growth and development and the expansion of national labour markets were unable to keep pace with rapid increases in population size.<sup>29</sup> Onn Winckler has suggested that these states began to suffer from 'structural unemployment', partially as a result of demographic factors.<sup>30</sup> These factors included the pressures of sustaining societies where the majority of the population was young and below working age, a very low female participation rate in the labour force, dramatic increases in educational attainment levels, and public-sector employment offering 'early retirement' opportunities.<sup>31</sup> Despite implementing ambitious economic reforms and restructuring programmes, many of the non-oil Arab states continued to experience high levels of unemployment and limited opportunities for upward economic mobility for their middle classes.<sup>32</sup> While these adverse economic circumstances were apparent several decades ago, in recent years they have been magnified. Today, across the region those who struggle the most to find employment are the young, educated segment of the population who are new entrants to the labour market. As a result, many of the Arabs working in the Gulf currently are younger, educated people who were unable to find occupation in their own countries.<sup>33</sup>

The benefit for the non-oil Arab states of sending their citizens to work in the GCC—in addition to the successful, productive employment of their nationals—was most visible in the flows of financial remittances that sent infusions of foreign currency back home, along with the increasing levels of development aid that the GCC states provided. However, the disastrous impact on the non-oil Arab states when the oil market collapsed in the 1980s showed that the relationship between labour-sending and -receiving states was at best tenuous and came with costs, risks, and vulnerabilities.

With the collapse of oil prices in the mid-1980s, the economic trajectories for the Gulf states changed dramatically and the demand for Arab labour significantly declined. The then largest Arab exporters of labour—Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Yemen—faced the most immediate negative consequences of this development.<sup>34</sup> The shift from the mid-1980s onwards, when the GCC states began to increasingly seek and rely on cheaper workers from less developed Asian countries, showed that there was no such thing as regional solidarity when it came to economic pragmatism.

The decrease in Arab workers' presence in GCC countries has occurred because of the implementation of labour migration policies based on the economic, political and security concerns of the Gulf states. The argument of eco-

## INTRODUCTION

conomic rationality is that the expansion of the regional private sector, the increasing integration of the Gulf into the global economy, and the success of neo-liberal economic policies, which predicate the logic of seeking cheaper sources of labour, have all curtailed the regional demand for Arab workers. Arab economists and policymakers from the non-oil states have long suggested—and continue to suggest—that the Middle East is best served if it is conceived of as a single unit, where different parts offer different strengths to complement and stabilise one another.<sup>35</sup> Such analysis encourages a regional approach to managing labour needs, and suggests that the current domination of the Gulf labour force by Asian workers has negative consequences for the political economies of all the Arab states. In line with this, Arab neighbours urge GCC states to actively work to replace Asian migrant workers with Arab ones.

Despite ebbs and flows over time, remittances and labour mobility continue to play a significant role in relations between the GCC states and their neighbours, and this will remain so despite the decline in the overall number of Arab migrants present in the region.<sup>36</sup> Intra-regional remittance flows to the Arab labour-exporting states from the resource-rich states have outpaced trade-related flows.<sup>37</sup> Remittances from the Gulf have provided a vital economic lifeline to the less economically robust Middle Eastern countries. For example, in 2007 more than half of remittances received in Egypt came from GCC countries.<sup>38</sup> Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon today are the three largest receivers of workers' remittances in the Arab world, while the four countries that provide the largest numbers of Arab workers to GCC countries are Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Saudi Arabia remains the largest single source of remittances from the GCC region to Arab states.

### *Intraregional mobility: political factors*

Economic considerations have not been the sole determinative factor to affect Arab migration to the Gulf. This of course reinforces what the existing literature on migration has already told us: although applying an economic lens is critical to studying migration, economics alone is not enough to understand migration in any context.<sup>39</sup> As early as the 1960s, Gulf governments were uneasy with the potential threat posed by hosting large numbers of non-national Arabs.<sup>40</sup> This threat was not one that derived from Gulf governments' economic concerns, but primarily stemmed from their political qualms.<sup>41</sup> Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the 1990s, it became quite clear that labour migration policies were not immune to political events, and in fact were directly shaped by them. During

and after the First Gulf War of 1991, almost 2 million non-GCC Arabs were either expelled or voluntarily left the Gulf, which had an enduring impact on the pattern of intraregional migration.<sup>42</sup>

During the First Gulf War, several of the Arab labour-sending states with high numbers of their citizens present in GCC countries either supported Saddam Hussein and Iraq's Kuwait campaign, or expressed neutrality. The GCC states' response to this perceived disloyalty was immediate and effective. Jordan, which had not expressed outright support for the Kuwaiti cause, saw more than 200,000 of its citizens summarily ejected from Kuwait and neighbouring GCC states.<sup>43</sup> The Palestine Liberation Organization adopted a similar position during the Iraqi occupation, which resulted in the same consequences for Palestinians living and working in the Gulf.<sup>44</sup> In 1965 Palestinians had comprised 30 per cent of the foreign population in Kuwait but following the Gulf War, 150,000 Palestinians were summarily expelled from the country.<sup>45</sup> The Yemeni government also faced similar consequences over its lack of support for the Kuwaiti regime and the other GCC states, and as a result 800,000 to 900,000 Yemenis were expelled from Saudi Arabia alone. On the other hand, Syria, by way of implicit thanks for its support of the anti-Iraq coalition, benefitted by seeing an increase in the numbers of its citizens present in the GCC region after the war.

The polarising consequence of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was undoubtedly one of the most important political events to affect the region's demography. However, while the invasion may have served as a catalyst, the gradual departure of Arabs from the Gulf labour market was not the result of one causal event. Beginning in the 1970s the GCC region steadily tilted in the direction of Asian migrants, not only for the economic benefits of the cheaper labour they offered, but also because politically, culturally and socially Asians were perceived by GCC policymakers to be more amenable to short-term labour recruitment, and easier to socially and culturally segregate from the rest of the population. Due to their cultural differences, GCC policymakers considered Asians to have less of a chance of achieving assimilation and integration with the host population, and that they would leave less of a diasporic footprint, and have less of a moral right to or interest in permanent settlement and citizenship.

In addition to the First Gulf War, the Arab world has seen its share of mass movements because of political and social upheavals. The current political turmoil in the Middle East has reinvigorated older political and security concerns of the GCC states, and will certainly have repercussions on Arab intra-regional mobility. The GCC states are not signatories to the 1951 Geneva

## INTRODUCTION

Refugee Convention and have no official framework for managing or accepting refugees or asylum seekers. As of 2015, 2 million Syrian refugees are hosted in the Middle East, primarily by five countries: Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt. None of the GCC states has expressed a desire to play a role in hosting refugees of current crises. The conflict currently playing out in Yemen is certain to create a new cadre of internally displaced people pressing against the borders of yet another fractured Middle Eastern state.

The reconfiguration of the ethnic and national composition of the GCC labour force has been a gradual process and a result of economic and political factors. Over time, the region has moved from being dominated by high numbers of non-national Arab migrants to contemporary circumstances where a far greater number of non-Arabs make up the workforce. While the configuration of different nationalities and ethnicities present in each of the GCC states is continuously changing, the bulk of migrants working and living in the Gulf today come from South and South-East Asia. The notion that intra-regional Arab labour migration has supported and promoted sustained social, political, cultural and economic regional integration is clearly questionable. While intraregional labour migration has benefitted both Arab labour-sending and -receiving states, it has flourished more as a result of the national interests of states on either side of the migration divide, rather than as a result of an active effort to promote Arab solidarity. Much as we see in other parts of the world, the national interests of a particular state at a given historic moment dictate migration policies in sending and receiving Arab states.

### *Gulf migration in comparative perspective*

The study of migration in the GCC region has provided us with a richer understanding of how patterns of movement have developed in this sub-region of the Middle East. Among other things, the emerging literature on this topic has deepened our understanding of the conditions and lived experiences of migrants living in the Gulf states; focused our attention on the challenges of local labour governance practices such as the *kafala* (sponsorship system); and explored some of the deeper societal dynamics and tensions around migration that have developed in the GCC context.<sup>46</sup> However, despite the increasing empirical work being produced, a trend persists in theoretical literature of treating conditions in the Gulf as exceptional, as though the patterns of regional migration, the policymaking mechanisms in place, and the particular vulnerabilities of Gulf migrants are somehow unique to the

region. The Gulf's story of migration is all too frequently seen through the lenses of oil flows and repressive regimes, and this limited view allows for little comparative perspective and robs us of analytical depth.

Much of the story of Gulf migration in fact reflects broader global trends, and can be compared with what occurs in other parts of the world that are similarly struggling with the challenges of managing migration. While the Gulf region has increasingly become a site of contestation over accepted rights and norms for migrants, this is but one site in what is in fact a globalised struggle. While much of the discussion in the GCC region appears to centre on regional specificities and focuses on the particularly egregious nature of local practices of migration management, the attention that Gulf governments are receiving is very closely tied to and informed by debates that are equally relevant elsewhere. At the most fundamental level, the implementation of national immigration policies by all states often inherently clashes with migrants' basic human rights. Broader rights for migrants, such as rights to integration and inclusion, are being contested and challenged in many parts of the world. The rising popularity of temporary worker programmes—which share a marked similarity with the *kafala*—in the historic migration hubs of North America and Europe indicates that, worldwide, states are showing a noticeable preference for meeting labour-market shortages without offering permanent settlement.<sup>47</sup> Increasingly, researchers on Gulf migration are pointing out that migrants in the Gulf are far from a homogeneous group, and that their particular conditions and exposures to vulnerability reflect differences in class, gender and income levels.<sup>48</sup> Targeted migration policies and practices, which separate out skilled and sought-after international workers from lower-income, less-skilled migrants, is also not a phenomenon unique to the Gulf.<sup>49</sup> The era of globalisation, which has allowed an increasing number of the skilled and highly skilled to take up international occupations and in essence become 'transnational' migrants, has simultaneously led to a proliferation of policies that ease the settlement of 'more desirable' migrants, while increasing restrictions and limitations on unskilled workers populating jobs in the lower strata of the labour market.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, in addition to income, skill and gender levels, the migration experience in the GCC region is also informed by migrants' particular ethnic, linguistic and national identity affiliations.<sup>51</sup> Focusing on Arab communities in the region allows us not only to explore not only how culture and ethnicity are entwined with migration in the Gulf, but also to contribute to the broader global understanding of migration.

The research that was undertaken for the chapters that follow is neither based on a single a priori hypothesis nor on a series of interlinking hypotheses.

## INTRODUCTION

Rather, the goal is to present readers with a series of cross-disciplinary studies that provide a deeper, empirically based understanding of a phenomenon that has gone largely neglected in the study of the Gulf region, namely the persistent presence of an Arab expatriate community. Within the literature on regional migration acknowledgement is growing that it is not only the markers of class and income, but also ethnicity, nationality, language, religion and culture that shape and inform the migration experience. It is thus even more of an imperative to study sub-national and ethnic foreign communities in the Gulf, so as to gain a more nuanced understanding of processes and experiences of regional migration. Additionally, and as discussed in the previous paragraphs, the different chapter contributions in this volume, when read as a whole, push against prevailing assumptions about the Gulf's exceptionalism in terms of labour migration.

### *In this volume*

Sensitivities in some of the GCC states regarding the public disclosure of information on their demographic conditions mean 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 partly addresses this gap in the literature by providing empirically rich analyses on Arab migrant communities in the GCC. The chapters that follow use multi-disciplinary views to provide us with original material on the historic and contemporary dynamics of Arab migration to the Gulf, and unravel how the particular social and cultural practices of Arab migrants have interacted with the host states. Among other things, specific contributions allow us to consider the particular socio-economic 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 can discern any patterns of socio-cultural integration for Arab non-nationals.

Given that across the GCC region we know that the vast numbers of migrants occupying lower-income and less-skilled jobs in the construction and service sectors originate from Asia, can we say that Arab migrant workers tend to be more visible in medium- or high-skilled occupations? Chapter Two focuses on addressing this particular question through a review of the Arab

expatriate labour force in Qatar, and provides us with original data from Qatar's Ministry of Labour. Data provided in the chapter shows that the number of Arab migrants present in Qatar is far lower than previous work has suggested. Additionally, the analysis of Arab migrants' integration into the Qatari national labour market bolsters the argument that Arab migrants for the most part tend to occupy positions in sectors that are at higher income and skill levels than their Asian counterparts.

Historically, Egypt has provided the Gulf with a trained workforce that has served as the backbone in certain critical sectors such as education, healthcare and the judiciary. Despite the transition in the region's workforce and the move to a less costly, Asianised labour pool, many Egyptians continue to work in the Gulf's education sector. In Chapter Three, Natasha Ridge, Soha Shami and Susan Kippels explore the dynamics of skilled Arab migrants through a sectoral analysis of their integration into the education sectors in the UAE and Qatar. Through this comparative case study, Chapter Three unravels anxieties and challenges Arab migrant teachers face in GCC countries, and also provides us with a deeper understanding of how their motivations and reasons for working in the Gulf differ from other expatriate teachers in the Gulf. Zahra Babar's and Ridge, Shami and Kippels' chapters underscore that skilled Arab workers dominate particular sectors and may continue to do so in the future, a reflection perhaps of the particular linguistic and ethno-cultural abilities required to do certain jobs in the Gulf.

What are the overall living, employment and residential conditions and status of long-term Arab migrants in Gulf states? The Yemeni, Egyptian and Palestinian communities in the GCC are assumed to be into their third generation and have left a diasporic presence in the region, despite restrictive policymaking mechanisms designed to curtail pathways to assimilation and long-term settlement. Have there been naturalisation tracks for these migrants, and if so, what is the form of citizenship access that they may benefit from? Despite the obvious need to expand their domestic labour forces, the GCC states have been extremely reluctant to extend naturalised citizenship, even to their Arab neighbours.<sup>52</sup> Several chapters in the volume address the enduring presence of certain Arab migrant communities in the Gulf. Abdullah Alajami examines the experiences of migrants in Kuwait who come from the Hadramaut region of Yemen. He suggests that this historically embedded migratory pattern developed as a result of individual- and household-level economically motivated decision-making, but was also buttressed by congenial and fraternal social relations that existed between Yemen and Kuwait. He