



**Gulf Research Center Foundation**  
Knowledge for All

## **Third Gulf Research Meeting 2012**

### **Workshop Migration in the Gulf**

#### **Directors**

**Prof. Philippe Fargues, European University Institute, Italy &  
Prof. Nasra Shah, Kuwait University**

#### **Summary**

Our workshop had similar goals to the one we organized during the first Gulf Research Meeting in July 2010. Our main aims were to assess the current trends and patterns of migration and appraise the consequences in terms of the costs and benefits for sending as well as receiving countries. Another major goal was to assess the governance of migration in terms of the sustainability of current migration patterns in light of the socio-demographic changes occurring in the receiving countries, especially their efforts towards indigenization of the workforce. The workshop received more than 40 proposals from which 15 were selected. Three participants were unable to attend. A total of 12 papers were received. In addition, a paper was presented by one of the workshop directors. Participants included economists, demographers, sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists resulting in a highly interdisciplinary debate and discussion.

The papers covered a wide array of topics ranging from broad theoretical overviews to specific case studies. Almost all the six Gulf countries and several sending countries were covered. The workshop began with a paper by Phillippe Fargues outlining the uniqueness of the Gulf region in terms of a phenomenal reliance on foreign workers combined with exclusion from the receiving country's citizenship and integration in the host culture. It described three stages through which the migration process has evolved and outlined the separate demographics of the populations of nationals and non-nationals. A theoretical paper by Oded Stark and Lukasz Byra assessed the impact of international migration of unskilled workers on the average skill level in the home country and the ensuing welfare implications for the home country. Five papers focused on migration issues in receiving GCC countries. In her paper on the tiering of citizenship, migration, and nationality rights in the United Arab Emirates, Manal Jamal showed how the current nationality and tiered rights policies are built on an institutional legacy inherited from the British during the existence of UAE as a Trucial State. Francoise De Bel Air presented a paper describing the characteristics of the Kafala system and its economic, social and political outreach. She concluded that the sponsorship system supports the social and economic segmentation between nationals and foreigners and the maintenance of control over the latter by the

former. Shefali Jha addressed the contradiction between the Qatari government's policies to increase the participation of nationals in the workforce and their declining proportion instead. Adel Al- Herbie and colleagues focused on the trends of tuberculosis in Kuwait. They concluded that the recent rise in prevalence of tuberculosis among non-nationals places a burden on Kuwait's health system that requires alternative management strategies. In his paper on "Space and Demography in Bahrain," Omar AlShehabi described how spatial and demographic factors have driven the geographic transformation of Bahrain. The rapid rise in population, caused mainly by the 'politically naturalized' citizens has led to the geographical shifting and intermixing of various groups. Three papers dealt with various aspects of migration from India to the Gulf. In their paper on labor market activity of Indians in the Gulf, Mathias Czaika and Maria Villares Varela found that occupational changes during an individual's migration history had an impact on the length of stay in the Gulf. Lakshmi Priya described how the efforts of many hard-working Indian entrepreneurs such as Ram Buxani helped in the development of present-day Dubai. R.S. Reshmi and Unisa Sayeed described several aspects of the migrant experience of domestic worker returnees from the Gulf to Kerala villages based on a household survey of 71 domestic workers. One paper focused on migration from Bangladesh and another on Lebanon. In his paper on migrant worker recruitment in Bangladesh, Md. Mizanur Rahman described the process through which recruitment agents organize such migration. He pointed out the difference between the arrangement of 'flying' visas and 'free' visas. Rita Yazigi noted that 45 percent of Lebanese households have at least one family member abroad. There has been a sharp increase in Lebanese university graduates who seek to go overseas in the absence of jobs at home.

The group discussed publication plans and preferences of participants. It was agreed that the directors would explore the possibility of publishing selected papers in a special issue of the Asian and Pacific Migration Journal in which four papers presented at the migration workshop of the Gulf Research Meeting 2010 are already under process.

### **Papers**

- "Immigration and Associated Increase of Tuberculosis Trends in the State of Kuwait" by Adel Al Harbie and Ali Sadek, Ministry of Health, Kuwait City, Kuwait
- "The Demographic and Spatial Transformations of the Cities of Bahrain" by Omar Al Shehabi, Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait City, Kuwait
- "Kano to Jeddah - Explanations on Migration Dynamics of Nigerian Migrants and Traffickers in Saudi Arabia" by Aliyu Salisu Barau, University of Technology Malaysia, Johor, Malaysia
- "Labour Market Activity and Temporary Migration: The Case of Indian Expatriates in the Gulf" by Mathias Czaika and Maria Villares Varela, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
- "Reforming the Kafala (Sponsorship) in the GCC Countries: What Socio-Political Stakes? The Case of Saudi Arabia" by Francoise De Bel Air, European University Institute, Florence, Italy
- "Beyond Globalization and Oil: the Tiering of Citizenship, Migration, and Nationality Rights in the United Arab Emirates" by Manal Jamal, James Madison University, Virginia, United States
- "Expatriate Labor and Nation Building: Issues and Contentions in Qatar" by Shefali Jha, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
- "Indian Entrepreneurs in Gulf: A Case Study of Ram Buxani" by Lakshmi Priya, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
- "Recruitment of Labour Migrants for the GCC Countries: The Bangladeshi Case" by Md Mizanur Rahman, National University of Singapore, Singapore
- "Working and Living Conditions of Domestic Workers in the Gulf - A Special Reference to Female Migrants from Kerala, India" by Reshmi R.S. and Unisa Sayeed, Deemed University, Mumbai, India

- “A Back-Door Brain Drain: How Low-Skill Employment Prospects Abroad Erode Skill Formation at Home” by Oded Stark and Lukasz Byra, Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland
- “The Lebanese Emigration: Between Myths and Facts” by Rita Yazigi, Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth/Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin en Yvelines, Beirut, Lebanon