Introduction

Antía Mato Bouzas

Migration is a constituent feature of Gulf societies. It is framed in temporary terms, as if migrants remained for the period of their contracts and then left, presumably without a trace. Yet, migration has been a constant phenomenon for many decades, which in some cases has involved various generations of the same family and from the same communities. This volume examines the social reality of the permanent transient resident who is an active part of the process of placemaking and of the transmission of knowledge in the region. The contributions, which are from various disciplinary fields, draw on two main assumptions: first, that migration is regarded as integral to Gulf societies; and second, that the Gulf continues to exert an influence on other regions by way of migration diplomacy and on the construction of transnational spaces that involve citizens and noncitizens living in the Gulf. The chapters underscore how nonnationals of different categories try to appropriate this space as their own in what amounts to claims of membership. The volume also includes the often-underrepresented perspective of those who belong to the nation—that is, the ways in which citizens, in this case women from privileged classes, distinguish between "Gulf" and "non-Gulf" spaces in their condition as a minority group. Most of the contributions focus on the United Arab Emirates (UAE), yet the issues addressed in the chapters are representative of the rest of the Arab states in the Gulf. By being and living in the Gulf, migrants engage in a dialogical relationship with these ever-present others. However, this presence also affects the ways citizens and government actors negotiate their "own" Gulf spaces.

The aim of this book is to analyze how, by constructing new spaces, migration is shaping the Gulf Arab states. The volume emphasizes in particular the interactions of political, economic, social, and cultural fields. In this volume the notion of Gulf space bears a transnational dimension; what happens in the Gulf impacts the regions that send migrants there. Chapter 6 illustrates this in relation to the impact of Gulf migration on sartorial practices in the Indian state of Kerala. Therefore, the focus of this volume

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is not only on the Gulf states, but also on the regions that send migrants there. This approach reveals an "enlarged" Gulf space whose influence in other regions is enduring. Other contributions, such as those written by authors brought up in the Arab Peninsula, underscore the tensions that exist between the lived space of constant segregation and the representational space of the Gulf as a cosmopolitan place. How does this "enlargement" in terms of the Gulf's influence in other regions relate to its "shrinkage," given that the Gulf is the result of what remains after constituting a wide range of outsiders?

Migration and the Gulf

Migration is central to the configuration of the contemporary Gulf. Although previous mobilities to the Gulf region existed, notably linked to the slave trade and labor movement and trade under the British and Ottoman empires (Freitag 2020), state formation and nation building processes have worked, to a great extent, to erase part of that past. The movement of people to this region, which has been almost exclusively for labor purposes, shares characteristics with other migrant movements elsewhere, but it is framed and organized in substantially different terms. Migration to the Gulf responds to the logic of modernization. However, the constant and continued dependency of the mainly smaller Gulf states on resources (natural resources such as water and land, and human resources such as labor), along with their inability to produce added-value goods (except for the development of services), casts serious doubts about the success of this modernization process. The rentier model of the state does not so much foster industrialization processes as it does dominate the manner of improving the population's standard of life and stimulate further service investments once the oil reserves have run out (Massey et al. 1998: 134–35). This "rentier logic" can also be found in other spheres of socioeconomic life, such as in the sponsorship system for developing businesses in which foreign entrepreneurs need national partners to develop any type of economic activity. In many cases, national partners limit themselves to providing their names and receiving potential benefits without playing a role (Gardner 2008: 72–73). The transformative process of modernization is further hampered by the perpetuation of a model of dependency that relies on high levels of temporary foreign populations to keep the economy running while denying them legal and political rights; it also has difficulties in developing a native labor force in key sectors.

Like other movements of migrants to developed countries, migration to the Gulf is organized along the logic of the "guest worker" or the *Gastarbei-*

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ter, although it differs from these movements on the issue of the possibility of sociopolitical inclusion in the receiving society. Migrants in the Gulf, for example, cannot attain citizenship and other permanent benefits, such as health care or a pension after retirement. Except for very exceptional cases, their stay in the Gulf is bound by a date of departure and by their belonging elsewhere. There is a strong hierarchy to this migrant system in which Europeans and Americans occupy top positions, and a racial component, which reproduces orientalist views that correlate types of workers with specific jobs (Gardner and Nagy 2008; Walsh 2012; Ahmad 2017). This segmentation is reflected in a language that classifies a variety of self-definitions and the identifications of others as ranging from "expatriates" and "migrants" to "temporary workers" (Mato Bouzas 2018; Horinuki 2020: 36).

The distinction between citizen and noncitizen is equally crucial to understanding the specifics of Gulf migration and to the construction of a racialized Arab Gulf identity, as already shown in the classical ethnographic work on Kuwait authored by Anh Longva (1997). This distinction functions similarly to other segregated societies, such as in the case of the legally sanctioned apartheid system that existed in South Africa, or in the structural differentiation between Palestinians and Jews that exists within Israel. In the Gulf, however, the central issue of discrimination has to do with the foreign nationality of migrants and the particularities of the *kafala* labor system that almost reduces migrants to a commodity (Mato Bouzas 2018: 5). Even though the migrant foreigner is erased from what could be defined in the Lefebvrian sense as the abstract space of economic management (see Lefebvre 1991: 306–18), he or she cannot go unnoticed in the streets and in the urban landscapes of Gulf cities. Migrants appropriate and shape those places, and in so doing, they fully inhabit Gulf space.

Although Gulf migration has been a topic of interest (in macroeconomic terms) for economists and demographers for decades, it was in the 1990s that the broader dimensions of this phenomenon began to attract specific attention. Addleton explored migration to the Gulf from Pakistan by focusing his study on the conditions of both the sending and the receiving societies, and he pointed out the importance of remittances for the development of the Pakistani economy (Addleton 1992). The social dimension of migration has been addressed by Longva in her pioneering ethnographic study on Kuwait, *Walls Built on Sand* (1997), in which she demonstrates how migration plays an essential role in politics and nation building processes in the Gulf. However, it was not until very recently that issues such as the diversity of these migrant populations, the ways they cope with the *kafala* sponsorship system, and their mobility strategies began to receive more systematic attention (Gardner and Nagy 2008; Shah 2004; Shah and Fargues 2011). This literature has a strong focus on South Asians because they are

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among the largest migrant groups in the Gulf (Jain and Oommen 2016). However, over the years, academic scholarship has increasingly addressed the case of long-stablished communities such as Arab communities (Babar 2017), and the lesser-explored African and Asian groups such as Eritreans and Filipino groups (Thiollet 2007; Malik 2017; Hosoda 2020). In addition to the interest in migrant communities in the Gulf states, research on Gulf migration addresses the impact of migrant activity in Gulf societies and in the sending areas, and issues of gender, entrepreneurship, and the historical aspects of regional integration (Gamburd 2002; Osella and Osella 2007; Thiollet 2007; Hosoda 2020). Many of these works focus on the lives of migrant communities in Gulf societies and on how the Gulf experience influences their lives after their return—and in so doing they contribute to the understanding of Gulf space (Gardner and Nagy 2008; Babar 2017; Ishi et al. 2020; Ahmad 2017). The transnational dimension of the Gulf is an underlying element in many of these works (Walsh 2012). In this respect, the present volume connects with already existing literature on the topic but centers its attention on how Gulf space is being produced.

This volume focuses on the space inhabited by migrants and former migrants in the Gulf cities, the abstract space they help produce and model through their work (and from which they are excluded), their use of public space, and their social interactions and memory. By relating migrants' experiences to the general context of the Gulf, this volume attempts to make sense of how Gulf governments attempt to portray the Gulf as an "open" and "cosmopolitan" space while at the same time maintaining segregation and exclusion at the societal level. On the one hand, the definition of Gulf migration as "temporal" appears problematic because this allegedly temporary system has reproduced permanent states of precarity over time. On the other hand, the long existing sediments left by generations of migrants in Gulf societies—composed of their transfer of knowledge, their lives in specific city areas, their memories, their appropriation of places—that are characteristic of social diversity in the Gulf are removed in the framing of a contemporary Gulf cosmopolitanism. The latter, as Craig Calhoun would argue, is defined in liberal terms because Gulf cosmopolitanism is articulated in terms of being free from social belonging rather than recognizing a special sort of belonging (Calhoun 2003: 532).

Research in the Gulf states is difficult and expensive. The topic of migration is sensitive because it intertwines with other equally delicate sociopolitical questions about the authoritarian regimes present in the Gulf region (Matsuo 2020: 55–56). However, the social contexts of each of these countries are different and, following the developments of the Arab Spring uprisings and protests, they have been made less accessible to researchers. In addition, major transformations are taking place in the region due to the

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policies of replacing foreign workforces with national ones; in each of the respective countries, these policies are known as Saudianization, Kuwaitization, Omanization, and so on. Moreover, the yet-to-be-studied forceful expulsion of migrants due to the pandemic in 2020 poses additional challenges to the continued building of a consistent corpus of research.

Former research on the melting pot that is Bahrein (Gardner 2008; Louër 2008; Nagy 2008) has proven difficult in recent years owing to the dramatic developments after the uprising in 2011 (Khalifa 2011; Louër 2013). The case of Oman is substantially different because, alongside the policies of Omanization and the deployment of Arabness as a key marker of national identity, the country is also tacitly recognizing the historical importance of its society's composite culture. This understanding can be seen when visiting the National Museum of Oman in Muscat, or through its not-exempt-from-criticism display in award-winning literary works such as *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi (2019). Except for religiously related questions, research on migration to Saudi Arabia focuses mostly on the sending areas and is connected to the migrants' working experiences in these societies (Sons 2020). An open discussion about belonging and membership is still lacking in Saudi Arabia, although the literary analysis provided by Nadeen Dakkak in this volume shows an emerging concern with these questions. Both Oman and Saudi Arabia, unlike the other smaller Gulf states, are geographically large and have a majority national population, both of which significantly affect their approach to the management of migration.

Most of the research that has been produced on migration to the Gulf in recent years, however, focuses on the smaller states, especially on the UAE, and focuses prominently on the city of Dubai as a paradigm of "Gulf cosmopolitanism," on Kuwait, and, to a lesser extent, on Qatar. The book by Neha Vora on Indian middle-class groups in Dubai made a significant contribution to this subfield by highlighting the production of a neoliberal form of belonging because, "they [middle-class Indian migrants] are integral to the operation of governance, to national identity and citizenship, and to the functioning of Dubai's liberalized and globalized market forms" (Vora 2013: 3). Rather than stressing the impossibility of membership and the ways in which this can be achieved, other studies of long-term rooted communities such as Pakistanis and Iranians emphasize the role of Gulf cities simply for what they are (Errichiello 2018; Moghadam 2013). This latter approach is adopted by most of the contributors to this volume, as exemplified by Dakkak in her literary analysis of the novel *Samrawit*, in which the main character reflects on the long presence of Eritreans and other groups in the city of Jeddah. However, the question of citizenship can be a determining factor for nonnational artists while representing the nation internationally at cultural events, which Derderian aptly raises as a ques-

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tion with regard to the ambivalence of the state on the issue of membership. Academic scholarship on the topic of migration to Kuwait highlights how the Gulf experience has an underlying interactional component that can deeply affect the trajectories of migrants on matters of faith (Ahmad 2017), which is also addressed by Alloul and Karinkurayil in this volume. However, the Kuwaiti case is also relevant because, although this country recognizes a "composite" culture as part of the nation-building process in the sense that the most prominent families in Kuwait acknowledge a foreign Iranian, Iraqi, or Saudi origin (which is compatible with Kuwaitness), it bars bottom-tier groups in the society such as the *bidun* from nationalization (Beaugrand 2019). Finally, research on Qatar has also addressed how, as part of its cultural diplomacy, the government has promoted cosmopolitan ideals through the building of museums (Koch 2019), an issue that is closely linked to issues of labor (Donini 2019). Other publications that focus on this state address the social diversity of its communities with regard to the question of citizenship (Babar 2017; Malik 2017).

This rather sketchy landscape of research on migration to the Arab states in the Gulf shows that, despite the homogenous labor system of sponsorship implemented in all of them, the domestic contexts of each of these states are different. Yet the question of membership and the social and labor rights of communities of migrant origin (including stateless people such as the *bidun*) permeates much of this research. In this sense, the contributions to this volume reflect the state-of-the-art contemporary research on Gulf migration. Most of the chapters, however, directly or indirectly focus on the UAE, and, more concretely, on the cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Although in terms of representation this can be seen as a limit to our claim of examining "Gulf space," the topics proposed in each chapter center on the different dimensions of this space. They consider the experiences of those raised in the region, as Dakkak does in her chapter, and as discussed in Casini's interview with the acclaimed author Deepak Unnikrishnan in the Conclusion. They also envisage the migrant trajectories in the Gulf and the enduring influence of this experience on their lives, as shown in the works of Alloul and Karinkurayil. Related to this is the migrants' constant negotiation of spaces, whether as nationals or as "contingent citizens" who are entitled to membership through national and cosmopolitan paradigms, which is analyzed by AlMutawa and Derderian.

As an epistemological tool, the notion of Gulf space in this volume allows the contributors to overcome the dichotomies of citizen/noncitizen and receiving/sending migrant regions and shifts the focus of inquiry to the existing social realities created by these very separations. These realities are exemplified by the case of the youth of migrant origin who are brought up

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in the Gulf cities, and who, once they reach the age of majority and can no longer remain under their parents' visas, will often need to leave for a third country to study and work so that they can later return to what they feel is their home. The meaning of home as a place of safety becomes, in the Gulf context, redefined as a struggle for a home. Similarly, some of the works in this volume explore the meanings of Gulf-branded cosmopolitanism in terms of embracing selective inclusion, or "contingent citizenship," and in terms of incorporating the class aspirations of Europeans of Maghrebi migrant origin. Two challenges emerge in our dealing with the notion of Gulf space: that of conceptually grasping the transience associated with this space, which is constituted by precariousness, and that of the still-unacknowledged enduring element (or influence) of this space that has resulted from the multiple interactions of the trajectories of migrant lives and the engagement of individuals and groups from the Gulf with others in different regions. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's argument that space is produced by specific actors for certain purposes (Lefebvre 1991: 84–85), this volume examines the disentanglement of what the Gulf means for different groups of people whose life trajectories are connected to the region in order to critically reflect on the intersection of mobility with citizenship, modernity, and cosmopolitanism.

Mobility, Modernity, and Citizenship

During my second fieldtrip to Kuwait in January–February 2019, which was part of a project funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG-Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) in which I studied a migrant and development network between Kuwait and northeastern Pakistan (Mato Bouzas 2018), I by chance met Muhammad, a taxi driver whom I later interviewed several times, often while traveling in the city. I initially approached him in Urdu, or the creole Hindostani often employed in the Gulf, and then we slowly switched to English, a language he spoke fluently. Muhammad was born in Kuwait, although his family hailed from the city of Sialkot, in Punjab, Pakistan. His father and other relatives were carpenters and were recruited to work in the oil fields of preindependent Kuwait because at that time there was a significant amount of available work in carpentry. The whole family lived in Kuwait for several decades, with some interruptions of up to two years, until the oil crisis of 1973 when they returned to Pakistan. Muhammad went back to Kuwait and has been moving between Kuwait and Pakistan since then. He narrated the story of his early childhood and recalled that the family was living in the desert.

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> "Kuwait at the time was only desert, nothing else. One day, a government official came to the oil field and asked my father if he would like to register us as Kuwaiti nationals, but he refused."
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because at the time [early 1960s], Pakistan was a young nation and there were many expectations. Kuwait was not modern, and there was only desert, and no cities—nothing of what you can see all around now [he gestures with his head to the city landscape marked by high buildings]. The British had just granted independence, but there was nothing here except for oil. My father thought that Pakistan had a bigger future, and it was better for us to remain Pakistani nationals."
>
> "But if you now had Kuwaiti nationality, and not Pakistani, you would be receiving many benefits from the state."
>
> "Yes, you are right. My father made a mistake. . . . Mine is a wasted life."

The conversation with Muhammad and the meaning of a "wasted life" is revealing when examining his whole trajectory, which is beyond the scope of this introduction. Muhammad spoke Arabic fluently with a Kuwaiti accent, something he said allowed him some privileged access to Kuwaiti society in terms of relations and friendship. Yet, in the end, he was living with his brother in an apartment, and his life was not that different from the segregated nature of other migrants' lives in the city.

The excerpt above reveals the often-neglected aspects of the way we approach the study of migration to the contemporary Gulf. Migration to the Gulf can be described in terms of South-South mobility in the sense that the Gulf states, despite being able to achieve high standards of living for their citizens, share a history of colonization or indirect rule similar to those of the sending regions. This "shared past" is present in the ways migrants deploy their relationship to this region. This relationship unfolds the complexity of Southern geographies of belonging and different understandings of modernity. For Muhammad's father, Kuwait was not modern at the time, especially as compared with the promising future of Pakistan during the "Decade of Development" (1958–1968). The issue of nationality, however, became important for Muhammad, whose wife and three children returned to Sialkot in the 1990s because his earnings were not enough to keep them with him. Moreover, after working and living most of his life in Kuwait, it was difficult for him to settle back in Pakistan.

Citizenship is often linked, in migrants' narrations, to modernization projects in which the attainment of naturalization or some form of membership is important for those who have established stable ties in the region, such as is the case of second generations or long-term residents. Throughout the research I conducted among unskilled and semiskilled mi-

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grant workers from northeastern Pakistan (the administrative division of Baltistan) in Kuwait, however, the question of citizenship did not appear to be relevant. This was because, in their condition as poor migrants at the bottom of the social ladder, these workers could not even consider it, and also because this migration channel was formed almost exclusively of married men with responsibilities back home, and because the community exercised tight social control among its members. None of them mentioned the idea of staying in the Gulf, except for two men who had better jobs and whose children were born and raised in Kuwait. Citizenship, as understood by migrants, is connected to the economic and social benefits attached to this form of membership, but also, and mainly for generations raised in the Gulf, it is a matter of security, namely, of having one's own place and thus preventing further displacement.

Although some youth born and/or raised in the Gulf are able to stay there and continue to work, a common path for them is having to decide when they reach the age of majority whether to move back to their parents' countries (as they hold their parents' nationalities) or try for, via higher education, the possibility of being naturalized elsewhere in Europe, the United States, Canada, or Australia. Citizenship, in this latter sense, is about the possibility of having a home, a home of a certain kind (in the general Anglo-speaking developed world), a home that can prevent further compulsory mobility because it offers security in many aspects of life.

Apart from the need for citizenship based on the need for legal, social, and economic rights, there is the question of the real emotional and affective attachment to the Gulf developed by many long-term residents and by those brought up in these societies. This volume addresses this issue in narrative and artistic fields, although the political dimension of citizenship with regard to the Gulf still remains largely unexplored. What kind of challenges does the question of citizenship pose regarding the Gulf? Is the issue only about a love for the place and the wish/right to belong to that place? Is it about access to benefits? Or does it also have to do with the possibility of participation in and/or accepting the nonparticipatory processes of these mainly authoritarian monarchies? In rather informal conversations about the events surrounding the Kuwaiti Arab Spring that I had with Kuwaiti intellectuals who were sympathetic to the idea of providing some rights for migrants, I observed the fact that the question of citizenship intersects with the political balances in these states. The granting of citizenship rights to migrants, which was under debate in late 2020 in the UAE (Naar 2020), opens the question of the sharing of state resources that is the basis of the welfare system. It also affects political balances because, as other scholars have observed, migrants are perceived as being protected by these monarchies (Matsuo 2020: 54–56).

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As with the case above of Muhammad, many blue-collar migrants in the Gulf are trapped within a continual circle of mobility that deprives them of stable affective and social relations. Although many envisage migration as a period in their lives when they can save up for the future, probably for no small number this period comprises decades that span most of their adult lives. This can be the sense in which the expression a "wasted life" is used—that is, a life that is devised to provide for others (the family and relatives) without the physical presence of, and support from, these others, but also a life without a place of one's own. In this view, the relationship of mobility and citizenship underscores the role of the Gulf as a "producer" of various categories of outsiders, whether as stateless people, contingent citizens, or, by default, as "nominal" citizens of third states (i.e., those children who automatically become citizens of their parent's countries). The existence of a significant number of noncitizens—the majority of whom are in the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrein—creates tensions with those who are entitled to citizenship in terms of access to a generous welfare state system, the literal occupation of spaces, and the rights of majority/minority groups. In this context, citizenship for noncitizens appears to be a marker of class, gender, and race; it is a consumerist item that sometimes can be purchased or recognized if one possesses enough economic resources. Also, in some Gulf states the granting and revoking of citizenship rights adheres to a policy of eliminating dissent. The state's production of a range of outsiders implies that these "outsiders" must be prepared for mobility because a constant sense of insecurity permeates their lives.

Gulf Space: Some Considerations about Transnationalism and Cosmopolitanism

The Gulf continues to exert an important influence in other regions, whether in the neighboring territories of the Indian Ocean, such as Kerala or Balochistan (Jamali 2020) and various regions in East Africa, or in more remote places in eastern Asia. This contemporary influence is due not only to the location of the Gulf's ports along major sea trading routes, but also to the fact that the Gulf is the birthplace of the tradition of Islam and it exercises a moral role for all Muslims. Moreover, an element of historical continuity also can be seen in the high density of the Gulf region's relations with territories such as the Indian state of Kerala, which is exemplified by the fact that around 5.5 percent of Kerala's population has migrated to different Gulf countries (Rajan 2020).

Migration is central to the building of Gulf transnationalism in that the activities and ties of locals (citizens) and noncitizens are characterized by

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relatively stable connections across borders, which configure transnational spaces. Migration triggers a number of engagements beyond the field of migration. Through the knowledge that they gain about sending societies, actors from the Gulf become involved in other regions, such as in the case of Gulf charities and NGOs. Philanthropic activities abroad by wealthy Gulf merchant classes can sometimes be considered to be an external action on behalf of the state's foreign policy; and also, these activities amount to a form of governance in other regions (Mato Bouzas 2018). Equally, migration relates to the security–military survival of the state, as exemplified in the arrangement made between Bahrain's monarchy and Pakistan for Pakistani military to provide personnel for Bahrain's armed forces (Louër 2013). Those "mercenaries" lead transnational lives through their relatively privileged condition in Bahrain and back in Pakistan.

Yet, when we refer to the Gulf, the temporal character of transnational migrant activity raises questions about the very concept of transnationalism because, as it has been already noted, most of the migrants lead lives orientated to their home areas, and once their contracts in the Gulf end, they will be replaced by new labor. On the other hand, generations of families have been migrating to the Gulf for decades or even centuries now; they have been living there for most of their adult working lives and have raised their children in these societies. They certainly are diasporic in character (Unnikrishnan 2020). Moreover, the effects of transnational activity in the case of the Gulf can be better examined through places, which, unlike migrants, remain and become testimonies of this Gulf transnationalism (see Dakkak in Chapter 2). Thus, transnationalism in the global South differs substantially from that of the North in the sense that the impossibility of inclusion at one end (in this case the Gulf) creates permanent vulnerable lives for migrant workers. However, for those who are able to access certain privileges in the Gulf, such as naturalization, housing, and substantial economic benefits, they can indeed be considered, to some extent, transnational subjects in the general sense of the term. The role of the postcolonial state in shaping this transnationalism is, therefore, determinative.

The bulk of foreign workers in the Gulf constitute, as defined by Andrew Gardner, a transnational proletariat because although migrants develop ties between nations, their whole lives are oriented toward their home areas (Gardner 2008: 56). Their lives differ substantially from those identified by Gardner as the diasporic elite who are able to deploy a strategic transnationalism (Gardner 2008: 58). This differentiation is based on social and geographical mobility and is strongly connected to the dominance of the urban character of the Gulf cities. However, this mobility, whether social or geographical, tends to be generally understood as a progressive force marked by the decreasing importance of the national frameworks (Sheller

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and Urry 2006; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Yet for those in the lower ranks of the social ladder, the national frame of their home societies, which are in developing countries that are unable to provide basic security to their population, is decisive. For this group, mobility to the Gulf is limited to the movement back and forth between two ends (although places of destination can vary) and in no way has a positive connotation.

Migrant groups from middle– and upper-middle–class backgrounds, however, are able to mobilize their resources and passports, and the Gulf experience provides them with access to multiple working and living locations. Despite the impossibility of attaining citizenship, they can certainly deploy a strategic transnationalism, a sort of "flexible citizenship" (Ong 1999, 112–13), through various forms of perceived inclusion in the Gulf. European migrants of Maghrebi origin in the Gulf, as Alloul shows in this volume, are able to mobilize the value of their European passports and education together with their condition of being Muslim Arab speakers. For them, the Gulf represents a place to fulfill their aspirations of social mobility. Moreover, they share the perception of being culturally included in a society in which, unlike many Arab-Muslim majority states, the Arab-Muslim tradition exercises a hegemonic role through the economic power and the distribution of wealth in these states. Equally, the Gulf merchant classes with their philanthropic work abroad and the white-collar professionals of migrant background with their privileged condition who are under the purview of inter-state special agreements are examples of groups that fit the classical definition of transnationalism in terms of their capacity to influence local conditions in other states or territories. Religious groups, however, are a different matter.

Transnationalism is central to the building of Gulf societies because the presence of large migrant populations, who, as opposed to the group of citizens, are in some cases the majority group, is a constitutive feature that directly impacts the nation building processes in those societies. In her anthropological study of the relations between migrants and local populations in Kuwait, Longva acknowledges the importance of the transnationalism of foreign populations in the building of an ethnocratic society that is based on segregation (Longva 1997). Similarly, in this volume AlMutawa also reflects on the impact of these foreign populations on Emirati women's negotiation of their access to city spaces in Dubai that are considered "non-Emirati" and cosmopolitan, and the preservation by these women of a cultural–religious identity. Transnationalism in the case of the Gulf exposes the vulnerabilities of the nation building process because although migrants (of all social backgrounds) contribute to the identity formation of those societies, they are strategically selected by these governments to pro-

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vide an image of openness. In general terms, "blue-collar transnationalism" in the Gulf is completely absent in the shaping of a national identity, while the acknowledgment of a "white-collar transnationalism," even when these subjects are never fully included as part of the nation, functions to portray Gulf space as cosmopolitan. This is nowhere more evident than in the UAE, Qatar, and probably Bahrain, where the deployment of an elitist cosmopolitanism is part of the state's cultural diplomacy.

Although Gulf societies have been historically diverse and hosted individuals and groups from other regions, after their independence they followed exclusivist "racial" nation building projects. How does this reconcile with claims to cosmopolitanism? This question has been raised by political geographers such as Koch through an analysis of the iconic dimension of the building of museums in the UAE and Qatar (Koch 2019). Koch argues that the narrative of cosmopolitanism arises in terms of the idea of the commodification of cosmopolitanism. The latter requires that those participating noncitizens and corporate allies convey the message that this cosmopolitanism is being realized (Koch 2019: 354). Derderian, in this volume, examines the ambivalent inclusion faced by artists who are long-term residents of the Emirates and whose works are selected to represent national cosmopolitan projects. She argues that these artists "are selected to represent the nation because they can never be a part of it—so long as they remain foreigners, that is, contingent citizens, they can perform receiving the state's generosity at allowing them to reside there." They function to "hide" the social diversity that already exists in society and highlight a cosmopolitanism from above (Calhoun 2002).

Gulf cosmopolitanism is essentially framed in terms of "access" and as the product of (individual) "aspirations" rather than in terms of universal moral obligations and as a discussion over the recognition of equal and just rights. Examples of the former are provided in the chapters by AlMutawa and Alloul. AlMutawa explores the use of exclusive spaces of leisure and consumption through Emirati women in the city of Dubai where they perceive both embracing and exclusionary feelings of belonging. Also, Alloul provides a more complex account by which Dubai "forms a deeply affectionate counter-space to Europe" in his already mentioned study of Europeans of Maghrebi origin who fulfill their upward mobility by navigating in the racialized Gulf space, which privileges and facilitates inclusiveness for Arab-speaking Muslims with "whitened" European passports. Instead, cosmopolitanism in terms of moral obligations and inclusion emerges in the literature written by non-Gulf-citizen authors examined by Dakkak, who argues that these works narrate lived experiences of diasporic subjects and, in so doing, make these subjects' presence integral to the Gulf societies.

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Presentation of the Book

This book is organized along two main thematic areas: Gulf cosmopolitanism, belonging, and national imaginaries; and the Gulf as an aspirational place. Both themes are related to each other because the deployment of Gulf cosmopolitanism intersects with the portrayal of the Gulf as a place to fulfill life and attain life expectations. The contributions in the first section, however, share a reflection on how national representations and sentiments of belonging create various forms of exclusion. The chapters critically examine cosmopolitanism with regard to its ideal of inclusion, because Gulf cosmopolitanism, as deployed by some of these states, undermines claims of belonging and citizenship (Derderian) and reduces the "cosmopolitan space" to that of consumption (AlMutawa). Between these two poles lies a real claim of a cosmopolitan space as lived by generations of migrants who made the Gulf their homes (Dakkak).

In Chapter 1, Derderian explores the use of noncitizen artists in the UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, between 2009 and 2017. Despite the fact that these artists are barred from becoming part of the polis, their participation in national events shows Emirate reliance on noncitizen artists as a way of displaying its tolerance and cosmopolitanism and shifts the attention of migration to a specific relation of the state and culture. Dakkak in Chapter 2 reflects on the possibilities of citizenship that come out of claiming belonging in the two novels *Samrawit*, by Haji Jaber (2012), and *Temporary People*, by Deepak Unnikrishnan (2017), which are set in the cities of Jeddah and Abu Dhabi, respectively. Dakkak claims that the lived experiences narrated in these works are diasporic and can be read as claims to recognition that differ from other migrant groups; but these stories also highlight the diasporic character as a constitutive element of the Gulf space. AlMutawa in Chapter 3 offers the other dimension, that of the citizens, through an ethnographic study of the experiences of Emirati women from the upper-middle classes of the city of Dubai. AlMutawa examines how women negotiate the use of "cosmopolitan" spaces (of consumption and leisure) in the city against their own cultural traditions, citizenship rights, and belonging. Both Derderian and AlMutawa discuss Gulf cosmopolitanism as a tool of governance from above, while Dakkak addresses the recognition of the transient character of the migratory experience from below.

The contributions in section two focus on the impact of the migrant experience in the Gulf at the level of society or at the level of personal trajectories. The two chapters in this section highlight the character of the Gulf as an aspirational place that continues to hold attraction for all kinds of migrants. In Chapter 4, Alloul analyses how Dubai becomes a heterotopian space where the feelings of exclusion and inferiority experienced in Europe

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by educated Europeans of Maghrebi background become thoroughly reversed. As Alloul highlights in his contribution, the apparently frictionless homecoming in the Gulf of privileged laborers can take place despite the racial features enmeshed in EU citizenship. In Chapter 5, Karinkurayil examines a much larger and better-known social group in the Gulf: migrants from the Indian southern state of Kerala. He focuses on the role of pictures and looks specifically at the sartorial choices of the people portrayed in these pictures, and how these choices create a specific imaginary of the Gulf as an aspirational space. The author's analysis emphasizes the transnational nature of this process and the impact of these imaginable narratives in the region of Kerala.

In the Conclusion, Casini dialogues with author Unnikrishnan on the major themes touched on in his novel *Temporary People*, which largely coincide with those of this book. Unnikrishnan became actively involved in the discussion surrounding this publication project. He is therefore in a privileged position to comment on the main themes discussed by the other contributors and relate them to his own life experience as a writer from the Gulf.

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