

Migration and the Global Cities of Arabia In the Era of Mobility

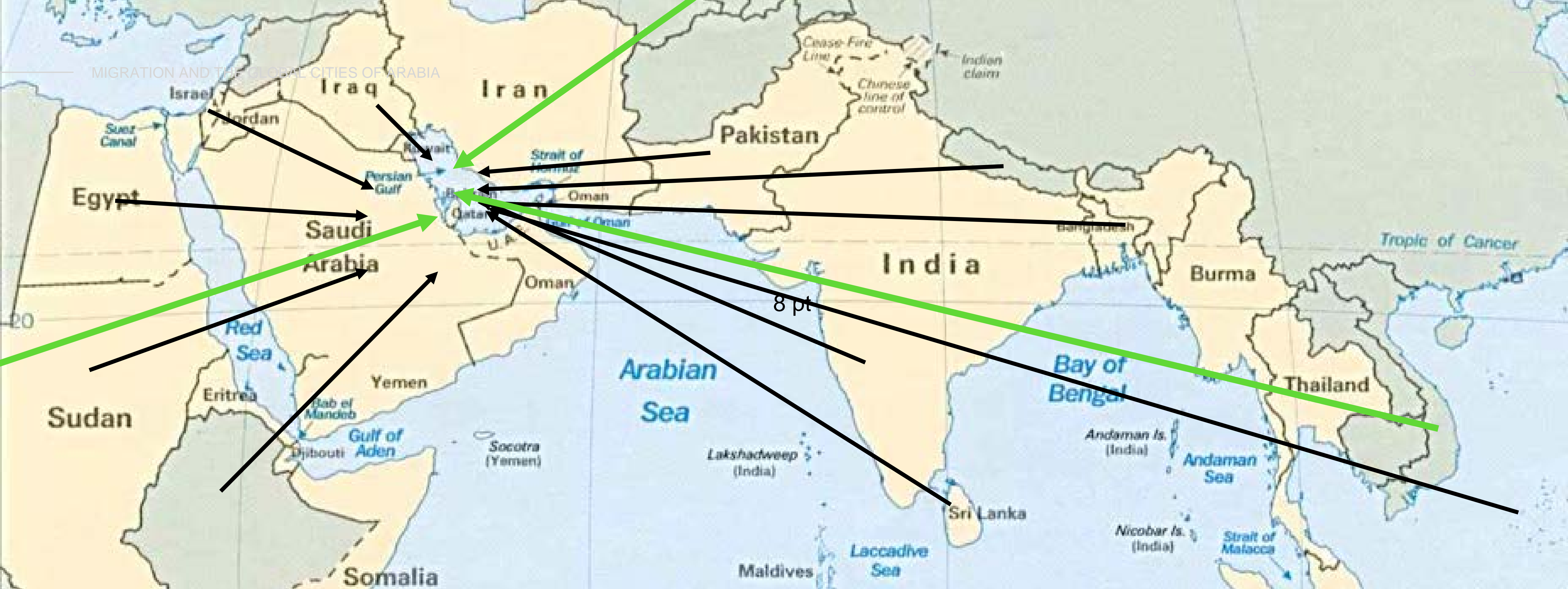
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Third Largest ~~Destination~~

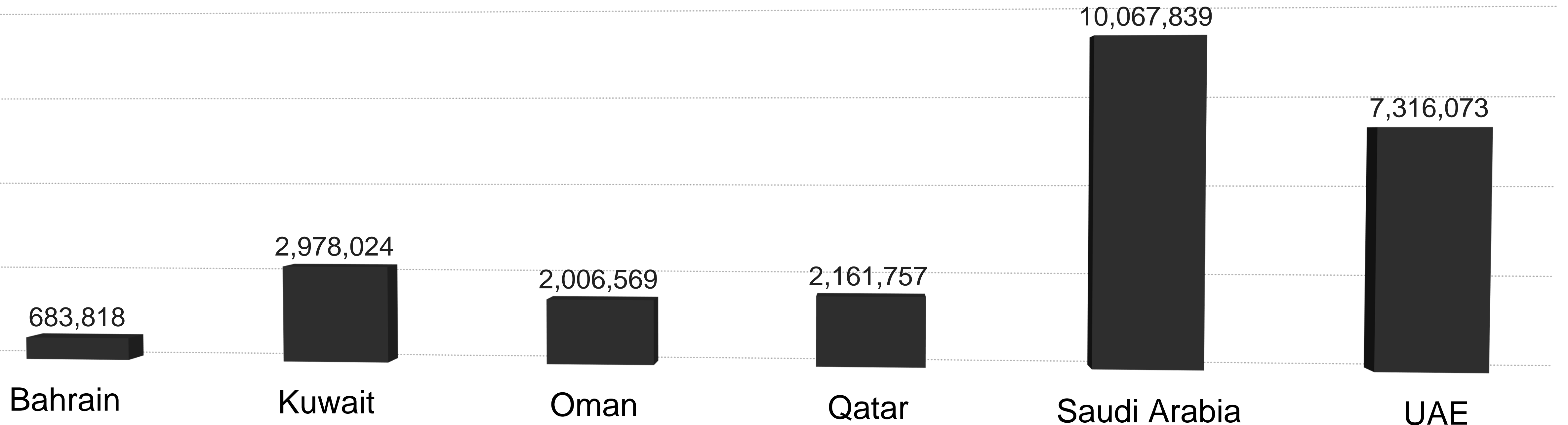
- Third largest global flow of transnational migration
- My understanding: via a multi-sited ethnographic approach attentive to both ends of these migration conduits



The Geography of Gulf Migration

- This migration system is centered on the Indian Ocean World
- The geography of in-migration therein is constantly evolving and shifting

Non-Nationals in the GCC



The Scale of Gulf Migration

Data from the GLMM (2016)

- *Non-nationals* includes migrants, refugees, stateless persons
- The total stock of migrants: 25,214,080
- No pathway to citizenship or naturalization

The Kafala and Variability

- Based on a set of practices distilled in the early and mid-twentieth century, migration is organized and governed by the *kafala*, or sponsorship system.
- Via the *kafala*, migrants must obtain employment prior to arrival, and are tied to that employer for the duration of their stay abroad. That stay is usually organized by two-year contracts.
- The resulting unfree labor market constructs the variability characteristic of migrant experiences in Arabia.
- Throughout the GCC, we are witnessing the continued erosion of these arrangements and practices, for the better in my (and others') estimation.



The Migration Industry

- Dalals and informal brokers in villages
- Labor brokers and recruitment agents in urban hubs
- A constellation of related businesses flourish alongside
- Manpower agencies, human resources personnel, and many others in receiving countries
- Entire economies? Airlines? Police? Expansive thinking about the “migration industry” possible here ...

Dear Sir/Madam
We request you to select and recruit the following as per the details given below.

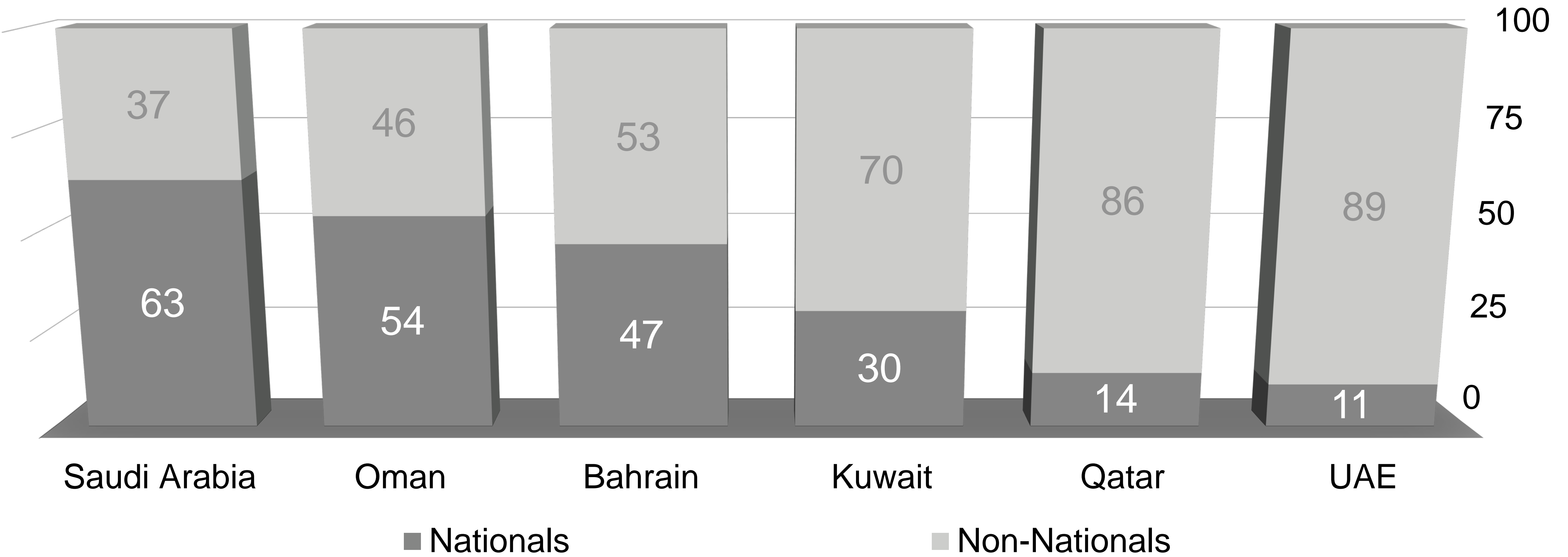
| No. | Category | No. of workers | Salary (digit) |
|-----|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Welder | 10 | 1100 |
| 2 | Plumber | 20 | 1100 |
| 3 | Electricians | 20 | 1100 |
| 4 | Tile Mason | 20 | 1100 |
| 5 | Plaster Mason | 20 | 1100 |
| 6 | Shuttering carpenter | 20 | 1100 |
| 7 | Steel Fixture | 20 | 1100 |
| 8 | Labor | 50 | 900 |
| 9 | Driver | 15 | 1400 |
| 10 | Civil Engineer | 3 | 4200 |
| 11 | Heavy Driver | 15 | 1900 |
| 12 | Pipe Fitter | 25 | 1100 |

Total candidates: 238

The following Terms & conditions shall be included

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Period of employment | : Two years (ren |
| 2. Place of Employment | : Qatar |
| 3. Air Ticket | : For Joining the (KTM-DOHA) Provided after |
| 4. Working Hour | : 8 hrs per day, 6 |





Proportions, Hierarchy and Difference



- Unprecedented proportions of foreign residents and citizens occupy these cities and states
- As an anthropologist, I want to convey how I think about this in terms of indigenenousness and the preservation of culture amidst the swell of interconnection and globalization.

Segregation, Enclaving and ~~S~~patialization

- Transnational labor migrants in Arabia generally live a segregated life in the city
- They are sifted and sorted from various front-stage public spaces in the city
- Their dwellings — typically labor camps arranged by their employers — are frequently located in peripheral zones, districts, and other sorts of places that have been long referred to as “bachelor cities”
- They are transported to and from these peripheral enclaves in busses or transportation arranged by their employers.



Critique Behind Walls

- I first began writing about these labor migrants' segregation when I lived in Qatar, in the compound pictured here.
- Compounds are groups of a hundred or so flats and villas, typically provided by employers to middle class migrants, or "expats" of a professional nature.
- The walls enclose — or segregate — other sorts of foreigners from the public spaces of the city.
- Note the irony here. It was this irony that sparked my thinking about migrants and their place in the Arabian city





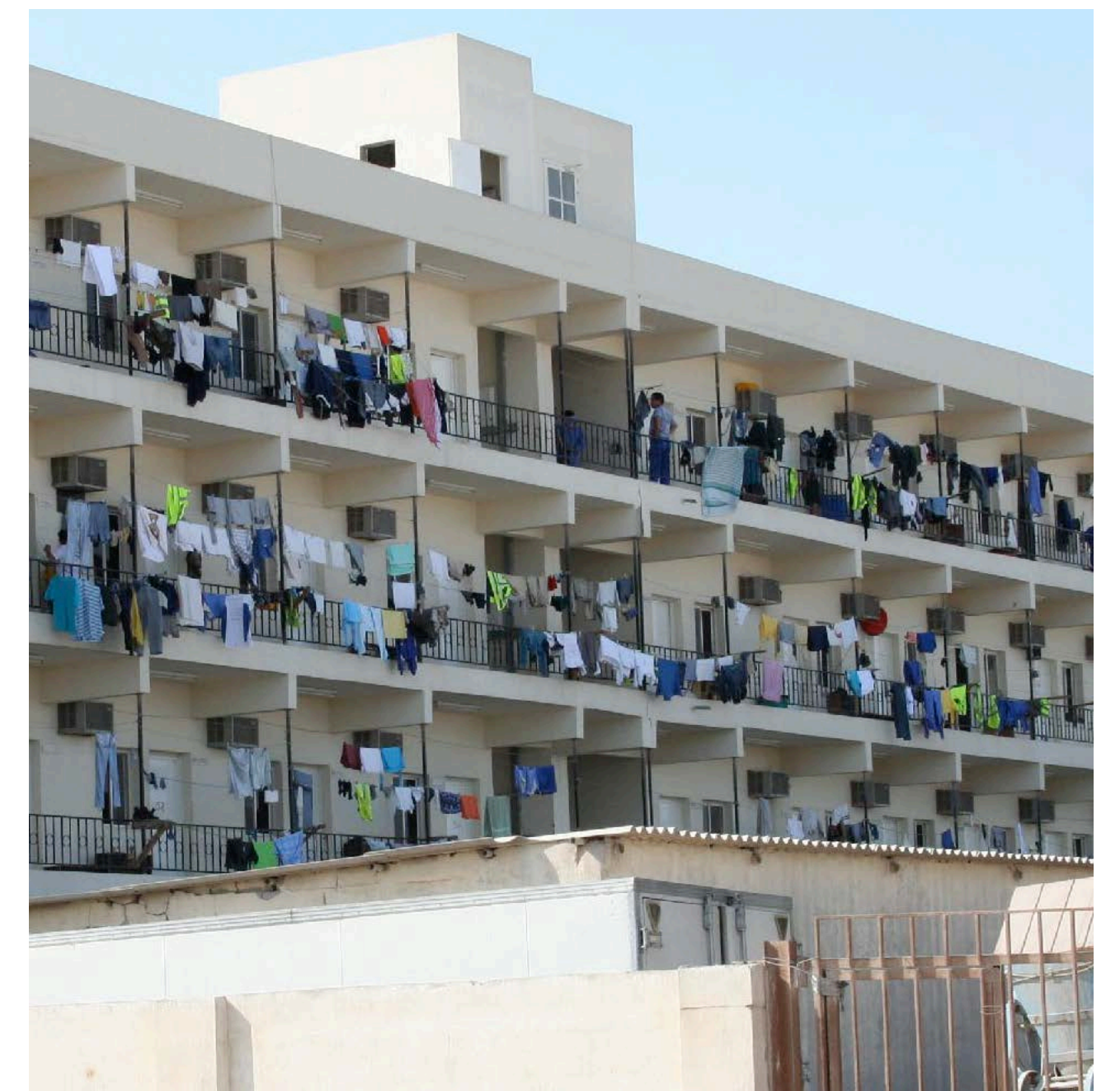
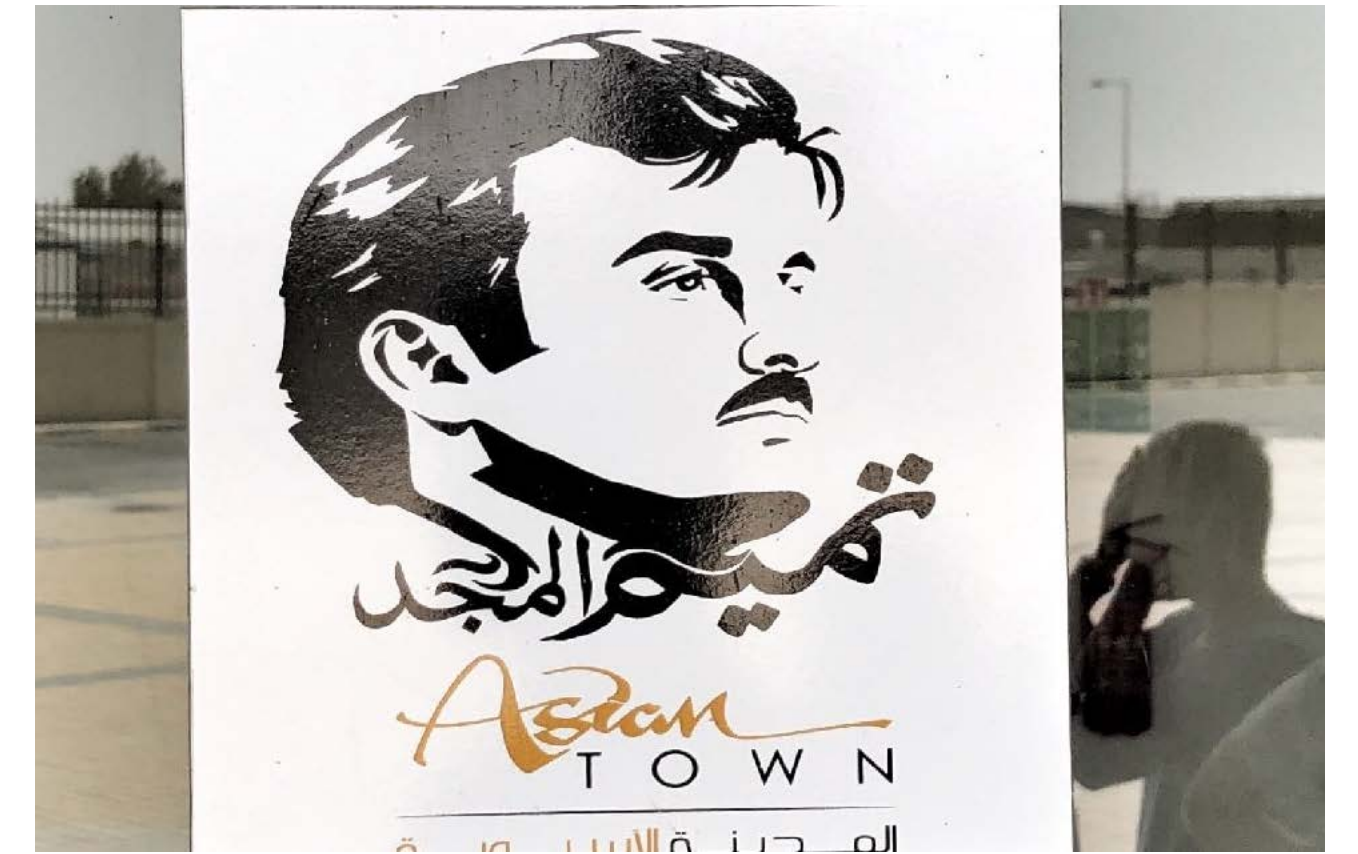
Space and Exception

- Beginning with this realization about how segregation in space transcended migrant class, I began to see other parallels in urban space
- Internet censorship, alcohol, gender-mixed campuses, property ownership, and more ...
- In my forthcoming book, I trace this spatialization of foreign matter to the same taproot as our urban planners' spatial organization of the urban landscape into residential areas, commercial areas, and industrial areas.



The City as a Tool of Governance

- In my analysis, migrants — as foreigners — fall into the same logic as the practices described on the previous slide.
- In the boom cities of Arabia, we can thereby envision the city as a tool for governing relations with what Paul Dresch calls “foreign matter” (2006).
- Anthropologically, we should also grasp *integration* and *assimilation* as Western ethnocentricities, and recognize the segregation described here as a mixture of forced and voluntary placements configured around neoliberal conditions and the landscape of inequality that defines our contemporary world.



Concluding Thoughts

- Regional migration systems are diverse and complex, and we should assess those diversities as best we can
- Clearly this migration system is one aspect of the human experience in the contemporary era of mobility
- As I contend here, in Arabia the city itself serves as the infrastructural tool for governing the mobilities of the neoliberal century
- While there is much to critique in these migrations, as with seemingly all migrations in the contemporary world, these arrangements are noteworthy for allowing receiving states to maintain their cultural sovereignty amidst such demographically overwhelming contexts

