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Demography, Migration, and the Labour Market in Oman

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Demography, Migration, and the Labour Market in Oman

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Abstract: As of May 27, 2015, estimates of Oman's total population stood at 4,187,516 persons, of whom 1,849,412 (44.2 per cent) were foreign nationals. Foreign workers are overwhelmingly from the Asian subcontinent: Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis together made up 87 per cent of the workforce in 2013. Eighty-two per cent of all foreign workers were employed in the private sector that year, and 12 per cent were filling managerial and "white collar" posts. The flow of foreign workers to Oman has been rising over the 2000s up till today. Lagging youth employment and rising poverty levels spurred popular protests in 2011 which slowed down economic diversification and the private sector's development process. However, sectoral Omanisation quotas are now enforced and the hiring of Omani nationals in every business has become mandatory. Aggressive measures also target foreign residents in irregular situation which has led to several massive amnesty and deportation campaigns since 2010.

Keywords: Oman, Foreign & National Populations, Foreign Population, Labour Market, National & Foreign Labour, Statistics, Omanisation, Irregular Migration, Amnesty, Deportation.

Migration is at the heart of Oman's history and socio-demographic framework. Trade relations (including slave trade) with the coastal regions of East Africa were established in the Middle Ages. Indian merchants from the Gujarat region in the north-west of India settled in Omani ports during the fifteenth century. Oman's colonial empire later developed transnational ties with the Indian subcontinent (Baluchistan), East Africa (Zanzibar), Persia and the rest of the Gulf region, as populations travelled between Oman and these territories in search of livelihoods. Many Baluchis, for instance, were enrolled into the country's armed forces, while wealthy Omani merchants and poor workers alike settled in Tanzania and elsewhere in East Africa. After Pakistan and Tanzania gained independence, in 1947 and 1964 respectively, descendants of Omani settlers, as well as populations originating from these areas "returned" to Oman and were incorporated into the country's multicultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic society.¹ Labour-oriented migration also enhanced the mobility of

population from and to Oman: since oil was first exploited in the Gulf region in the 1930s, poverty had pushed a majority of low-skilled, low-educated Omani workers to seek employment in the neighbouring Gulf countries.² Exploitable oil fields in Oman were indeed discovered only in 1964, and Petroleum Development (Oman) Ltd. (PDO) began production in August 1967.³

However, following Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said's accession to the throne in 1970, Omani expatriates were encouraged to return and emigration flows reversed.⁴ Furthermore, after the oil boom of 1973, the Sultanate became an importer of foreign labour. Owing to Oman's historical ties with South Asia,⁵ Asian workers made up the bulk of foreign workers from the start.⁶ During the 1990s, after the First Gulf War when oil prices fell and an economic slowdown resulted, the number of foreign residents seemed to stagnate (0.4 per cent annual growth on average between 1993 and 2003).⁷ However, it doubled between 2003 and 2009: Oman's economic performance started improving significantly in 1999 due to the upturn in oil prices.⁸ Foreign nationals made up 26.5 per cent of the total population in 1993, 23.9 per cent in 2003, and 36 per cent in 2009 when the global financial crisis occurred.

Since 1970, Oman has embarked on an ambitious programme of economic liberalisation and modernisation sustained by high oil prices. The Sultanate evolved from a country lacking in basic services and infrastructure to a modern state. The Human Development Report of 2010 entitled "The Real Wealth of Nations" attested to this rate of progress by ranking Oman as the fastest HDI (Human Development Index) mover globally over the past forty years: the index more than doubled between 1970 and 2010, from 0.36 to 0.79. Interestingly, this rapid rate of development was achieved without a comprehensive publicly documented knowledge of the Sultanate's demography, as the first census ever conducted in Oman only took place in 1993.⁹ Before the 1990s, partial demographic and socioeconomic data were collected in the framework of the Five-Year Development Plans and included estimates of the labour force by nationality.¹⁰ However, most data concerned only the Omani population.

The oil rent has been instrumental in financing the state-building enterprise in Oman since 1970.¹¹ However, the country is less hydrocarbon-rich than other GCC states, and Omani policy-makers are increasingly focussed on diversifying the country's economy. This is one of the main targets of Oman 2020, the long-term strategic development master plan launched in 1996. Following drastic economic reforms, Oman became a member of the World Trade Organization in October 2000. In its eighth five-year plan (2011-15), the government has increased spending on key infrastructure projects, which is enhancing Oman's status as a logistics hub in the region. Expansion and development of the three major ports at Salalah, Duqm, and Sohar are ongoing, and major upgrades to the international airports in Muscat and Salalah are also underway.¹² In 2011, oil and gas accounted for 38.8 per cent of Oman's GDP.

Another of the main concerns of Omani policymakers, expressed in the Oman 2020 Plan, is the alleviation of the national economy's dependency on foreign labourers and the "Omanisation" of the workforce. Instrumental in this matter was "the repositioning the private sector as the engine of economic growth and generating employment."¹³ The challenge is indeed crucial. As a result of past very high levels of fertility and high demographic growth rates since mortality decreased in the 1970s, Oman is a "young" society: until 1990, at least 45 per cent of the population was below 15 years of age. Even if census 2010 showed a sharp decrease in fertility¹⁴ and in the share of the young age groups in the total population (27.2 per cent below 15 years of age),¹⁵ the numerous generations born in the 1970s and

1980s are now on the job market. Moreover, as education levels have improved spectacularly since the 1970s, every year almost 30,000 students successfully complete their secondary schooling and are ready to enter the job market. Yet, most find it difficult to get a job: “the reason for this is the lack of vocational/ higher education and/or the lack of practical work experience compared to expatriate labourers working in similar positions.”¹⁶ Indeed, implementation of the economic diversification and rationalisation plan created a gap between private sector labour needs and expectations of young Omanis, who, like young people elsewhere in the region, would stay unemployed if no opportunities were offered in the government sector. From its onset in the mid-1990s, Oman Vision 2020 had outlined specific quantitative targets for the indigenisation of the workforce. These included expanding the proportion of Omanis in the labour force from 17 per cent of the total population in 1995 to 50 per cent in 2020; doubling the rate of female participation in the labour force from about 6 per cent in 1995 to 12 per cent by 2020; and lifting the Omanisation ratio from 68 per cent in 1995 to 95 per cent in 2020 for the public sector and from 15 per cent in 1995 to 70 per cent in 2020 for the private sector. Some advancements can be witnessed, especially concerning the female workforce, for instance in retail trade. Certain economic sectors were also successfully localised (taxi driving, for instance). However, Omanisation measures were never fully enforced and youth unemployment rates remain high. Oman does not publish unemployment statistics but rates among nationals, in general, are said to reach approximately 15 per cent and above 30 per cent in the youth segment.¹⁷

In such a context, the political uprisings which shook the Arab world starting at the end of 2010 did not spare the Sultanate. Oman witnessed popular demonstrations protesting the corruption among ruling elites, inequality in the redistribution of resources, difficulties in accessing employment opportunities, and stagnating salaries. Migrant workers were also explicitly targeted by these protests: some slogans accused the regime of keeping employment opportunities for its allies, the inhabitants of the Sultanate’s capital Muscat, as well as foreign labourers. Xenophobic statements even alleged “Indian colonisation” of Oman and criticised the privileges granted to foreign managers by the Omani business class, while calling for a total Omanisation of the country’s top economic roles.¹⁸ In response, 50,000 public sector jobs were immediately created for Omanis, and the minimum wage was raised to 200 Omani Rials (around \$500) in the private sector.¹⁹

Since then, much voluntarism has been shown in the implementation of the Omanisation process. The newest labour law announced by the Shura Council in July 2013 put a cap on foreign workers at 33 per cent of the population. Other laws designed to promote local employment are being discussed, such as a new taxation on foreign worker remittances, according to the Economic and Financial Committee of the Shura Council.²⁰ The Ministry of Manpower has announced that from March 2014, it will not entertain any transactions regarding any facility in the private sector that does not have a national workforce.²¹

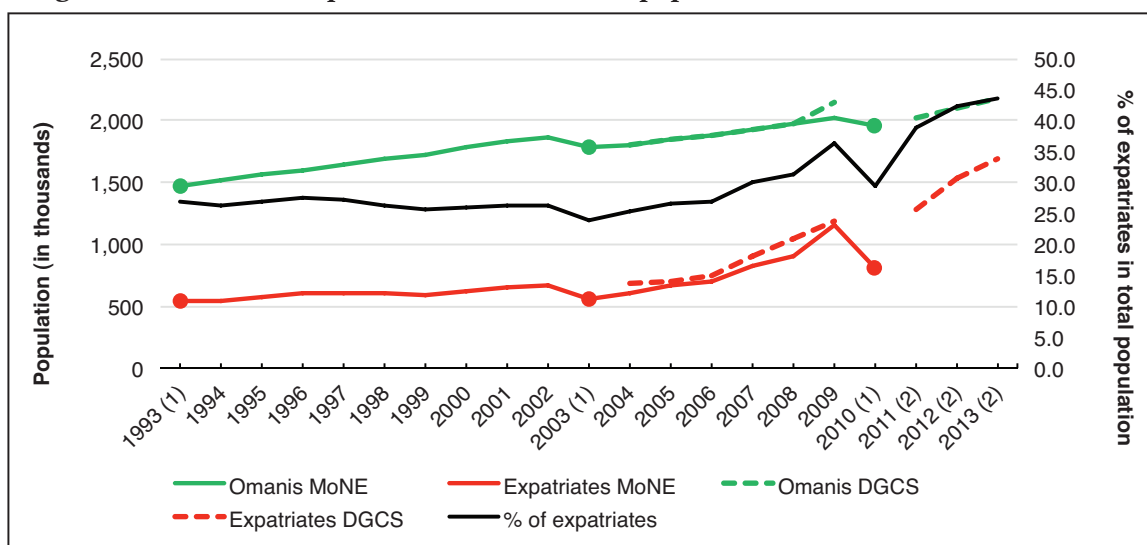
Additionally, foreign workers and residents in irregular situation are increasingly criminalised. A massive deportation campaign²² was conducted late 2010, after several months of amnesty. Seventy thousand undocumented labourers, mainly from the Indian subcontinent, left the country or were deported following massive rounding up operations. In 2013, increased raids and inspections led to the

apprehension of over 13,000 undocumented workers and the cancellation of over 16,000 visas.²³ Crack-downs on undocumented migrant workers and deportation continued throughout 2014. As of early 2015, it was expected that some 47,000 irregular workers, mostly from Bangladesh, would take advantage of an upcoming amnesty and leave Oman.²⁴

INWARD MIGRATION

Stocks

Figure 1: Omanis and expatriates in total resident population (various sources, 1993-2013)



Source: NCSI, Statistical Yearbook 2014.

(1) censuses; (2) Directorate General of Civil Status, National Registration System records (mid-year); (other years) intercensal mid-year estimates, Ministry of National Economy.

As of May 27, 2015, estimates of the Sultanate’s total population stood at 4,187,516, of whom 1,849,412 (44.2 per cent) were foreign nationals.²⁵ The 1993 census, the first population census ever conducted in Oman, put the total population at 2,017,643, with foreign residents accounting for 26.5 per cent. The second Omani census, conducted in December 2003, estimated the total population at 2,340,815, of which 23.9 per cent were foreign residents. In December 2010, the last census conducted to date counted a total of 2,773,479 residents, of whom 816,143 (29.4 per cent) were foreign nationals.²⁶ The evolution of population figures since 1993 as displayed in Fig. 1 shows that in Oman, like in all other GCC states, the numbers of foreign nationals rose rapidly during the 2000s. This was in conjunction with the hike in oil prices and ensuing economic upsurge witnessed in the region during the decade, which stimulated infrastructural development and, hence, manpower needs. The continuous increase in the numbers of foreign nationals, however, stands in contrast with the drop in figures of foreign nationals, observed in all other GCC states after the 2008 financial crisis. Moreover, the low figures of foreign nationals recorded during the 2010 census suggest some inconsistencies in the population data.

As stated earlier, the late onset of a comprehensive and ambitious infrastructural development process (1970) explains why the Sultanate has only a recent history of recording population movements. Yet, the Sultanate has caught up and set up a modern statistical apparatus from scratch: within the 1990 to 2010 time-span, Oman evolved from “an absence, to a hyper sophistication” of population statistics.²⁷ However, Fig. 1 shows that the population estimates drawn for intercensal periods (1994-2002 and 2003-2009)²⁸ built respectively on the basis of 1993 and 2003 census results do not match the censuses’ results for 2003 and 2010. In particular, the gap is huge between the numbers of expatriates actually recorded during the 2010 census (816,143), and the number expected on the basis of the intercensal yearly estimates (in the range of 1,162,000).²⁹ Three scenarios may explain such shifts in numbers: 1) the 2003 and 2010 censuses underestimated population numbers; 2) intercensal estimates inflated the figures of Omanis, and mostly, of foreign residents; 3) a sizeable number of the latter left Oman the years the censuses took place.

- 1) The use of the latest technological innovations at every step of the three census operations, from interviewers’ training to data collection, loading, and processing³⁰ has been widely acknowledged.³¹ In 2003, in particular, Oman became the first country in the world to equip interviewers with Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) devices.³² Census-takers were numerous and well-trained, a thorough information campaign in the media ensured the cooperation of the population, public institutions were mobilised (schools, the Army, for instance) and the Sultan himself was directly involved. Detailed results of the 2003 census were released within less than a month, a sign of confidence in the reliability of the data. In 2010, by contrast, even though technological innovations were more advanced than in 2003,³³ a number of organisational and informational drawbacks were reported in the press and among other ministries’ officials to have affected the validity of the census results.³⁴ Indeed, the sharp drop in the figures of foreign residents in the 2010 census results raises questions.³⁵ It effectively contrasts with the other sources available for the post-2003 period: the intercensal estimates as well as the newly-established civil registration system.
- 2) Intercensal estimates (1994-2002 and 2004-2009) are drawn using the components method.³⁶ However, before 2004 and the creation of the Directorate General of Civil Status (a public body in charge of civil registration),³⁷ the systematic and comprehensive registration of births and deaths, and, hence, knowledge of the age structure of the total population was far from complete.³⁸ Therefore, it is likely that intercensal estimates of Omani and non-Omani populations between 1994 and 2002 are not fully accurate. As regards the period 2004-2009, intercensal estimates of the foreign residents’ population are based on the 2003 census results, which were considered to be of high quality. Moreover, these estimates are close to the figures provided by the Civil Registration System (dotted lines on Fig. 1). Therefore, it is likely that the Civil Registration System provides more accurate estimates of the numbers of Omanis, and of non-Omanis, than Census 2010. The figure of expatriates in 2010 is thus probably closer to 1,160,000 as estimated from the Civil Registration records than to the published figure of 816,173.

- 3) Nevertheless, the steep drop in the number of foreign nationals recorded during the 2010 census held in the month of December may also be due to the aggressive police operations conducted during the year. As mentioned earlier, 70,000 irregulars were deported that year. Moreover, many other undocumented foreign nationals may have been hiding from census operations for fear of being deported too. The police crackdown against illegal sojourners in the year of census may thus explain part of the underestimation of foreign residents in 2010.

Census 2010 is, however, the only detailed source of information available on the expatriate population as a whole. Data suggest that the non-Omanis are overwhelmingly Asians (88 per cent of the total): Indian nationals alone made up 57 per cent of all resident expatriates that year. Arabs (GCC and non-GCC nationals) are no more than 8.5 of all expatriates. In general, Arab populations display a more balanced sex ratio (128 men for 100 women) than Asians: among Bangladeshis, for instance, there are ten men for every woman resident.

Table 1: Oman's foreign resident population by main region of origin/country of citizenship and sex ratio (2010)

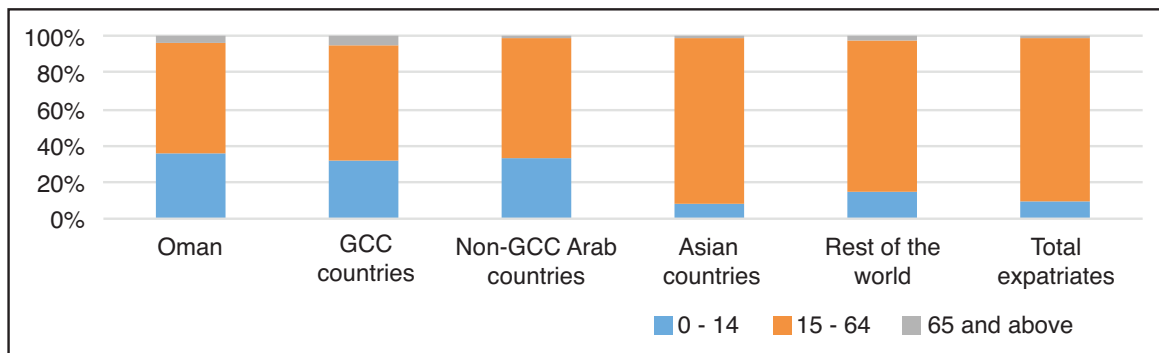
	Total foreign residents		sex ratio (men/ 100 women)
	Number	%	
GCC countries	7,997	1.0	103
<i>U.A.E.</i>	<i>6,426</i>	<i>0.8</i>	91
Non-GCC Arab countries	60,989	7.5	128
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>29,877</i>	<i>3.7</i>	136
<i>Jordan</i>	<i>7,403</i>	<i>0.9</i>	124
Asian countries	721,511	88.4	376
<i>India</i>	<i>465,660</i>	<i>57.1</i>	459
<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>107,125</i>	<i>13.1</i>	999
<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>84,658</i>	<i>10.4</i>	634
Rest of the world	25,646	3.1	114
Total	816,143	100.0	320

Source: Census 2010, Ministry of National Economy.

A more balanced sex ratio in the total population indicates that Arabs are more likely to reside with their families in the Sultanate than Asians are. As a matter of fact, children aged 0-14 make up about one-third of total GCC and non-GCC Arab populations. Among Asians as a whole, they make up only 8 per cent (5 per cent among Bangladeshis and less than 1 per cent among Indonesians, of whom most are women). Until 2013, a foreign labourer was able to sponsor his dependents on a family reunification visa on the condition that his monthly income would be 300 Omani Rials and above.³⁹ In other GCC countries where the distribution of professions and income levels by regional origin is available, it appears that most Arabs are employed in the upper and middle echelons of the occupational scale, below Westerners. This guarantees them the possibility of bringing their families over and of settling for longer periods in their GCC host countries. Moreover, in Oman, like anywhere else in the Gulf, salary levels

differ in each profession, according to the nationality group of the employee. Westerners earn on average the highest salaries, followed by Arabs and then Asians. This “racialised” labour market indeed entails discrimination and inequalities beyond the divide nationals/non-nationals.⁴⁰

Figure 2: Oman total population by region of origin and broad age group distribution (2010)



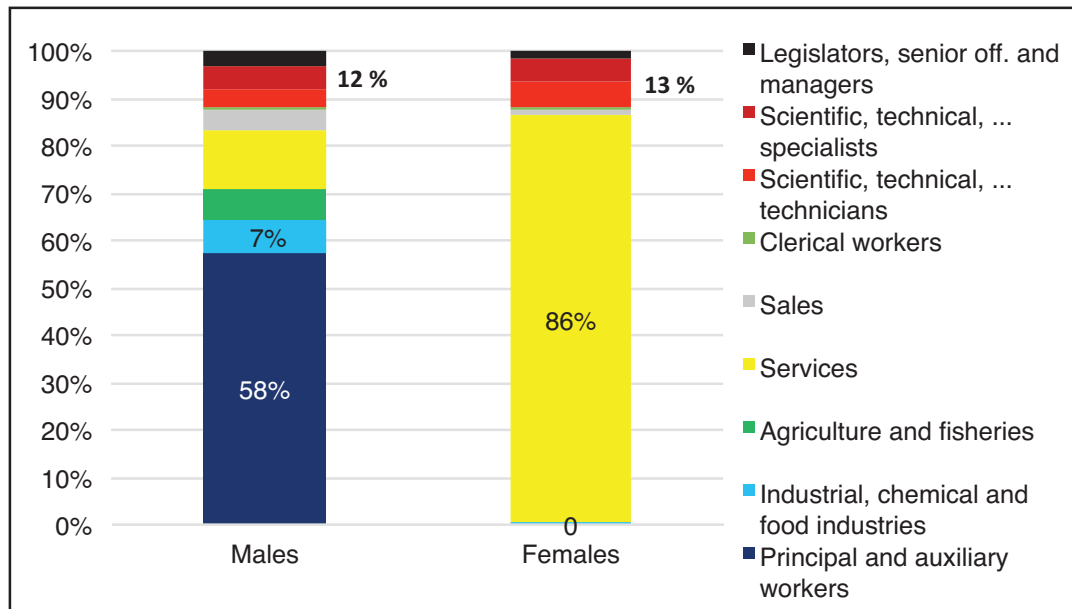
Source: Census 2010.

Even though some variations exist by regional and national origin of expatriates, the bulk of foreign residents in Oman are indeed workers.⁴¹ In 2013, 1,498,277 (89 per cent) of all foreign residents were employed and 184,927 (11 per cent) were family dependents.⁴² As a whole, expatriate labourers in Oman are predominantly males (89 per cent or 780 men for 100 women), relatively young (mean age is 33 years), and little educated (74 per cent of them, men and women alike, have below-secondary level education as of mid-2014),⁴³ which reflects the characteristics of the numerically-dominant group within the expatriate population. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of workers come from the Asian subcontinent: Indians, Bangladeshis, and Pakistanis together make up 87 per cent of the workforce. Ethiopians (quasi-exclusively females) make up 3 per cent and Egyptians only 1 per cent of the employed population.⁴⁴

Regarding expatriates' economic characteristics, as of mid-2013 most of them (85 per cent) were sponsored by public or private institutions or companies. Only a minority were actually sponsored by individual kafeel (14.7 per cent), half of these being domestic workers.

Eighty-two per cent of all foreign workers were employed in the private sector that year, 90 per cent of them among men and 17 per cent among women. The latter were most often in the domestic sector (72 per cent). In 2010, the domestic workers' socio-demographic profile was as follows: 35 per cent were from Indonesia, 29 per cent from India, and 12 per cent from the Philippines; more than a half were in the age group 30-44 (55 per cent). Ninety per cent had below secondary education and most (70 per cent) were married.⁴⁵ In 2013, 81 per cent of employed foreign females⁴⁶ were in domestic activities; 5 per cent were in the education sector and 2.5 were in the retail and trade sector. As for the males, 49 per cent were in the construction sector while 13 per cent were, respectively, in the retail and trade and manufacturing sectors.⁴⁷

Figure 3: Employed non-Omanis by occupation and sex (private and domestic sectors, 2013)

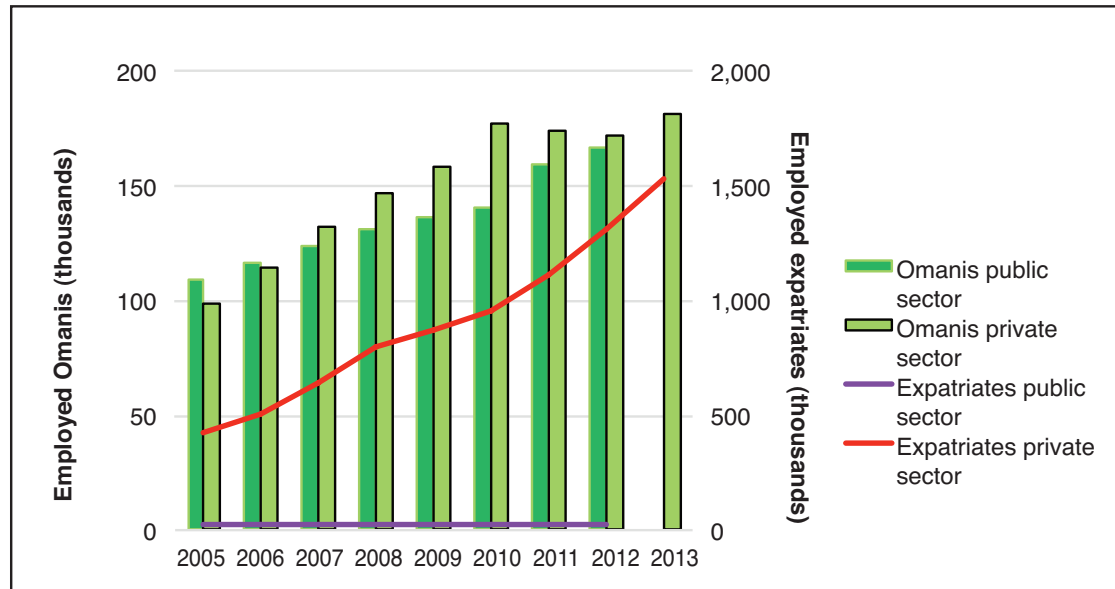


Source: NCSI, Monthly Statistical Bulletin March 2013.

As regards expatriates' occupational level, Fig. 3 shows that in 2013, 65 per cent of males were in blue-collar occupations, industry or handicraft professions, while the overwhelming majority of females were in occupations related to services. Around 12 per cent of expatriates only were involved in white-collar occupations, men and women alike. Interestingly, no expatriates were employed as clerical workers. This suggests the impact of Omanisation policies, which reserve white-collar professions, especially the ones not demanding high levels of skills and educational specialisations, to local job seekers.

Indeed, Fig. 4⁴⁸ shows the regular increase of the absolute numbers of Omanis employed in the country's private sector. The progression started stagnating, however, after 2010. This is probably due to the economic slowdown of the late 2000s followed by the unrest that erupted in the country in 2011. The government response to the claims, i.e., supplying public employment opportunities, is visible on the chart, yet the figure for 2013 suggests that the nationals' enrolment in the private sector could be on the rise again. However, a comparison with the figures of expatriates' employment in the private sector clearly indicates that the numbers of foreign workers have increased more rapidly than that of locals (Fig. 4). Expatriates made up 89.4 per cent of the private sector's total workforce in 2013.⁴⁹

Figure 4: Omanis and expatriates by sector of employment (public, private) (2005-2012)



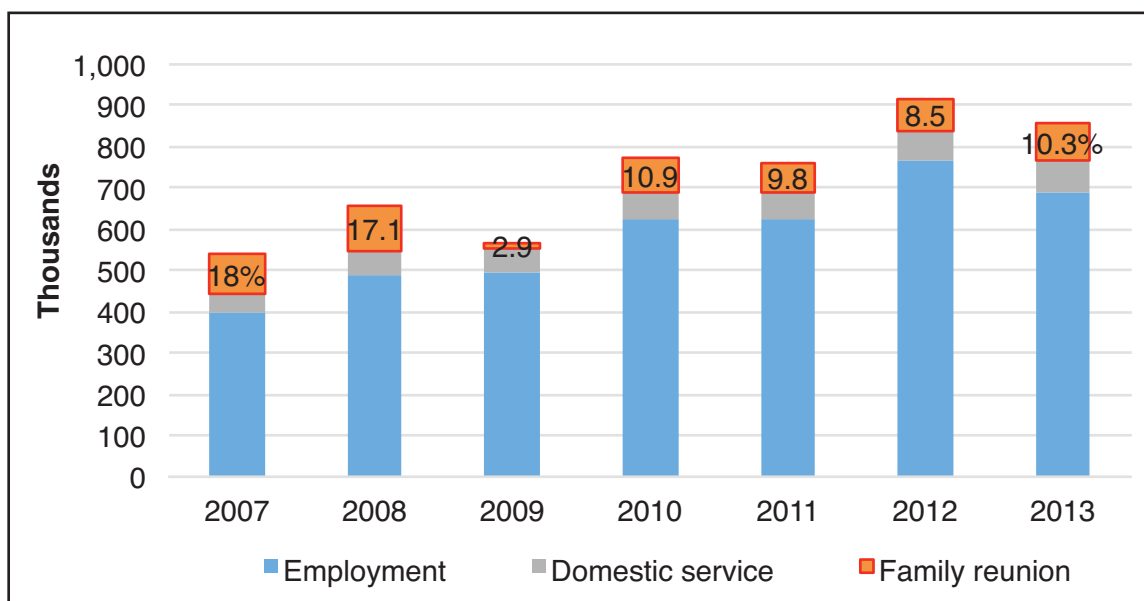
Source: Ministry of Manpower in Central Bank of Oman's Yearbooks, given years.

Excludes Security and Defense personnel. Omanis in the private sector are registered with Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI).

Flows

Statistics of permits delivered indeed suggest that the flow of foreign residents to Oman has not been affected much over the years: 541,572 permits were delivered in 2007 and 919,314 in 2012, an 11 per cent increase per year on average.⁵⁰ Additionally, in spite of the Omanisation process, the flow of foreign workers to Oman (for regular and domestic employment, in blue and grey on the chart) shows an upward trend (Fig. 5). However, the number of family residence permits has been significantly reduced since 2008. In 2009, only 16,696 family reunion permits were granted, as opposed to 113,005 the year before. The share of family dependents within the flows of foreign residents to Oman was divided by half approximately since 2008, from 17-18 per cent of all permits delivered to 8-10 per cent in the early 2010s. This raises the question of a possible decrease in the skill level of workers who have come to Oman from the year 2009 onwards: the possibility of family reunion is indeed limited to relatively high-income categories of foreign residents, those earning at least 300 Omani Rials.

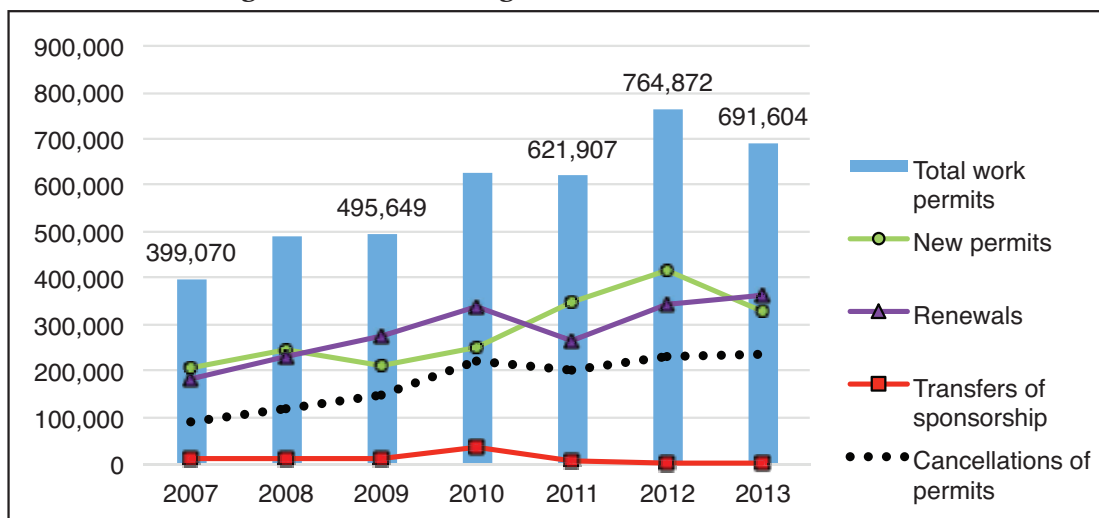
Figure 5: Flows of foreign residents to Oman by type of permit granted (2007-2013)



Source: Directorate General of Civil Status, Royal Oman Police.

In fact, family reunion seems to have become a direct target of public policy in the tense aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008 and the 2011 civil unrests. New measures regarding family reunion were announced by the Directorate-General of Passport and Residences at the Royal Oman Police (ROP) in 2013. These imposed a doubling of the monthly minimum income allowing expatriates to be granted a family reunion permit, now set at 600 Omani Rials (\$1,558).⁵¹ Officials state that such attempts at limiting family reunion respond to the need to better manage the labour market and create more job opportunities for Omanis. Family dependents under family residence visas will be barred from taking up employment. Other families allegedly left the country because of their failure to secure family reunion.⁵²

Figure 6: Flows of foreign workers to Oman (2007-2013)



Source: Directorate General of Civil Status, Royal Oman Police.

However, similar constraints have been applied to workers too and a major overhaul of the labour market seems to be taking place in Oman. The number of labour visas almost doubled between 2007 and 2012 (it decreased in 2013): this probably indicates the difficulty of “Omanising” the labour force in every sector, especially in sectors of activity such as construction, which directly concern Oman’s infra-structural development plans. As seen in Fig. 6, visas granted since 2008 were mostly renewals granted to workers already in the country, which suggests a strategy of rationalising the workforce by retaining the workers already trained. Cancellation of permits has more than doubled since 2007. More recently, measures aiming at curbing the import of new foreign workers and at fighting irregularity were taken. Since 2010, several bans on recruitment of new workers in certain sectors have been imposed: for example, a six-month ban was placed on expatriate recruitment in the cleaning and construction sectors for small companies, which officials claim facilitate visa fraud. Another freeze in recruitment of foreign labourers was announced in October 2013.⁵³ Such measures may also explain the drop in the issuance of new visas noticed in the Fig 6.

Foreign labourers’ mobility on the labour market was also limited by some recent decisions announced by the government. Although since 2006, “expatriates no longer need the permission of their current employer to switch to a new one,”⁵⁴ the Royal Oman Police announced a two-year re-entry ban on foreigners willing to return to the Sultanate after failing to complete two years with his/her previous sponsor in Oman. Employment visa transfers for foreign workers who have not completed two years of their work contract with their company also became forbidden.⁵⁵ From a peak of 42,228 sponsorship changes completed in 2010, the figure reached a low of 551 in 2013. Limiting workers’ mobility was said to aim at “preventing foreign workers from job-hopping prior to the completion of their contracts and to prevent employers from poaching employees from competitors.”⁵⁶

More likely, the enforcement of sectoral Omanisation quotas⁵⁷ and the mandatory hiring of Omani nationals in all private sector businesses⁵⁸ are comparable to Saudi Arabia’s “Nitaqat” programme of nationalisation of the workforce. Similarly, the deportation campaigns and police operations conducted in the Sultanate since 2010 echoed the crackdowns on irregular workers performed in the Kingdom since 2013. In Oman, like in Saudi Arabia, business owners as well as expatriates whose jobs are at stake are thus left with the responsibility of alleviating youth unemployment and discontent.

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2. Courbage Youssef, Philippe Fargues. « La population des pays arabes d’Orient », In: *Population*, 30e année, no. 6, 1975, pp. 1111- 1141, http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/pop_0032-4663_1975_num_30_6_15877 (p. 1118).
3. <http://www.mog.gov.om/Portals/1/pdf/oil/history-Oil-Gas-en.pdf>.
4. Jihan Safar, *Mariage et procréation à Oman et au Koweït : étude des mutations générationnelles dans le contexte d’Etats rentiers*. PhD in Economic Demography under the supervision of Prof. Philippe Fargues, Sciences Po. Doctoral School, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris, May 4, 2015.
5. Unlike with the Eastern African countries, the eviction of the Al-Busai’di dynasty and Arab settlers took a violent form during 1964’s Tanzania revolution. Another wave of Arab refugees originating from the region also fled the war in the African Great Lakes region in the 1990s. See Marc Valeri, *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 19-22.
6. Andrzej Kapiszewski. *Arab Versus Asian Migrant Workers In the GCC Countries*, United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development In the Arab Region, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, Beirut, May 15-17, 2006, UN/POP/EGM/2006/02, May 22, 2006, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/pdf/expert/11/P02_Kapiszewski.pdf, p. 8.
7. Some authors state: “there was a rapid increase in expatriate labor force between 1991 and 1996. The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) and the 1991 Iraq War helped to attract migrants to this country.” K.C. Dasand Nilambari Gokhale, “Omanization Policy and International Migration in Oman,” *MEI*, February 2, 2010.
8. <http://www.omansultanate.com/economy.htm>.
9. The only existing estimation of 500,000 persons in 1908, drawn by Lorimer, is probably too high. If accurate, the estimate would signify a zero per cent population growth rate until 1993. See J. Safar, 2015, p. 127.”
10. A Household Survey was conducted in 1975 in parts of the country only and two fertility surveys were conducted in 1989 and 1995. The first Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan covered the period 1976-

1980. See O. Winckler, *Arab Political Demography. Population Growth, Labour Migration and Natalist Policies* (Brighton/ Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), pp. 20-21.
11. Valeri, *Oman: Politics and Society in the Qaboos State*, pp. 72-73.
 12. Oxford Business Group, *Country Profile Oman 2015*, <http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/oman-2015/country-profile>.
 13. Crystal A. Ennis and Ra'id Z. al-Jamali, "Elusive Employment, Development Planning and Labour Market Trends in Oman," Chatham House Research Paper, Middle East and North Africa, September 2014, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20140916ElusiveEmploymentOmanEnnisJamali.pdf.
 14. The total Fertility Rate (TFR) of Omani women aged 15-49 was six children per women on average in 1995; by 2010, it was 3.2 only. See *Annual Health Report 2013*, <https://www.moh.gov.om/en/web/directorate-general-of-planning/resources>.
 15. Jihan Safar, *Mariage et procréation à Oman et au Koweït*, Thèse IEP Paris, 2015, p. 230.
 16. Das and Gokhale, "Omanization Policy and International Migration in Oman." Other explanations to difficulties encountered by Omani youth to access available positions pertain to their reluctance to perform certain, mainly manual, tasks.
 17. Ennis and al-Jamali, "Elusive Employment, Development Planning and Labour Market Trends in Oman," p. 3.
 18. Jihan Safar, "La question des migrants à la lumière du printemps arabe dans le Sultanat d'Oman," (paper presented in the conference *Faits migratoires et mouvements sociaux dans le monde arabe*, Paris, Moulay Hicham Foundation, June 2011).
 19. Said Sultan al Hashimi, "The Omani Spring: Towards the Break of a New Dawn," *Arab Reform Brief*, n°52, November 2011 <http://www.arab-reform.net/sites/default/files/Omanenglish.pdf>, pp. 5-6.
 20. Oxford Business Group. "Local Knowledge: The Drive is on to Prepare Omanis for Private Sector Employment," <http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/analysis/local-knowledge-drive-prepare-omanis-private-sector-employment>
 21. <http://www.timesofoman.com/News/Article-29327.aspx>.
 22. <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/oman-sends-70-000-illegal-workers-home-and-30-000-taxis-now-have-no-passengers>.
 23. <http://www.migrant-rights.org/2014/02/oman-intensifies-localization-strategies/>.
 24. <http://www.timesofoman.com/News/50193/Article-47-000-illegals-in-Oman-to-make-the-most-of-amnesty-offer#>.
 25. National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI)'s home page (updated every week): http://www.ncsi.gov.om/NCSI_website/N_Default.aspx (English) http://www.ncsi.gov.om/NCSI_website/N_default_ar.aspx (Arabic).
 26. <http://gulfmigration.eu/oman-population-by-nationality-omani-non-omani-at-dates-of-census-1993-2003-2010/>.
 27. Jihan Safar, *Mariage et procréation à Oman et au Koweït*, Thèse IEP Paris, 2015, pp. 126-127.
 28. Drawn from past population movements (births, deaths, emigration and immigration).
 29. Using linear regression method.

30. For a description of the techniques used during the three censuses, see, for example: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/Conferences/Korea/2012/docs/s07-5-1-Oman.pdf>
31. Such exemplarity actually propelled Mr Ali Ben Mahboob Al-Raisi, Director General of the Social Statistics and Census Administration at the Ministry of National Economy to the Chairmanship of the UN Statistical Commission for two consecutive years in 2010 and in 2011 (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/table-chairs.pdf>). See Safar, 2015: 126.
32. With access to satellite maps and direct transmission of information to data-processing computers, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/egm/CensusEGM04/docs/AC98_8.pdf
33. Among other innovations, the use of GIS to ensure comprehensive geographical coverage of the territory, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/darticlen.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/November/middleeast_November23.xml§ion=middleeast; http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2011/Seminars/NewTechnologies/Oman.ppt.
34. Among which: technical mishaps in the counting of the housing units preliminary to the start of the census, a delay in the start of operations, an over-mediatisation of the census which may have affected the population's commitment and participation. Please see J. Safar, *Mariage et procréation à Oman et au Koweït*, pp. 138-142.
35. It is also puzzling that most of 2010's census results, which were published in numerous thematic studies, usually appear as percentages, not raw data that could be processed by researchers.
36. The components method projects the various components of population growth (fertility, mortality, migration) separately by sex, age group, etc.
37. The civil registration is based on the civil status system and is maintained by the General Directorate of Civil Status (DGCS), a part of the Royal Oman Police. Since 2004, registration of all vital events taking place in the Sultanate (births, death, marriages, and divorces) in the civil register is mandatory for Omanis and residents of the Sultanate. The DGCS also issues and keeps records of identity cards for Omanis and residence cards to foreign residents.
38. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/vitalstatkb/Attachment75.aspx>.
39. \$ 779, or 691 Euros as of May 2015.
40. For a systematic survey of average salaries by profession, GCC country, and group of nationalities, see: Robert Anderson, "Revealed: The Gulf Business 2015 Salary Survey," *Gulf Business* 19, Issue 11, March 23, 2015.
41. Data on employed population used here are taken from the Civil Registration records, published by NCSI.
42. NCSI. *Characteristics of Expatriates in Oman*, Mascate: NCSI, 2014. Data are taken from the Civil Registration records.
43. <http://gulfmigration.eu/oman-employed-expatriates-by-sex-and-education-level-mid-2014/>.
44. <http://gulfmigration.eu/oman-employed-population-by-country-of-citizenship-mid-2014/>.
45. <http://gulfmigration.eu/oman-a-socio-demographic-profile-of-domestic-workers-2010/>.
46. Concerns only those employed in the private and domestic sectors.
47. NCSI. *Characteristics of Expatriates*, p. 20. These figures concern only the workers holding valid labour permits and working in the private sector (which here includes the domestic workers).
48. The data is taken from the Ministry of Manpower's records, which are reproduced in the Central Bank of Oman's *Yearbooks* and in NCSI's Statistical Yearbooks (Sections "Government" and "Private sector"). How-

ever, such data is used here as an indication of Omanis' employment patterns (unavailable elsewhere). The MoM's data are not used in this paper, because they do not match the Civil Registry's datasets, on which the paper is mostly based.

49. NCSI/ Ministry of Manpower's data, in: Central Bank of Oman. *Statistical Yearbook* 2014, p. 6.
50. Yet, it is impossible to know if a part of these permits actually served to regularise the situation of undocumented residents.
51. <http://omanobserver.om/new-visa-rules-to-hit-families/>.
52. <http://gulfnnews.com/news/gulf/oman/oman-tightens-rules-on-expatriate-workers-1.1231629>.
53. <http://gulfnnews.com/news/gulf/oman/oman-freezes-expatriate-recruitment-in-construction-and-cleaning-sectors-1.1248182>.
54. Steffen Hertog, "Arab Gulf States: an Assessment of Nationalization Policies," Research Paper No. 1/2014, Gulf Labour Market and Migration (GLMM) programme of the Migration Policy Center (MPC) and the Gulf Research Center (GRC), <http://gulfmigration.eu>.
55. <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-filipino/07/29/14/oman-imposes-new-policy-foreign-workers>.
56. <https://www.balglobal.com/News/News/Details/tabid/1136/id/4024/language/en-US/OMAN-Dec-2-2014-Foreign-workers-subject-to-two-year-ban-may-re-enter-on-other-visa-type.aspx>.
57. <http://www.manpower.gov.om/portal/en/OmanisationPerSector.aspx>.
58. The 2012 Omani Labor Law states: "Each employer that does not comply with the stipulated Omanization percentages shall be punishable by a fine of not less than two hundred fifty (250) and not more than five hundred (500) Omani Rials for each Omani employee that should have been employed. The employer shall rectify the Omanization percentage within six months from the date the violation was detected. Penalty shall be doubled upon the repetition of the violation." Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Manpower. "Oman Labor Law 2012." Muscat, Oman: Ministry of Manpower, 2012. Part 10, Article 114; Refer to Julia Craig Romano and Lee Seeger, "Rentierism and Reform: Youth Unemployment and Economic Policy in Oman," *IMES Paper Capstone Series*, The Institute For Middle East Studies, The Elliott School Of International Affairs, George Washington University, May 2014, p. 43.

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