

Series on the Nationalization of the Workforce in GCC Countries

New York University Abu Dhabi

Background and Objective

The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been pursuing nationalization initiatives aimed at gradually reducing, and eventually eliminating, their dependence on foreign labor. To meet this objective, each government has adopted an economic development strategy (better known as Bahrainization, Emiratization, Kuwaitization, Omanization, Qatarization, and Saudization) that target the employment of native workers through various affirmative action regulations, educational reforms, population policies, and economic diversification plans. Although such policies are yet to yield the desired results, they could eventually have considerable impact both within and outside the Gulf region. This two-year series includes four workshops and aims to address different aspects of these nationalization strategies, including their historical and contextual backgrounds, the factors that motivated them, the approaches adopted, the directions they have taken, their outcomes (present and potential), and the challenges that the governments face as they pursue them.

The first workshop sets the stage for the series by focusing on the structural contexts and overarching objectives of the nationalization initiatives dealing with the political and socio-economic frameworks of the GCC countries and their respective development trajectories (particularly in relation to economic diversification and regional integration) in the aftermath of a succession of oil booms and the recent financial crises. The sessions in this workshop also address issues related to demographic features in the region (especially its youthful profile); dynamics of labor markets; the role of civil society and the media; and employment and migration policies in different GCC countries.

The subsequent workshops examine further topics that continue to be central to the implementation and effects of the nationalization strategies, especially

- gender and population policies
- labor rights and regulations
- education and employment reforms
- domestic politics
- the future of the welfare state in the Gulf

The objective of the series is to provide a forum for in-depth examination and discussion of GCC nationalization initiatives, bringing together a core group of academics, researchers, government officials, and representatives of international organizations.

Organizing institutions

This workshop is convened by Samira A. Atallah, of [NYU's Center for Advanced Social Science Research](#) and of [NYUAD Institute](#). It is part of a CASSR project supported by NYUADI under the umbrella of its Regional Collaborative Seminars (RCS) program. The RCS program is designed to stimulate substantive research and deep collaboration among NYUAD, the NYUAD Institute, and scholars in the UAE, the Gulf, and the larger Middle East and North Africa region.

| Workshops in Series | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Workshop I | Workshop II | Workshop III | Workshop IV |