



**Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.**

**Fahad Rashid Saif Al Jahwari**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

**The University of Sheffield  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Department of Sociological Studies**

**March 2021**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Truly, undertaking this research project has been a life-changing experience for me, which would have been impossible without the supervision, inspiration, support and insight of the many people I have learned from throughout the research process.

I might not have reached this final stage of my studies without the help of my supervisors, colleagues and administrative staff in the department, my parents and my employer, all of whom have actively contributed to the success of my research journey up to this point.

First, special thanks goes to my joint supervisors Professor Majella Kilkey and Professor Louise Ryan, for their supervision and collaboration over the last five years, without which my research would not have been successful. Each time I found myself challenged within the research process, I found my supervisors to be invaluable. Although I had the opportunity to develop my research skills by consulting numerous academic books and journal articles and attending workshops, within the department and under the respective umbrellas of the Doctoral Development Programme (DDP) and the White Rose Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP), I found my supervisors to be more useful, as they understood my situation and knew what I aimed to accomplish. On certain occasions, I could find myself confused, as a researcher, particularly when faced with a deluge of social science information. It was in such situations that their guidance turned out to be truly indispensable. They were supportive, often granting me the freedom to explore and to investigate various approaches to the research process without objection. They have been my primary resources when it came to answering all of my questions about PhD research, and have been actively involved in enabling me to crank out / bring the thesis to this point.

Second, I would like to express sincere appreciation to all my colleagues and friends in the department of sociological studies. I must thank them for their continuous support, for our shared learning experiences and for the active concern expressed in the (PhD students' office). Words cannot express how much it meant to me to have been a member (as a researcher) of this highly prestigious department, which enabled me to make friendships with international colleagues from seven continents. These magnificent colleagues and friends proved to be an inspiration to me over the years; special thanks goes to (Kwaku, Ping, Eda and Abdul).

Third, I would also like to thank the administrative staff in the department for their support. I remember the brief discussions held in the department's dedicated social space (the kitchen) and how exceptionally enlightening their insights were. I must say that each of those discussions had a positive influence on my research journey. I must thank them for their direct and indirect administrative and technical support; I became very enthusiastic about completing my research project due in part to their cooperation and valuable assistance; special thanks goes to (Lorna, Adele, Jo, Jenni and Daniel).

Fourth, I would like to thank the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman, my employer ('the Supreme Council for Planning and Ministry of Economy - Muscat') and the Cultural Attaché Office - Embassy of Oman, in London for the scholarship I received and their other support. Obviously, without their contribution, this research would not have been possible in the first place.

Fifth, my special thanks and appreciation to my viva examiners panel (Dr Crystal Ennis and Professor Alan Walker) for their valuable comments, pieces of advice and recommendations for my future research.

In conclusion, I would like to thank both of my parents for their constant support, love and care. Their willingness to maintain a steady flow of communication from thousands of miles away provided much-needed psychological support for me to get through the research. They inculcated in me the power of positive thinking. Finally, I must thank my family for the great friendship, compassion, encouragement and, most importantly, love despite the constraints of distance.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the evidence about the employment and employability patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector through the lens of Omanisation policies and perspectives from the demand and supply of labour. Omani government policy seeks to address such social problems as youth unemployment and poverty by diversifying the economy away from being dependent on the oil and gas sector. The objectives of this thesis are to understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates, and to identify what modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

Qualitative methods were adopted for this research project, based on interviews with a broad spectrum of key actors representing both demand and supply sides of the labour market, as well as government policymakers and members of academic staff. The data consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews and elite interviews, which were analysed thematically (both manually and with NVivo software) to achieve the standard of rigour and validity required. The findings of the study suggest that Omanisation policies should be modified to promote balance between Omani and migrant graduates, as the growing T&H sector creates ample employment without harming the prospects of either category to find suitable positions. Theoretically, investment in Human Capital (HC) in Oman supports the opportunities for Omani and migrant graduates to work in higher-quality jobs and to achieve their social and economic goals.

**Keywords:** Omanisation, tourism and hospitality, human capital, gender, graduate attitudes

## Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Research context and background.....	2
1.2 Research problems and justifications.....	7
1.3 Scope of the study .....	11
1.4 Significance of the study and contributions to knowledge .....	12
1.5 Research motivation and goals.....	15
1.6 Thesis structure .....	16
<b>CHAPTER 2: Background of the Omani Labour Market and Omanisation Policies ....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	20
2.2. Omanisation policies .....	21
2.2.1. The meaning of Omanisation and criticism of its implementation .....	21
2.2.2 Related nationalisation policies in the Gulf region .....	29
2.2.3 The demand and supply sides of the labour market .....	32
2.3 Migration.....	35
2.3.1 Historical perspectives on migrants and migration trends and development in Oman and the GCC .....	35
2.3.2 The role of migrants in the economies of Oman and other GCC countries .....	44
2.3.3 The <i>kafala</i> system.....	45
2.4 The role of gender in women’s employability .....	48
2.4.1 Patterns of women’s employment in the GCC .....	49
2.4.2 Effects of education on women’s employment in the GCC and Oman.....	52
2.5 Conclusion and summary of research gaps .....	54
<b>CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Framework – Human Capital theory .....</b>	<b>57</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	57
3.2 Background of HC theory .....	59
3.3 Gender and HC theory.....	63
3.4 Understanding why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector .....	70
3.4.1 Employability of domestic graduates .....	71
3.4.2 Migrants’ employability .....	73
3.4.3 Employers’ perspectives on graduate employability.....	81
3.4.4 The risk of employability: .....	84
3.5 Potential modifications to nationalisation policies.....	90
3.6 Assessing the strengths and limitations of HC theory.....	92
3.7 Conclusion.....	105
<b>CHAPTER 4: Methodology .....</b>	<b>108</b>

4.1 Introduction .....	108
4.2 Research questions, aims and objectives.....	108
4.3 Research design, research philosophy and research approach.....	110
4.3.1 Pilot study .....	112
4.3.2 Data collection.....	113
4.4 Reflections on data collection, with reference to reflexivity and positionality.....	125
4.5 Ethical considerations .....	136
4.5.1 Informed consent .....	138
4.5.2 The Promise of anonymity .....	140
4.5.3 Confidentiality .....	140
4.5.4 Ethical challenges and self-reflection.....	141
4.6 Data Analysis .....	142
4.7 Rigour and validity in qualitative research .....	145
4.8 Conclusion.....	147
<b>CHAPTER 5: Factors shaping attitudes of Omanis toward working in the Omani T&amp;H Sector.....</b>	<b>150</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	150
5.2 The influences of individual and social expectations on attitudes towards working in the sector .....	150
5.2.1 Perspectives on the role of diverse work opportunities in shaping Omani attitudes towards working in the Omani T&H sector .....	150
5.2.2 Factors influencing employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani graduates .....	156
5.2.3 The effect of gender roles and dynamics on attitudes towards the T&H sector....	161
5.2.4 Gendered perspectives on the influence of income on attitudes .....	165
5.2.5 Role of human capital investment on Omanis' job expectations and employment patterns.....	176
5.2.6 Perspectives on job security in the T&H sector .....	186
5.3 Social, cultural and religious norms.....	189
5.3.1 The role of the Islamic religion and Omani traditions in shaping attitudes towards the T&H sector .....	189
5.4 Conclusion.....	199
<b>CHAPTER 6: Omanisation Policies.....</b>	<b>205</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	205
6.2 Evaluation of Omanisation.....	206
6.2.1 Factors shaping attitudes towards Omanisation in light of evolving patterns and impacts of migration.....	206
6.3 The relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social changes.....	215
6.3.1 Relevance to current economic changes.....	215
6.3.2 Relevance to current social concerns.....	226
6.4 Conclusion.....	239
<b>CHAPTER 7: Factors Affecting Migrants' Attitudes, Employability and Patterns of Employment in the Omani T&amp;H Sector .....</b>	<b>243</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	243

7.2 Factors shaping migrant workers’ attitudes towards working in the T&H sector .....	243
7.2.1 Effects of characteristics of the T&H sector on migrants’ attitudes.....	243
7.2.2 Migrants’ expectations of the Omani labour market and resulting effects on their attitudes.....	253
7.3 Effects of migrant workers’ investments in HC in Oman on their employability and employment patterns .....	259
7.3.1 How various investments in HC affect migrant workers’ employability and employment patterns.....	259
7.3.2 The effect of HC investment on length of stay in Oman.....	274
7.4 Factors influencing employers’ attitudes towards hiring migrant workers.....	278
7.5 Conclusion.....	283
<b>CHAPTER 8: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>288</b>
8.1 Introduction .....	288
8.2 Key findings and theoretical contributions .....	289
8.4 Policy recommendations for key actors .....	310
8.5 Limitations of this research project and suggestions for future studies .....	315
8.6 Concluding remarks .....	319
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>322</b>
Appendix 1: Letter Of Authorisation To Conduct Research Interviews/Request For Access .....	322
Appendix 2: Letter To A Hotel Manager To Conduct Research Interviews .....	325
Appendix 3: Letter To The Public Authority Of ‘X’ .....	329
Appendix 4: Letter To The Deputy Dean For Academic Affairs .....	333
Appendix 5: Letter To A Tourism Development Firm To Conduct Research Interviews.....	337
Appendix 6: Letter To A Government Tourism Expert To Conduct Research Interviews.....	341
Appendix 7: Demographic Questionnaire – Academic Staff of Migrant Origin .....	344
Appendix 8: Demographic Questionnaire – Employees of Migrant Origin .....	345
Appendix 9: Demographic Questionnaire – Managers of Migrant Origin .....	347
Appendix 10: Demographic Questionnaire – Students of Migrant Origin .....	349
Appendix 11: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Students .....	350
Appendix 12: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Employees .....	351
Appendix 13: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Graduates Who Are Unemployed ..	353
Appendix 15: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Managers .....	355
Appendix 16: Elite Interview Guide – Academic Staff of Migrant Origin.....	357
Appendix 17: Elite Interview Guide – Managers of Migrant Origin.....	359
Appendix 18: Interview Guide – Employees of Migrant Origin .....	361
Appendix 19: Interview Guide – Omani Employees .....	363
Appendix 20: Interview Guide – Omani Graduates Who Are Unemployed .....	365
Appendix 21: Elite Interview Guide – Omani Managers.....	367
Appendix 22: Interview Guide – Omani Students .....	369
Appendix 23: Interview Guide – Students of Migrant Origin .....	371

Appendix 24: Elite Interview Guide – Tourism Experts.....	373
Appendix 25: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Employees .....	375
Appendix 26: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Managers .....	378
Appendix 27: Participant Information Sheet – Employees of Migrant Origin .....	381
Appendix 28: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Managers .....	384
Appendix 29: Participant Information Sheet – Academic Staff of Migrant Origin .....	387
Appendix 30: Participant Information Sheet – Managers of Migrant Origin .....	390
Appendix 31: Participant Information Sheet – Tourism Experts .....	393
Appendix 32: Participant Information Sheet – Unemployed Omani Graduates .....	396
Appendix 33: Participant Information Sheet – Students of Migrant Origin .....	399
Appendix 34: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Students .....	402
Appendix 35: Participant Consent Form .....	405
Appendix 36: A Copy of An Ethics Approval Letter Issued By The University.....	408
Appendix 37: Hierarchy Chart: Data Analysis Using NVivo – 1 .....	409
Appendix 38: Hierarchy Chart: Data Analysis Using NVivo – 2 .....	410
Appendix 39: Coding Percentages: Data Analysis Using NVivo .....	411
Appendix 40: Explore Diagram of Codes and Cluster Analysis of Themes – NVivo.....	412
Appendix 41: Creating a Hierarchy: Chart of Themes – NVivo.....	413
Appendix 42: Qualitative Data Analysis: The NVivo Pro 12 Workspace .....	414
Appendix 43: Opening a New Project in Nvivo and Transcribing Audio and Video.....	415
Appendix 44: Creating a Hierarchy Chart: Tree Map – NVivo .....	416
Appendix 45: Project Map – NVivo .....	417
Appendix 46: Concept Maps – NVivo .....	418
Appendix 47: Using NVivo for the three data chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) by adding links to relevant literature and theoretical concepts (Chapter Two and Three) .....	419
Appendix 48: Official Letters From The Embassy .....	420
Appendix 49: Number of employees in accommodation services, by nationality and class of hotels, relative shares (%) in the T&H sector in Oman .....	422
Appendix 50: Number of employees in accommodation services, by nationality and class of hotel in the T&H sector in Oman.....	423
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>424</b>

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 4. 1: Breakdown of participants and interview details for primary data collection.....	115
Figure 2. 1: Number of migrants from Asian countries to Oman, in thousands.....	41
Figure 2. 2: Composition of migration to Oman, 1990–2019.....	42
Figure 2. 3: Composition of the labour force in GCC countries in 2014: Citizens vs. migrants. .....	43
Figure 2. 4: Global and GCC unemployment rates by gender (including both citizens and migrants) in 2012. ....	51

Figure 2. 5: Global and GCC labour force participation by gender (including both citizens and migrants) in 2012. ....52

Figure 2. 6: Women in leadership positions in relation to educational attainment in 2015. ...54

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CoE** — Code of Ethics

**GCC** — the Gulf Cooperation Council

**GDP** — Gross Domestic Product

**GDPR** — the General Data Protection Regulation

**HC** — Human Capital theory

**ILO** — International Labour Organisation

**IMF** — the International Monetary Fund

**KSA** — the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**MENA** — the Middle East and North Africa

**NCE** — the National Centre for Employment: Oman

**NCSI** — the National Center for Statistics and Information: Oman

**OCHR** — the Centre for Human Rights: Oman

**OECD** — the International Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

**PAMR** — the Public Authority of Manpower Register: Oman

**PASI** — the Public Authority for Social Insurance: Oman

**SC** — Social Capital theory

**T&H** — Tourism and Hospitality sector

**The Majlis Al-Shura Council** — the Omani Parliament

**UAE** — the United Arab Emirates

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research context and background

This thesis collects and examines evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment<sup>1</sup> and employability<sup>2</sup> in the tourism and hospitality (T&H) sector within the context of Omanisation policies<sup>3</sup>: policies aimed at replacing migrant workers with local citizens by localisation, or nationalising the workforce in the national labour market.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the thesis explores the varied perspectives and opinions of key actors on the demand side of the Omani labour market, including Omani and migrant employers or managers. At the same time, the thesis also examines the supply side – Omani and migrant graduates – and offers a critical examination of Omanisation policies from these varied perspectives.

This study is crucial because of the dearth of research to date focusing on what Omanisation policies mean for employment and employability, as understood by key actors in the T&H sector. Whereas public debate and previous research on the effects of Omanisation shed light on domestic, supply-side perspectives, they have paid less attention to the perspectives of migrants and of demand-side representatives. Like most of its neighbours in the Gulf region, Oman faces critical social issues related to high unemployment among Omani nationals; meanwhile, the country depends on an imported labour force (of migrant workers) to fill gaps

---

<sup>1</sup> Employment represents an agreement between two parties (employee and employer), based on an agreed contract for paid work between two parties (Delsen, 1997; McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005; Cavalier and Upex, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Employability is a characteristic of individuals, based on the accumulation of human capital (such as education and skills) that enhances a person's capacity to obtain and maintain employment (Berglund and Wallinder, 2015; McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005; Lindsay et al., 2007).

<sup>3</sup> 'Omanisation policies' are frequently referred to in Omani conventional and social media; this term is generally preferred for purposes of this study, since the policies analysed here are not unitary and have been implemented through a number of initiatives in relation to different groups and sectors, over time.

<sup>4</sup> See Wickramasekara (2016), Fargues (2011), Hertog (2019), Thiollet (2019), Valenta and Jakobsen (2016) and Adamson and Tsourapas (2019); also see Chapter Two (the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies) for a detailed discussion of Omanisation policies.

of skills and expertise in labour (Gardner, 2012; Al-Balushi, 2018; Young, 2016). Throughout this study, I explore why so few Omani graduates are working in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates, examining demand- and supply-side attitudes and perspectives. In addition, I offer a critical review and analysis of Omanisation policies, to eventually suggest modifications to increase the proportion of Omani graduates working in the T&H sector in the future. Omanisation policies have failed in encouraging Omani graduates to work in the T&H sector, which has been largely unaddressed by previous scholarship. In fact, most jobs in the sector are currently filled by migrant workers rather than Omani graduates, even though the T&H sector has been identified by the Omani government as a growth industry (Nair, 2019; Times of Oman, 2016a; Inside Arabia, 2018; Al Jazeera, 2005; Simpson, 2018; Al Othman and Al Balushi, 2021).

The aim of the government's Omanisation policies, launched in the public and private sectors (including the private T&H sector) in 1988, was to promote an increase in the number of Omani workers in relation to the migrant labour force, to address such social problems as unemployment and poverty and to reduce government social spending on unemployment benefits and social insurance payments (DeFlumere, 2021; Sher, 2017; Karshenas and Moghadam, 2009; Gibson and Al-Sabahi, 2020).

Since their introduction, the objectives of Omanisation policy initiatives have not been met, and the Omani government has continued to encounter critical social problems, centred on increasing youth unemployment accompanied by poverty, crime and other issues affecting both socio-economic and political stability (Sher, 2017; Valeri, 2020; The Omani Centre for Human Rights, 2018; Owtram and Hayek, 2020). Omanisation policies have not been reviewed or updated to reflect contemporary conditions, contributing to the current failure of these policies and continuing issues concerning the Omani labour market's dependence on migrants (DeFlumere, 2021; Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020). At the same time, the Omani

government has not taken into account the perspectives and demands of key actors in the labour market over the whole period these policies have been pursued; these insights are what I am seeking throughout this study, with my focus on key actors from the demand and supply sides of the T&H sector's labour market.

These issues in Oman have been reported through international media like the BBC and CNN, which embarrassed the Omani government in front of the international community and ushered in criticism of the government response to such social problems as unemployment (CNN, 2011; Valeri, 2020; Louër, 2008; the Guardian, 2011; BBC News, 2011). For instance, in reaction to an unusual show of public displeasure during the 2011 Arab Spring<sup>5</sup>, the government of Oman created approximately 50,000 jobs in the public sector as part of this initiative, while increasing the minimum wage for workers in the private sector, adding new unemployment benefits, increasing the enrolment at both internal and international universities, and raising students' monthly allowances (Worrall, 2012; Louër, 2015; Calabrese, 2018; Mesch, 2003; BBC News, 2013). In addition, the Omani government considers T&H to be an alternative leading sector for future generations, shifting away from reliance on the oil and gas sector to enhance economic diversification *Thanfeedh*<sup>6</sup> in Oman and create jobs for Omanis (Ministry Of Economy – Oman, 2021; Netherlandsworldwide, 2017; US Embassy – Oman, 2016).

In this context the government of Oman, through its social policies, offers state-sponsored welfare provisions including provision of employment for graduates in the public sector, free education, free health services, social insurance for job seekers and other subsidised services

---

<sup>5</sup> Social scientists and political analysts use the term 'Arab Spring' for the wave of anti-government protests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) that took place from Tunisia to Oman, beginning in 2010, in response to autocratic regimes and low standards of living including social, economic and civil considerations (Goodwin, 2011; BBC News, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> The process of increasing the number of sectors or markets in an economy to ensure reliance on multiple sources of income nationally (Supreme Council for Planning – Oman, 2016; Netherlandsworldwide, 2017; US Embassy – Oman, 2016).

for Omani citizens. However, Omani social policy has changed direction in recent decades to reduce government spending on social welfare, due to a series of economic crises caused by falling oil prices. In other words, the government's implementation of Omanisation policies in the T&H sector has aimed to ensure that the demand for workers in this sector matched a supply of workers mostly drawn from within the country. More importantly, Omanisation was meant to influence the labour market at three different levels: executive management, middle management and semi-skilled workers (Atef and Al-Balushi, 2016; 2017). Meanwhile, Zerovec and Bontenbal (2011) explain that even though Omanisation has been in effect for many years, it faces particular challenges that prevent it from sustaining and increasing the number of local employees in the T&H industry. To replace a growing migrant workforce with more local workers, the government established quotas for each sector to meet when employing local and migrant workers (Winckler, 2000; Al-Lamki, 2000; Schmidt et al. 2013; Winckler, 1997).

Meanwhile, Oman is currently struggling with the effects of declining oil prices on its revenues. In 2019, the International Monetary Fund estimated that the country was operating on a debt level of 59.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and that it would reach nearly 77% by 2024 (Davies, 2020; Kerr, 2020; Middle East News, 2020; IMF, 2020; Sfakianakis, 2020; Torchia, 2019). More than 40% of the Sultanate's total annual government budget goes to social spending, including social welfare, health care, education and housing (Ministry of Finance – Oman, 2020), but social spending in Oman and other Gulf countries averages about 10.4% of GDP, compared to a 20.6% average in advanced countries like the UK and Denmark in 2019 and 2020 (Mathai et al., 2020; Kutty, 2018; Abbas, 2020; OECD, 2019). The GCC in general, and Oman in particular, face challenges in developing the fiscal capacity to offer social services comparable to developed countries.

Like other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Oman is being transformed as declining oil and gas prices force shifts to the country's socio-economic agenda and path forward to economic development. To address Oman's macroeconomic and social challenges, the government launched an initiative to diversify the economy, commencing a five-year strategy in 2016 to cut the contribution of hydrocarbon production from 44% to 22% of GDP by 2020 by encouraging reliance on other sectors, such as T&H (Davies, 2020). Against this background, there are concerns that the Omanisation policies may not be helpful in increasing the numbers of Omani graduates into the T&H sector's labour force (Al-Balushi, 2018; Gulf Business, 2018; Ennis and Al-Jamali 2014; Muscat Daily, 2021).

One of the main challenges facing Omanisation policies within the T&H industry is the lack of skilled Omani graduates, which forces many companies and hotels in this sector to rely on migrant workers to meet the demand for employees. According to a study by Bontenbal and Aziz (2013), Oman faces limitations in its higher education facilities and training institutions: they consistently fail to provide enough graduates with the skills required to meet market demands. Al-Riyami and colleagues (2015) agree that Omani institutions are not producing graduates qualified to occupy executive positions in this sector, leaving T&H companies with no option but to employ migrant workers. These scholars have further emphasised that Omani youths tend to be reluctant to work as waiters, tour guides or accommodation managers, even when they have no skills and are jobless. For instance, data assembled by Nair (2019) show that the total number of workers employed in the T&H industry increased from 14,050 in 2017 to 18,627 in 2018. However, out of this number, only 26 % were Omanis, while the remaining 74% were migrant workers (Al-Balushi, 2018; Nair, 2019; Muscat Daily, 2021). The ambitious target set by the Omani government is to create more than 500,000 jobs for Omanis and migrants by 2040; the Omani T&H sector is therefore expected to create at least 20,000 jobs each year (Castelier, 2020; Muller and Castelier, 2019). Consequently, this thesis will

investigate the challenges posed by Omanisation policies in sustaining the local labour economy in the T&H sector and Omani labour markets, with a focus on Omani and migrant graduates (see Chapter Two for a discussion about the literature concerning the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies, in greater depth, and Chapter Six for the study's findings concerning Omanisation).

In the next section, I discuss the reasons this research topic is important, and the problems associated with it.

## **1.2 Research problems and justifications**

This thesis seeks to address specific issues and problems based on existing knowledge gaps within the large body of previously published literature. First, I intend to explore the attitudes and perspectives underlying why so few Omani graduates work in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates, despite Omanisation policies intended to encourage locals to work in the public and private sectors (including the private T&H sector). Second, I want to understand the attitudes, perspectives and opinions of elite participants, like managers, employers and government officials, that help document the employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. Third, I aim to investigate how Human Capital (HC) investment may contribute to the employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates, including the role of gender in relation to HC theory (see the discussion in Chapter Three, section 3.3). I decided to adopt HC theory as the theoretical framework underpinning my study as it fits with these key research objectives. The HC paradigm proposes that society and its people obtain economic benefits from investments in such variables as education, skill training or migration investments that in turn bring returns like higher earnings or improved lifestyle. For the wider society, these kinds of investments bring about an increasingly productive and efficient workforce and hence more economic activity and increased societal benefits (Zwysen, 2019;

Zhou and Logan, 1989; Hollingsworth et al., 1996; Hage et al., 1988; Kane et al., 2018; Marimuthu et al., 2009; see Chapter Three, in particular section 3.2, for more detail).

In this context, I incorporate gendered perspectives to analyse the attitudes and experiences of male and female Omanis employed in the T&H sector (see Chapter Five, in particular, sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4, for a thorough discussion); I also discuss how gendered dynamic perceptions, expectations and stereotypes shape attitudes towards work in the T&H sector of migrant graduates (in Chapter Seven, particularly section 7.2). Finally, I explore whether Omanisation policies are able to address social problems in Oman, like unemployment, and whether they have the potential for success in the context of the Omani labour market. This examination will help me to identify what modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector. I introduce my participants' perspectives about the relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social changes. In addition, I explore the attitudes of my participants towards Omanisation in light of evolving employment patterns and the impacts of migration (see Chapter Six for a comprehensive discussion).

Oman's labour market policies and legislation are considered relatively liberal and encouraging of both international investment and labour migration. However, some human rights bodies have directed criticism at such labour policies as the *kafala*<sup>7</sup> (sponsorship) system: for example,

---

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter Two (the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies) for a more detailed explanation of the *kafala* system.

The *kafala* system (or policies) are frequently referred to in Omani conventional and social media. Like Omanisation policies, *kafala* is not a unitary system and has been implemented through a number of initiatives and in various economic sectors (like T&H), in relation to different categories of migrants over time. While *kafala* is an important aspect of employment in Oman, my research project is focused specifically on Omanisation in relation to the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. Meanwhile, the *kafala* system regulates all categories of migrant workers including unskilled, semiskilled and highly skilled workers, as well as migrant graduates (migrants with postsecondary qualifications or highly qualified migrant workers), in all economic sectors (Indrelid, 2018; Hvidt, 2019). However, I decided to exclude *kafala* from the scope of my investigation for several reasons. As a sensitive topic, I avoided raising this among the research questions in my oral interviews, particularly since migrants (and Omani women) make up the most vulnerable categories of informants in my thesis.

Human Rights Watch reported that some migrant workers experience exploitation and abuse from their employers (Human Rights Watch, 2016a). However, my research project focuses narrowly on Omanisation policies: the *kafala* system is itself a complex topic demanding dedicated research work (and I note this as a suggested topic for future research in Chapter Eight).

Although the Omani government has placed high hopes in the T&H sector, certain Omani officials and social researchers have expressed concerns that the objectives of Omanisation policies are not being met, since migrants still make up a majority of those employed in the sector (Muscat Daily, 2021; Nair, 2019; Ennis and Al-Jamali, 2014). T&H continues to employ newly arrived migrant workers, while not enough Omani graduates seek employment in the sector; both male and female Omani workers are more likely to become employed in the oil and gas, industrial and banking sectors compared to T&H (Al Abri, 2019; Hasan, 2015; Ennis and Al-Jamali, 2014).

Based on an extensive review of literature across various social science disciplines, I observed some vital challenges Omanisation has faced in various sectors, such as the education and health sectors (Ennis and Walton-Roberts, 2018; Zerovec and Bontenbal, 2011). Another challenge has been the problem of attracting high-quality workers away from local communities: convincing them not to return to their communities of origin or discouraging them from moving on from their places of employment. For instance, it is challenging to attract skilled workers to remain in Muscat (the capital of Oman) for work rather than returning to their local provinces or home countries; this contributes to shortages of skilled workers to meet the ever-growing demand of the T&H sector. In addition, a study by Atef and Al Balushi (2017), indicated that many Omanis consider work in this sector to be less formal and official than office work; they prefer to work in respectable offices rather than walk around serving the needs of tourists and other visitors. It is true, as well, that many hospitality graduates move

from this industry into other careers. The same study also found that the main reason given for leaving the T&H industry for another career is because of the negative views many people hold towards the industry. Scholars have stated that more than 70% of hospitality graduates leave this career for other work within five years of graduation (Atef and Al Balushi, 2016; 2017; Al-Balushi, 2018). Even though the Omani Ministry of Tourism has facilitated the diversification of the T&H sector for many years, through an increased implementation of Omanisation in different sub-sectors to encourage local labour to work in this sector, the industry continues to attract few Omani graduates. A subsequent data chapter of this study (Chapter Five) will explore and address these issues by further examining Omani attitudes towards work in the T&H sector.

The Omani T&H sector has attracted negative attention for numerous issues, such as anti-social working hours (Torchia, 2019), high levels of part-time and casual labour<sup>8</sup> and inadequate or non-existent career structures. As in other countries, hospitality workers in Oman are required to work irregular schedules or long-term night-shift work, which may interfere with sleep schedules and family life responsibilities as well as weekend socialisation. Such work patterns increase stress on workers, especially those with family and religious responsibilities. Consequently this work pattern and the low pay typical of this sector undermine Omanisation initiatives, since few local graduates would choose to work under such conditions (Bontenbal and Aziz, 2013; Atef and Al Balushi, 2016; 2017; Al-Balushi, 2018). Several valuable themes extracted from transcripts are presented in Chapter Five (for instance in sections 5.2 and 5.3), addressing this topic in detail.

Casual employment and unusual working hours are key policy concerns, which threaten the feasibility of Omanisation in the T&H sector. The result of T&H industry practices is the high

---

<sup>8</sup> Casual employment includes part-time labour and short-term jobs (Buchler et al., 2009; Campbell and Burgess, 2001).

number of skilled migrants occupying various positions in the T&H sector in Oman. Such trends have continued to undermine all efforts to encourage more skilled Omani graduates to work in this sector through Omanisation initiatives.

In the following section I discuss my main area of research, including the area of primary focus and coverage of this study. Some of the discussions in the next section will be presented in greater detail within Chapter Four (Methodology).

### **1. 3 Scope of the study**

My study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. While the methodology of the study will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four, the central objectives of this research project are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, might increase the participation of Omani male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

To achieve this, the primary research question addressed is: what factors explain the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector? To address this question, I examine the factors shaping demand- and supply-side perspectives about employment in the T&H sector, including their connection to human capital investment and gender-based considerations.

In this context, the secondary questions supporting my research project are as follows:

- i. What factors shape Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, and how do their perspectives compare to those of migrant graduates?

- ii. What factors influence employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates?
- iii. How do investments in Human Capital (HC) affect the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?
- iv. How do Omanisation policies affect the employment of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?
- v. How could Omanisation policies be modified to increase the participation of Omani graduates in the T&H sector?

In addition, I continue to explore how Omanisation could be altered to respond to globalisation trends and the factors identified through my data analysis. Finally, my thesis focuses on Omani and migrant graduates for greater comparability between the categories of workers in the T&H sector. I did not include Omani and migrant workers at lower levels of skill, including unskilled, semiskilled and other categories of labour, which would require new strategies and research methods suitable to their unique requirements.

The following section discusses the importance of this research and areas where it contributes to the advance of knowledge.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study and contributions to knowledge**

The results of this study represent insights that will make a significant contribution to scholarship, as well as informing decisions by government officials and key actors in the Omani labour market and broader society. The findings of this research project will present empirical evidence that is also relevant to important theoretical questions concerning HC theory, social policy and related fields of social science. The study's results will enlighten scholars on the sociology of migration, illuminating how national investment in HC contributes to a country's economic development, by enhancing the supply side of labour markets, and illustrating the

need for policymakers to reform and re-evaluate social policies such as Omanisation. From an individual perspective, my research will investigate the role of HC investment in Omanis' employment patterns and job expectations. In addition, the importance of HC investment to the full integration of both Omani and migrant workers into the T&H sector and the role of gender and social, cultural and religious norms, which shape attitudes towards work in the sector, are to be examined.

For an audience of government stakeholders, this study will help Omani social policy makers to identify areas that threaten the success of the Omanisation policy agenda. My research seeks to help policy makers to identify the employment patterns of Omani and migrant workers within the T&H sector. The results of this research bring to light certain themes concerning the factors that shape the attitudes of Omanis and migrants towards working in the Omani T&H sector, the impact of HC investment on Omani and migrant employment patterns and job expectations, perspectives around gender roles and dynamics and, most importantly, the relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social concerns<sup>9</sup>, which has not been explored by previous research (such as Bontenbal and Aziz, 2013; Atef and Al Balushi, 2016; 2017; Al-Balushi, 2018; and Al-Lamki, 1998; 2000). Therefore, policymakers will be tasked to develop new ways to modify Omanisation policies, giving priority to freshly qualified Omani hospitality graduates without reducing the number of migrant workers in the T&H sector. Through such efforts, it will be easier to overcome the critical challenges the implementation of Omanisation policies in the T&H sector currently face. Policymakers will then be able to develop policies to ensure that employers come up with strategies to curb the problems mentioned and increase the numbers of Omani graduates working in the sector.

---

<sup>9</sup> See the data chapters, Chapters Five to Seven, and also Chapter Eight (the conclusion) for more detail.

Finally, this study will provide data and related findings that can be used by various key actors and stakeholders in the T&H sector to help implement new measures and adjust their operations to meet the objectives of Omanisation. Through the data obtained, the study may encourage organisations to adopt specific changes, based on insights emerging from HC theory and interview data, to encourage more Omani graduates to seek employment in T&H. Therefore, the results of this study will be a source of data for key actors to use in future, facilitating the smooth implementation of Omanisation policies and overcoming the problems they currently face. In short, the present study present exploratory research, aiming to understand and gain insights from the perspectives of several social actors in the Omani labour market on the implications of Omanisation policies for the employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates. To achieve these objectives, the thesis will seek to answer its primary and interrelated sub-questions through qualitative interviews with 48 participants with a broad spectrum of key actors representing both demand and supply sides of the labour market, as well as government policymakers and members of academic staff. The data consists of in-depth semi-structured interviews and elite interviews, to be analysed thematically by traditional coding and then by NVivo 12 Pro. I will collect primary data from college ‘A’, government ministries, tourism firms, the public authority of ‘X’ and hotels in Muscat; in my data chapters I will discuss my experience interviewing each of these categories of participants during the 32 semi-structured interviews and 16 elite interviews.

For this research project, I adopted a purposive sampling method with snowball sampling to recruit participants in specific categories (I provide additional detail on my research methods in Chapter Four, section 4.3.2). My research philosophy and epistemological perspective are based on an interpretivist paradigm, selecting a qualitative methodology for this research project to obtain an understanding of the relevant social processes (Williams, 2000; Saunders et al., 2018). Therefore, my thesis will provide rich thematic data, revealing themes that emerge

inductively and guided by HC theory, and aiming to reach meaningful conclusions based on the data rather than generating theories or Grounded theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006. p 83; Saunders et al., 2018, p. 1897; Daher et al., 2017, p. 18; Silverman, 2014; and also see section 4.6).

To summarise, my study will contribute to knowledge by incorporating the lenses of both demand and supply side actors in the labour market in the T&H sector, capturing more in-depth and nuanced information to achieve my research objectives and address the research questions I will identify in Chapter Four. Accordingly, my study seeks to explore and discuss participants' perspectives on the supply and demand sides of the Omani labour market, to offer sophisticated analyses based on those perspectives and finally to develop policy contributions based on those perspectives and the theoretical perspective of HC (see Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight).

The next section discusses my research goals and my motivation for carrying out this study.

### **1.5 Research motivation and goals**

As a researcher working in public service in Oman and studying social policy at the University of Sheffield, this subject matter is highly motivating for me because it offers a clear opportunity to send important messages to key actors and stakeholders in the labour market and specifically in the T&H sector, to address certain social problems that Oman is now facing, particularly social issues relating to unemployment. According to the recent findings of international scholarship, Oman is experiencing continued social and political challenges, of which unemployment is a most urgent social concern (Kerr, 2020; Abouzzohour, 2020; Worrall, 2012; Said, 2016). Therefore, this study has particular relevance, particularly if it brings an improved understanding of some of the social issues that many Omani citizens face (including my brother, who graduated in 2013 from X university and is still unemployed because of

insufficient demand for his area of specialisation). Thus, my motivation to conduct this research is based on the current situation in Oman, where the government is pressured to implement financial austerity due to the decline of oil prices and faces an urgent imperative to find sustainable employment opportunities for its citizens. In addition, I aim to examine the existing Omanisation policies critically and to investigate the claims by previous analyses that Omani graduates do not want to work in the T&H sector, while also exploring the perspectives of employers towards these debates.

Again, the main motivation for me to carry out this research is to help understand the employment and employability patterns of Omani and migrant graduates and their potential to meet the continued demand from the T&H industry in Oman. I was inspired to ask myself the question: *What is going on in the T&H sector for hiring, in particular?*

## **1.6 Thesis structure**

My thesis is organised into eight chapters, as follows:

- Chapter 2: Literature review (Background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies) – This chapter offers a comprehensive review of the body of literature on government social policies related to immigrants vs. natives (Omanis) in Oman’s labour market, including Omanisation policies. It sets out the meaning of Omanisation and criticisms of its implementation, along with a review of other similar nationalisation policies within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC; for example, in the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). In addition, I review the demand and supply sides of the labour market. This chapter also addresses historical perspectives of migrants and migration trends and development in Oman and GCC countries, the role of migrants in the Omani economy and those of GCC countries and the *kafala* system. This chapter also offers the role of gender in women’s employability, the patterns of women’s employment in the GCC and the effects of education on women’s employment in the GCC. Finally, it includes a summary of gaps in the existing literature.

- Chapter 3: Theoretical framework – This chapter offers a comprehensive review of the study’s theoretical framework, HC theory, in light of my research objectives and the scope of this study. I provide the background and significance of HC theory, discuss the relationship between gender and HC theory in particular (including critical perspectives on women’s and men’s participation in labour markets), examine the role of HC investment in the employability of domestic graduates and of migrants in domestic labour markets and the demand side of the labour market (using a gendered lens), and explore HC theory in relation to potential modifications to nationalisation policies. The final section presents an overall assessment of some strengths and limitations of HC that are relevant to this research project, as well as complementary approaches used to address some of these weaknesses.
- Chapter 4: Methodology or methods chapter – This chapter elaborates the research questions, aims and objectives, research design and research philosophy (interpretivist epistemological paradigm) selected for this study. It discusses methods of data collection through the pilot study and then actual data collection, in particular the 48 semi-structured and elite interviews I conducted. It also sets out recruitment and sampling strategies as well as the thematic approach to data analysis selected for the study; my experience of the process of analysing the data thematically, first manually and then using NVivo software, is discussed at length. Finally, it addresses relevant ethical considerations, reflexivity and positionality, as well as factors enhancing the rigour and validity of qualitative research.
- Chapter 5: First thematic chapter (Factors shaping Omani attitudes towards working in the T&H sector) – this chapter discusses the factors shaping the attitudes of Omani workers and managers towards work in the T&H sector, the influences of individual and social expectations attitudes towards working in the sector, their perspectives on the role of diverse work opportunities in shaping Omani attitudes towards working in the Omani T&H sector, and factors influencing employers’ attitudes towards hiring them. A number of interesting themes and topics emerged from the data and are discussed in this chapter; in addition to general attitudes towards the sector, the chapter investigates gendered perspectives on the role of income in relation to other factors, perceptions of the role of HC investment on Omanis’ employment patterns and job expectations, perspectives on job security and the influence of Islamic religion and

Omani cultures in Oman. I also address the research questions concerning Omani graduates based on the data from my participants.

- Chapter 6: Second thematic chapter (Omanisation policies) – this chapter analyses my participants’ perceptions and attitudes regarding the theme of Omanisation policies and its place in Oman today. However, this chapter also engages with the research questions with regards to patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector, how Omanisation policies affect employment of these categories, and how Omanisation policies could be modified through different lenses (demand-side, supply-side and legislative aspects). Accordingly, I have organised the evaluation of Omanisation into two subsections. In the first subsection, I discuss the perceived attitudes towards Omanisation in light of the evolving patterns and impacts of migration. In the second subsection, I present my participants’ perceptions regarding the relevance of Omanisation to current economic concerns and also its relevance to current social concerns.
- Chapter 7: Third thematic chapter (Factors affecting migrants’ attitudes, employability and patterns of employment in the Omani T&H sector) – this final data chapter addresses research questions concerning migrant graduates. In its first section, I present the data in relation to factors shaping migrant graduates’ attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. The first subsection discusses the effects of characteristics of this sector on migrants’ attitudes, their expectations of the Omani labour market and resulting effects on their attitudes. Afterwards, the chapter addresses the effects of migrant graduates’ investments in HC while in Oman on their employability and employment patterns, the effect of this HC investment on their length of stay in Oman and finally factors influencing employers’ attitudes towards hiring migrant graduates.
- Chapter 8: Conclusion – This chapter summarises the research findings. In addition, the text discusses how the study has contributed to both theoretical and empirical knowledge in its field of research. Emerging policy recommendations are highlighted and the study’s limitations, and recommendations or suggestions for future research, are discussed.

In the next chapter, I will present a body of literature about the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation (and related) policies in the region and other significant related topics correlated to my study scope.

## CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND OF THE OMANI LABOUR MARKET AND OMANISATION POLICIES

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers three themes in the literature that are important to my study: Omanisation or nationalisation policies related to immigrants vs. native Omanis, the role of migrants and the role of gender in labour markets. First, I present an overview of the Omani labour market with a focus on Omanisation policies and the tourism and hospitality (T&H) sector, to provide context for my research into the employment and employability patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in this sector. These policies regulate the participation of migrants and native Omanis within the national labour market, and this section includes a critical discussion of the meaning of Omanisation policies and various critiques of them. Next, I offer a comprehensive examination of the literature about other similar localisation or nationalisation policies in the region to determine how they relate to Omanisation: for instance, policies in effect in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Localisation or nationalisation policies are the primary terms used in countries belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), in reference to their migration and related labour market policies. Each GCC state has a distinct set of policies concerning migration, reflecting local circumstances. In Oman, policies concerning migration are known as Omanisation policies; in the UAE they are called Emiratisation policies and in the KSA they are called Saudisation policies (Wickramasekara, 2016). Although my study does not include in its scope any comparative analysis of labour market policies or the *kafala* system in the region, it is nevertheless crucial to explore insights about policies arising from previous studies in similar contexts and to obtain a general picture of labour markets in the region, given the similar socioeconomic attributes of the six Gulf states. Then, in the subsequent section, I present a review of studies relating to the demand and supply sides of the labour market, to help

understand how those labour policies operate in the context of Oman. The following section relates to the role of migration, because Oman has relied and will continue to depend on migrant labour to develop its economy, I provide a historical review of insights on the role of migrants in Oman's labour market and their impact on national development, also discussing why a large number of highly skilled migrants (typically postsecondary graduates) come to the GCC and Oman, as well as on migration trends and development in Oman. Subsequently, I shed light on the current role of migrants in the Omani and GCC economies. Then I present a review of literature on the *kafala* system as a structural influence on the migrant workforce, showing its origin and its current status in labour markets belonging to the GCC. This system specifies the roles of migrant graduates (both men and women) in relation to their local sponsors (usually an employer or *kafeel*) in all sectors, including T&H. Finally, I explore the impact of gender, by examining patterns of women's employment in the GCC with a particular emphasis on women's experiences in Oman. The role of gender is a crucial theme in my study because of the need to analyse the attitudes of men and women (both Oman and migrant graduates) towards work in the T&H sector; the last section of this chapter includes a review of the literature on the effects of education on women's employment in the Gulf states and in Oman.

## **2.2. Omanisation policies**

### **2.2.1. The meaning of Omanisation and criticism of its implementation**

The process of localising or nationalising the workforce refers to the activity of strengthening the local workforce by replacing migrant workers with local citizens (Ennis and Al-Jamali 2014, p. 6; Hertog, 2019; Valenta and Jakobsen, 2016; DeFlumere, 2021). Nationalisation policies have been introduced in several states in the Gulf region to regulate the flow and mobility of migrants (Babar et al., 2019, Essomba, 2017). In the case of Oman, for instance, policies related to Omanisation have been at the centre of both local and international policy research. In spite of this research attention, I have identified gaps in this literature concerning

its overall effects on the employability of Omanis in such emerging sectors as T&H, as well as more generally concerning the adaptation of Omanisation policies to contemporary circumstances. The effects of these policies on the employability of Omanis in service industries, like T&H, remains relatively under-researched, and the concept of Omanisation also demands investigation from a critical point of view.

Various migration scholars agree that the initiation of nationalisation policies to promote greater employability has led to sustained research interest in the Gulf region. Indeed, research in a number of GCC countries has examined the effects of such policies on sectors other than T&H and has uncovered unexpected dynamics hindering these policies' potential to attain their original objectives (Zerovec and Bontenbal, 2011; Matherly and Hodgson, 2014). Critically, the Omanisation policies that came into force in 1988 were originally intended to promote investment in Oman's local workforce with the aim of lessening the country's reliance on migrant workers (DeFlumere, 2021). Over the last decade, the key goals underlying the implementation of these policies have been: ensuring that more Omani nationals obtain employment in the private sector, reducing the spending of public funds on subsidised services (such as water, electricity and health) for migrant populations, reducing Oman's balance of payments shortfall through a reduction in remittances leaving the country and, lastly, increasing domestic expenditure through the multiplier effect, which would then accelerate Oman's GDP growth (Das and Gokhale, 2010; Hertog, 2019; Shayah and Sun, 2019). The body of international literature on migration suggests that such Omanisation policies have similar attributes to migration policies in developed countries aiming to measure, manage and regulate the flow of migrants. Such regulation, of course, differs depending on the nature of national labour markets, demographic structures, socioeconomic factors and public policies operating in each country (Hix and Noury, 2007; Castles, 2004; 2006; Global Detention Project, 2016).

Ennis and Walton-Roberts (2018) provided useful insights based on their empirical findings on the implications of Omanisation policies in the health care sector. For instance, they argued that Omanisation failed to nationalise the labour force in sector, noting that the numbers of migrant healthcare workers (primarily nurses from the Philippines) continued to increase due to high demands from 2010 to 2015 (see also: Oman Observer, 2020; Emerson, 2018). Meanwhile, the data confirm a decline in Omani participation in the sector, so Omanisation is failing to reach its target. In spite of the complexity of the Omani health care sector, the authors show that labour market policy and governance can be understood as a form of global social policy formation. For example, markets for skilled labour and migration and economic transformation in a globalised world can be managed by social policy. Accordingly, their study motivated me to explore what is going on in the T&H sector concerning Omanisation. To achieve this, I aim to explore demand- and supply-side perspectives and different actors in the labour market, including policymakers in two government ministries. To address these issue, in Chapter Six I will analyse and discuss perceptions of Omanisation policies from various perspectives, to suggest policy modifications and contribute to some additional recommendations to be presented in Chapter Eight.

Much of the scholarly assessment of Omanisation has interpreted it as a national social policy<sup>10</sup> aiming to reduce dependence on migrant workers (Al-Lamki, 2000; Emerson, 2018; Hertog, 2019). This explains the incorporation of quotas that certain domestic industries should meet when employing migrant workers (Ennis and Walton-Roberts, 2018; Al-Lamki, 2000; Emerson, 2018; Hertog, 2019). This also supports the interpretation that Omanisation, as a

---

<sup>10</sup> Social policy consists of governmental priorities, legislation and regulations developed to promote the welfare of the state, the living conditions of people and the satisfaction of human needs through initiatives addressing such domains as education, work, health and social wellbeing. In my study, I focus on policies related to work, labour markets, education and employment (Erhel and Zajdela, 2004; Buss, 2019; Ennis and Walton-Roberts, 2018).

national social policy, is designed to provide employment opportunities to Omanis in the labour market (Torabi and Abbasi-Shavazi, 2015; Common, 2011; Mehta, 2017).

In scholarship to date, a consensus has emerged that the objectives of Omanisation policies have not been met over the nearly 30 years since they were first introduced (DeFlumere, 2021; Ennis and Walton-Roberts, 2018; Emerson, 2018). National and international studies have documented profound departures from the intended objectives of the policies since their outset (Ennis and Al-Jamali, 2014; Hertog, 2019). Oman's private sector makes up more than 80% of the labour market in the T&H sector and employs a high concentration of migrant workers; it has failed to move towards Omanisation objectives in any significant way (NCSI, 2018; Al-Barwani, 2014). Indeed, the Omani government identified the T&H sector as a key target for increasing the prospects of hiring local graduates, but research to date has suggested that Omani job applicants decline offers to work in the sector because of relatively low salaries and uncertainties about the types of experience, training and skills required in the sector (Castelier and Quentin, 2019; Eturenews, 2014).

Accordingly, in line with the objective of Omanisation policies to encourage the employment of Omanis in the private sector, the Ministry of Manpower in Oman is currently targeting women and men to join the tourism industry to fill existing employment shortages (Common, 2011; Mehta, 2017). Again, it appears that this objective is far from being attained. In fact, only 26% of the workforce in the T&H sector was made up of Omani men and women in 2016 (Times of Oman, 2016b; Al-Balushi, 2018; Nair, 2019; See Chapter One). Underrepresentation of Omani men and women in the T&H sector remains a major concern and an urgent area for research if Omanisation policies objectives are to be met (Al-Rabaani, 2013; Times of Oman, 2016a). In 1993, 27% of the total population consisted of migrant residents, but this decreased slightly to 24% in 2003 as the native-born population increased more rapidly than the migrant population. However, this was followed by a significant increase in migration, reaching 43%

of Oman's population in 2009 and approximately 50% in 2020 (NCSI, 2020; World Population Review, 2020). The representation of migrants in the Omani labour force has been increasing in spite of Omanisation policies and the *kafala* system (I will discuss *kafala* in section 2.3.3).

The National Centre for Statistics and Information of Oman (NCSI) and World Population Review (2020) estimate the number of Omanis in the country in 2020 to be 2,674,303, along with 2,000,797 migrants.<sup>11</sup> As I mentioned earlier (Chapter One), unfortunately, reliable statistics for the composition of the T&H labour force in terms of gender, education, age and other important aspects of Omani and migrant graduates and workers are not available at present. Amidst such varied factors, it should be noted that the realisation of Omanisation policies objectives is emphasised in the Oman Vision 2040<sup>12</sup> (Al Rahbi, 2017; Al-Bahrani, 2019). This action plan stipulates that the proportion of Omani workers in the private sector should increase to 45% by 2040 (Economist, 2019). Also, a study by Ennis and Al-Jamali (2014) cited the Omani government as the first GCC country to launch a long term strategic plan to diversify the national economy by reducing the over-dependence on the oil sector and identifying the T&H sector as a priority, in its Oman vision 2020 (The ISFU, 2021; Oman Vision 2040, 2020; Ministry of Finance – Oman, 2020). Omanis subsequently criticised this vision, however, and I believe it failed to achieve its objectives. Later, the Omani government decided to launch a new vision (Oman 2040) in 2013 to address the failures of Oman vision 2020; the new vision document re-evaluated all economic sectors, including T&H, concerning their contributions to employment and GDP growth (The ISFU, 2021; Oman Vision 2040, 2020; Ministry of Finance – Oman, 2020). However, this policy direction has faced setbacks,

---

<sup>11</sup> Statistics drawn from the (NCSI) and World Population Review websites (NCSI, 2020; World Population Review, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Oman Vision 2040 is an economic diversification action plan for Oman that is designed to improve varied social and economic characteristics of the country. At the heart of the plan are bureaucratic and regulatory reforms that are intended to attain economic diversification by 2040 (Oman Vision 2040, 2020).

as government support for T&H development has been undermined by financial shocks, and the sector itself has been threatened by the Covid-19 crisis and related lockdowns and travel restrictions. The international sociological literature on migration policies and nationalisation policies<sup>13</sup> has also concluded that increasing the participation of local employees in new sectors may be difficult because of the demands placed on changing social structures (Tani, 2019; Kolbe and Kayran, 2019; Salikutluk, 2016; Tomlinson, 2008; Van Belle et al., 2018).

Empirical evidence on the implementation of Omanisation in the T&H sector indicates that the sector has failed to achieve the targets set by the government of Oman, but I was unable to discern any more specific conclusions for Omani labour markets based on an analysis of the most recent literature (Burns, 1997; Khan and Krishnamurthy, 2016; Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020; Winckler, 2007). The assumption that Omanisation could readily obtain the objective of increasing Omani employment in this sector is therefore questionable and indicates a critical research gap. To address this issue, in Chapter Six I will analyse and discuss data concerning Omanisation from various perspectives, to suggest modifications on Omanisation and also present some additional recommendations in Chapter Eight.

The situation in the T&H sector appears to be complicated by certain additional factors. The Ministry of Manpower has recently revealed that it lacks statistical information on the workforce requirements of the tourism sector as well as the skill sets possessed by Omani workers (Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020).<sup>14</sup> In addition, a lack of awareness by Omanis

---

<sup>13</sup> 'Migration policies' is a term used widely in advanced countries in the EU; in the Middle East, and specifically the Gulf states, the term 'nationalisation' is widely used for related policies (Valenta, 2017). However, I observed that the scope of migration policies in the EU is typically broader than nationalisation policies in the Middle East, since nationalisation includes policies to enhance and facilitate migration as well as policies to control and regulate it.

<sup>14</sup> I have translated and analysed the annual reports of the Ministry of Manpower in Oman from 2016 to 2018, from Arabic to English, to capture an overview and offer insights into the Omani labour market in general, and specifically the T&H sector, due to the lack of English versions of the T&H reports (Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020).

about opportunities in the tourism sector could be another reason many Omanis are discouraged from seeking employment in this sector. Moreover, as Khan and Krishnamurthy (2016) have pointed out, traditional Omani values tend to discourage employment in this sector. The Ministry of Manpower – Oman (2020) has also maintained that when the Omanisation target for the tourism industry was set in 2005, it was unclear how quickly the industry would expand; subsequent development has made the achievement of the sectoral target doubtful. Finally, as tourism is a relatively new industry in the Sultanate, the indigenous population is not likely to have much experience in the industry. Tourism might therefore not have been considered an attractive career choice by young Omani workers or their families (Winckler, 2007). Another major reason outlined by the Ministry of Manpower (Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020) is that the education system equipping young Omanis with required competencies has been unable to produce the number of graduates required by the industry. Even though high levels of attrition (loss of employees) represent a major problem faced by the T&H industry worldwide, e.g. in the UK, Australia and Hong Kong (King et al., 2003; Witts, 2015), the situation in Oman is even more critical, where some studies have indicated a general lack of awareness career development opportunities in the T&H sector (Atef and Al Balushi, 2017; Khan and Krishnamurthy, 2016).

Ultimately, while Omanisation is a government initiative established to resolve certain social and economic challenges, Omani society continues to face widespread issues that Omanisation has been unable to mitigate, particularly challenges related to persistent youth unemployment (Plecher, 2020; Al Jailaniyah, 2020; The World Bank, 2018). Similar challenges have been observed in other GCC states, such as the UAE, Bahrain, the KSA, Kuwait and Qatar, all of which have also initiated nationalisation policies (Randeree, 2012; Fasano and Goyal, 2004).

The evidence from a body of international research on labour market institutions suggests that Oman is dealing with continuing social challenges that are linked to relatively high rates of unemployment. Estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) show that unemployment for young people aged 15 to 24 years in Oman is nearly 13.7% of the workforce in 2020; among GCC countries, the KSA reports 5.8% unemployment in 2020, the UAE 2.4% and Qatar 0.082%. Oman lags behind within the region in terms of providing employment for its graduates (The World Bank, 2020). Meanwhile, Omani media and the Omani Centre for Human Rights (OCHR) have suggested that the effective rate of unemployment could be higher, possibly as much as 40% (Middle East Eye, 2019; Sher, 2017; Gorvett, 2018; OCHR Oman, 2018). This implies that Oman is exposed to the risk of more serious social disorder.

These generational challenges are particularly concerning for the Omani government policymakers, given that 40% of Oman's native-born population is under 25 years of age. This ratio could be a double-edged sword, as the prominence of young people's demands could distract the government from implementing balanced projects and programmes. Whereas developed countries often experience stresses associated with population aging, in developing countries like Oman, young populations might be a source of socioeconomic concern in terms of increasing the number of job seekers (Middle East Eye, 2019; Calabrese, 2018; see also: Walker, 2019 for a comprehensive discussion and analysis on the challenges and policies related to ageing in Europe). For example, in January 2011, demonstrations again took place in Dhofar, Muscat and Salalah provinces against the Omani government due to the lack of employment opportunities in the country, which continues to be a significant popular concern (BBC News, 2011, Valeri, 2020; Calabrese, 2018; Middle East Eye, 2019; See Chapter One). In my view, unemployment among Omanis is a severe socioeconomic problem affecting the stability of Omani society. If disregarded, this situation could intensify problems for society and for the government, particularly because unemployment has previously been linked to

income disparities, poverty and crime (Hakim, 1982; Phillips and Land, 2012). In an attempt to mitigate the ensuing risks of aggravated social problems, the Omani government appears to have recognised a need to ensure long-term social and economic development by developing the national workforce.

A certain degree of consensus has been attained among sociologists and economists that unemployment may serve as a critical social and personal issue (Buss, 2019; Cantillon, 2011; Midgley and Tang, 2001; Sage, 2019). Indeed, the scholarly consensus suggests that the long periods of waiting for employment that many young, educated people have to go through may threaten social stability and peace (Brenner and Starrin, 1988; Buss, 2019; Cantillon, 2011; Jakimovski, 2018; Midgley and Tang, 2001). In addition, high rates of unemployment limit the capacity of Omani youth to focus on social welfare development programmes provided by the government, including the housing cost assistance, health care and educational assistance. For instance, young people without jobs are less likely to get married or build a house, as they must concentrate on finding a job (Bergmark and Palme, 2003; Buss, 2019; Liem and Liem, 1988; Oesch and Lipps, 2013). Internationally, sociological researchers have argued that unemployed people consider their jobless status to be a complex social issue that leads to greater levels of societal stress, which may be related to a range of social problems such as physical health, poverty, marriage dissolution (divorce), social isolation and suicide (Hansen, 2005; Sage, 2019; Jakimovski, 2018; Fossati, 2018).

In the next sub-section, I provide a comprehensive review of the literature on nationalisation policies in the Gulf region to determine how they relate to Omanisation policies.

### **2.2.2 Related nationalisation policies in the Gulf region**

A body of both local and international research on the nationalisation policies currently in place in the Gulf states has identified three main explanatory factors. These have ensured the

dominant position of nationalisation in social and development policy-making in the Gulf region since the 1990s, when the persistent fall in oil prices contributed to a significant decline in oil revenues (Martin and Malit, 2017; Hertog, 2012; Forstenlechner and Rutledge, 2010; Al-Ali, 2008; Looney, 2004). The first of these factors is a rise in budget deficits, reaching nearly 4.9% in each of the countries in the Gulf region. This shift seems to have encouraged the six states in the region (Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, the UAE and KSA) to identify cost-cutting measures to recover from their deficits. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, a second major factor is unemployment, which has brought social instability to levels that resulted in social chaos in some states in the region – for instance, in Oman in January 2011 and January 2018 (Gill, 2018; Dudley, 2018; Middle East Eye, 2019; Valeri, 2020). The third factor I identified is the oil windfalls of the early 1980s that compelled the Gulf states to offer generous benefits to their public sector workers, drawing many locals to consider working in this sector. This phenomenon left the private sector with a significant deficit of local labour, forcing employers to consider appealing to migrant workers (Thompson, 2020; Birks et al., 1986; El Hag and El Shazly, 2012; Gardner, 2012; Looney, 2004). While the research on this topic to date has not been comprehensive, there is a general understanding among local and international scholars that these three key factors may have encouraged the economies in the Gulf region to become dependent on migrant labour to fill the skills gaps that are not available with locals (Franklin, 1985; Errichiello, 2012; Al-Ali, 2008; Hertog, 2019; Shayah and Sun, 2019). Governments in the Gulf region may have become critically concerned about the implications of their dependence on migrant labour for their future social and economic stability, based on the insights from this literature; in any event, all Gulf states have responded with nationalisation policies that are largely comparable to Omanisation (Babar et al., 2019; Shayah and Sun, 2019; Valenta, 2017; Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019).

One of the nationalisation policies in the GCC that has clear parallels with Omanisation is Saudisation, the workforce nationalisation policies introduced in the KSA. Since the 1980s, Saudi Arabia has experienced a scarcity of skilled local workers in the private sector. The Saudi government initiated the Saudisation policies or Nitaqat in 1994, aiming to replace migrant workers with nationals as part of the Sixth Development Plan of 1995–1999 (Thompson, 2018; Martin and Malit, 2017; Rahman, 2018; Khraif et al., 2019; Al Sheikh, 2015; Sevilla, 2014). It is critical to note that, just like Omanisation, Saudisation is focused on ensuring the creation and implementation of quotas for the number of local workers that firms in the private sector should hire to boost the number of Saudis employed in the sector. There is a similar concern that Saudisation policies have not been particularly successful in attaining this objective, because of low levels of education in the labour force and the high qualifications that employers in the private sector demand. This is comparable to the case of Oman, where research on Omanisation has indicated that inadequate investment in education by Omanis has made it difficult to realise the objectives of the Omanisation policies (Al-Lamki, 1998; 2000; Atef and Al Balushi, 2017; Matherly and Hodgson, 2014; Zerovec and Bontenbal 2011). Similar to the Omani case, it is evident that Saudi workers are generally less willing to join the private sector and instead prefer the public sector, as it offers greater job security, higher salaries, greater benefits and is less demanding of its workforce (Azhar et al., 2016; Al-Lamki, 1998; 2000; Azhar et al., 2018; Looney, 2004).

Other cases where I found another insights into the limitations of nationalisation policies in the Gulf states is the UAE's Emiratisation policies, also intended to increase the employment of local citizens in the private sector. Research in the context of the UAE has documented a negative response<sup>15</sup> to the Emiratisation policies comparable to the Omanisation policies in Oman. The Ministry of Labour released Ministerial Resolution 1187 on November 29, 2010,

---

<sup>15</sup> See figure 2.5.

aiming to boost the number of UAE nationals working in the private sector (Palik, 2013; Zachariah et al., 2003; Wickramasekara, 2016). Prior to that time, the UAE had witnessed significant economic growth since the discovery of oil in the 1970s. However, as in the case of Oman, the UAE's private sector has depended largely on migrant labour (Zachariah et al., 2003; Forstenlechner et al., 2012; Weiner, 1982; Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 1999; Zeffane and Kemp, 2020). The accumulated evidence indicates that UAE nationals have mostly been recruited to the public sector, and ultimately prefer to work in it for the same reasons as in Oman (Zerovec and Bontenbal; 2011; Atef and Al-Balushi 2017; Matherly and Hodgson, 2014). Both countries contend with a local workforce that prefers working in the public sector and associates the private sector with job insecurity and low pay. Such findings justify a need to re-examine the unintended implications of nationalisation policies for social stability in the region, to check how far they have deviated from their original objectives.

From the above analysis, I observe that nationalisation policies in the Gulf states have seen some success in the public sector labour force, but have failed to attain their fundamental objective of addressing high unemployment rates in the region or promoting local, private sector employment as is the case for my research concerning the T&H sector.

In the next sub-section, I present a review of findings concerning both demand and supply sides of the labour market, to develop a more comprehensive basis for pursuing labour market integration in the Omani context.

### **2.2.3 The demand and supply sides of the labour market**

Demand-side and supply-side initiatives both aim to ensure integration and balance in national labour markets. In spite of this, each aspect is often pursued in isolation. My research has led me to the observation that bringing these two perspectives together could provide a framework to improve labour market integration for Omani nationals and migrant workers doing graduate-

level jobs in T&H. Both international and national social policy research have tended to emphasise supply-side approaches in the implementation of nationalisation policies. Meanwhile, little emphasis has been placed on demand-side approaches targeted at activating employers or other demand-side actors (Ingold and Stuart, 2015; Armingeon, 2007; Mailand, 2008; Gwiazda, 2011; Burrioni et al., 2019). My research is built on and adds to existing scholarship in its integration of both demand-side and supply-side perspectives to develop a more comprehensive basis for pursuing labour market integration in the Omani context, making new contributions to knowledge (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

A body of scholarly research undertaken in Oman has indicated that negative attitudes towards work may affect the supply of labour in the country (Belwal and Belwal, 2014; Bontenbal and Aziz, 2013; Khan and Krishnamurthy, 2016). Indeed, certain previous studies have shown that negative attitudes towards work among Omani graduates remain a significant problem constraining Omani participation in the national labour market (Baporikar and Shah, 2012; Belwal and Belwal, 2014). However, the extent to which these negative attitudes undermine the realisation of the goals of Omanisation policies and distort the labour market structure in the country has remained unexplored in research to date, offering a critical area to be examined in my study (see Chapter Six).

Across a broader body of research, *precarisation* has been identified as a contributor to negative attitudes towards work (Buchler et al., 2009; Whitton, 2003; Burgmann, 2016; Broad, 1995; Hudson-Sharp and Runge, 2017; Vosko et al., 2009). The concept of precarisation of employment refers to the processes through which individuals are exposed to non-standard or temporary jobs that are insecure, offer poor wages and are barely protected by labour laws (Buchler et al., 2009; Campbell and Burgess, 2001; Whitton, 2003; Broad, 1995). Precarisation of employment has become increasingly challenging to characterise in the 21st century, as enterprises have introduced non-standard forms of work to allow people to work remotely and

more flexibly. In this context, not all forms of precarisation of work give rise to negative attitudes (Quinlan, 2016; Whitton, 2003; Burgmann, 2016). However, related social science research has identified negative perceptions among Omani towards working in the entrepreneurial sector, associated with the characteristic precarity of work in small and medium enterprises (Khalid and Varghese, 2012; Ibrahim et al., 2017; Varghese et al., 2012). As the T&H sector in Oman is relatively new, very limited research has gathered data on the effects of precarity of work on employees in hotel enterprises in the country.

Precarity of work could as well as linked to limited employer investment in upskilling and retention of employees. To this extent, research in the context of Oman asserts that, the Omani government has provided limited incentives for investments in the upskilling and retraining of employees, outside of the petroleum and telecommunications sectors; the result has been an adverse environment for graduates to seek employability through lifelong learning strategies (Al-Azr, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Al-Harhi (2011) examined the perceptions students held concerning the relationship between university education and the labour market, observing that Omani students were mainly motivated by the desire for secure employment and a better life. Students were also highly confident that they would be able to enter a career easily after they graduated from university. It appears that these perceptions might have shaped their attitudes towards the labour market, although this is an area that Al-Harhi did not explore, leaving a possible topic for future study. On the other hand, some of the factors that contributed to poor satisfaction with the university curricula included the perception that graduates were not appropriately prepared for future careers (Al-Harhi, 2011; Al-Mahrooqi and Denman, 2016; Smetherham, 2003). In this context, Al-Barwani and colleagues (2009) found that when graduates perceived the quality of their university education as not preparing them sufficiently to be competitive in the international labour market, their discontent could lead to broader

negative perceptions as well as pressures on the education system, aiming to improve the quality of programmes.

Regarding the demand-side perspective about the labour force, some scholarly research undertaken in Sri Lanka and in GCC countries, like Oman, has concluded that employers prefer migrant workers for reasons such as their perceived talents, expertise and sometimes a lower anticipated labour cost, which in turn has boosted demand in the private sector for migrant workers compared to local workers (Malecki and Ewers, 2007; Das and Gokhale, 2010; De Bel-Air, 2015; Ranasinghe, 2015; Chaabna et al., 2017). However, the reason for the difference in attitudes between migrant and Omani labour force participation has not been conclusively explored (see Chapter One, section 1.4, for more detail).

The next section reviews the literature on migration with particular emphasis on the historical perspectives of migrants and migration trends and development in Oman in Oman and GCC countries, the role of migrants in the Omani economy and those of GCC countries and the *kafala* system

## **2.3 Migration**

### **2.3.1 Historical perspectives on migrants and migration trends and development in Oman and the GCC**

Migration is a critical element of Oman's history as well and its socio-economic framework. The history of migration to countries in the Gulf region can be classified into two waves. The first wave consisted of migration to the region before the British withdrawal from the Arab Gulf region in four key states: the UAE, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar. This process is estimated to have begun between 1930 and 1970 (Allday, 2014; Jain, 2005). In this wave, migrants came from Asia, particularly from India and Iran, to settle on the shores of the Arab Gulf. Pillalamarri (2016), an international relations analyst, has noted that the main reason for migration during this wave was to build trade relations between India and countries in the Arab

Gulf, India being a major trading partner for incense, spices, cloth and pearl at the time (Pillalamarri, 2016). Scholars of diaspora studies like Azhar (2016) have pointed out that the age-old relationship between India and countries in the Arab Gulf could have originated during this wave, as many Indians stayed in the region for generations and ultimately became citizens.

The second wave is mainly characterised by migration to the Gulf region after the discovery of hydrocarbon fuels in the area between 1960 and 1970, after countries in the region gained independence from Britain in 1971 and after the British withdrawal from the region as discussed above. Migration was conducted mainly by individuals looking for jobs rather than to strengthen trade relations (Allday, 2014; Pillalamarri, 2016; Thiollet, 2011). Building on Human Capital (HC) theory (see Chapter Three for further detail about this theoretical perspective), I follow the interpretation that people invest in themselves and migrate in pursuit of greater returns, such as improved earnings or enhanced lifestyles in host countries (Thiollet, 2011; Williams and Baláž, 2005; Peters et al., 2018; Jendrissek, 2014; Polachek, 2004; IOM, 2004). Migration scholars have traced back labour migration in Oman to an initial surge in the wake of the oil boom of 1973, similar to that seen in such other GCC countries as Kuwait (Birks and Sinclair, 1979; Thiollet, 2011; Errichiello, 2012). The historical ties between Oman and South Asia may explain why the majority of migrant workers have originated from the latter region (Gardner, 2011; Kapiszewski, 2006; Thiollet, 2019). Related data has shown that in the 1990s, after the Gulf War, oil prices plummeted and the number of migrant residents declined (Al-Ali, 2008; Hertog, 2019; Shayah and Sun, 2019). Nevertheless, the numbers of foreign workers continued to grow by 0.4% annually between 1993 and 2003.

India shares historical relationships with the Persian Gulf, dating back to ancient civilizations when the Indus Valley ruled the sub-continent and the Dilmun Empire was prominent in the region. This relationship was primarily focused on trade, which continued to be the case until much later. India under British colonial control, before independence, was part of imperial

interest in the Gulf, and its trade was watched, prosecuted and administered by the Bombay Presidency. Up to the 1960s, the Indian rupee was a legal currency in most Gulf States, including Oman. India printed special rupee notes to be used exclusively in the Gulf, popularly known as ‘Gulf Rupees’, after oil was discovered by the British in Persia (then Iran) on May 26, 1908. The composition of exports shifted from raw materials, silk, spices, etc., to significant energy products during this period. However, these relationships remained transactional. In 2013, 48.7 million people lived in the GCC, approximately 8.5 million of whom were foreign (mainly from South Asia and the Middle East). The current population of migrants in the GCC arrived during relatively recent migrations. In 1960, approximately 240,000 foreign-born people were already in the GCC, out of a total population less than 10 million. Since then, the number of migrants in the GCC has increased dramatically, quadrupling each decade from 1960 to 1970, and again from 1970 to 1980. Over the last three decades, the massive growth of labour migration – from about 4 million in 1980 to over 20 million in the current decade – has contributed to rapid growth in GCC populations. For instance, according to World Bank data, migrants from India surpassed Jordanians in the 1970s as the largest group of migrants in the GCC (Indians had previously been the largest group in 1960). Since 1980, the number of migrants from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan has shown a rapid and sustained increase in the GCC. Since 2000, the influx of migrants from these three countries has been remarkably high (Valenta and Jakobsen, 2016).

From an international political economy perspective, the GCC is India’s largest regional economic partner, with total trade of \$104 billion in 2017–18, up almost 7% from \$97 billion the previous year. This exceeds trade between India and ASEAN<sup>16</sup> (\$81 billion) and between

---

<sup>16</sup> ASEAN is the organisation of Southeastern Asian Countries established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration), which now includes Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021).

India and the EU (\$102 billion) in 2017–18. Two of India's five most important trading partners, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, are GCC economies (Pradhan, 2010; Chaudhury, 2018; Gupta, 2013). The GCC also contributed over \$37 billion in foreign exchange from Indian migrants in 2017, representing over 54% of India's total receipts. However, India and the GCC do not have a free trade agreement in effect, although a framework agreement for economic cooperation was signed in August 2004 (Chaudhury, 2018). India and the UAE, in particular, have recently undertaken an ambitious effort to improve their bilateral relations. As traditional GCC societies become more diverse in their politics, economic, security and defence cooperation, India has gained a substantial and growing interest in the stability of the Gulf. This includes 'strategic partnerships' with Gulf countries on counter-terrorism, money laundering, cyber security, organised crime, human trafficking and anti-piracy (Gupta, 2013).

Indian nationals make up the largest migrant community in the Gulf States, with around 7.6 million Indian immigrants residing and working in the region, particularly in Saudi Arabia (2.8 million) and the UAE (2.6 million). There are more Indian residents in the GCC than the local population of the UAE and Qatar. The security of these Indian citizens is one of the Indian government's top priorities. India's relationship with the Gulf has come to include defence and naval cooperation, including joint exercises, regular visits from Indian ships and signed agreements. Gulf armed forces personnel are also trained in Indian defence and military academies. All Gulf States have membership in the Indian Navy-designed Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), which was created in 2008 as a biennial forum for the Indian Ocean Coast Navy leaders. India's most notable defence cooperation arrangement was with Oman. India has also performed an active role in strengthening the stability and security of the Gulf seaways by participating in anti-piracy patrols off the Somali coast (Chaudhury, 2018).

Since the 1970s, the inflow of migrant workers into the Gulf region's labour market appears to have gone through several phases (GIZ and ILO, 2015; Rahman, 2011, Zerovec and Bontenbal, 2011; Randeree, 2012). Until that time, most of the migrant workers in the region were Indian, Iranian or Arab; these groups comprised nearly 80% of the region's total workforce. Arab migrants were generally identified in migration research as originating from Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Yemen, although a significant proportion of them, particularly those working in multinational companies, came from other countries in Asia. In this period, a narrow wage differential existed between the countries originating and receiving migrant labour (Babar, 2017; Rahman, 2011; Fargues and Shah, 2011; Ferrie and Hatton, 2013). Oman was a net exporter of labour power at this time, although the country ultimately became a key labour importer in the region (Czaika and Varela, 2015; Fargues and Shah, 2011).

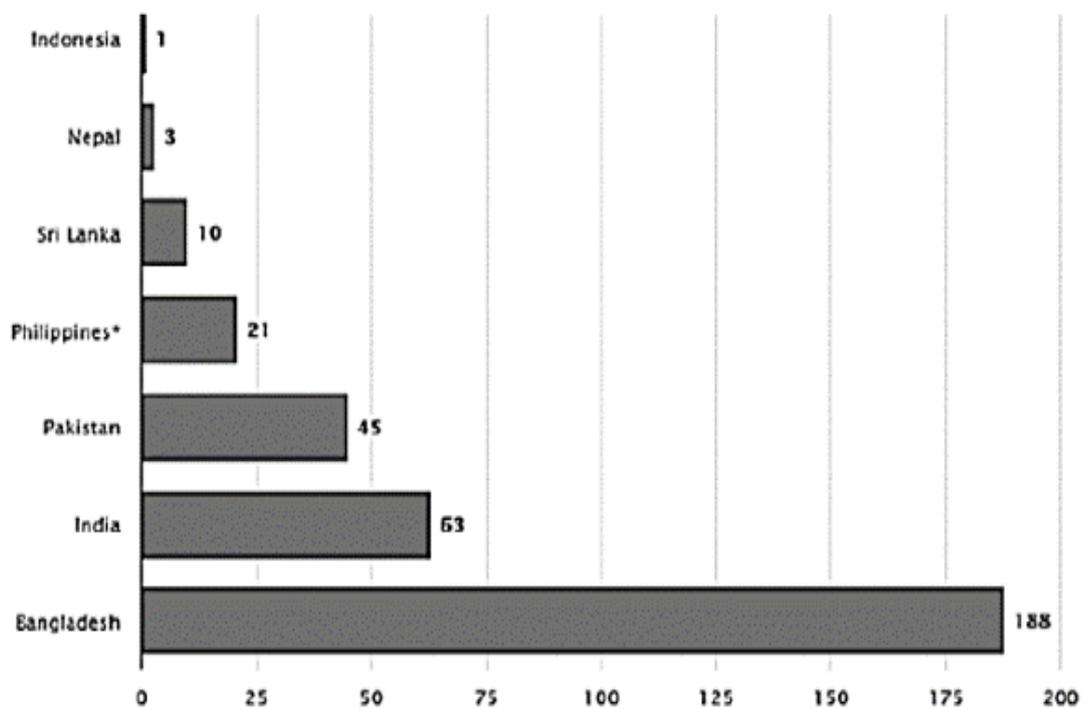
Another phase took place beginning with the oil boom that followed the Iranian revolution in 1979. At this stage, migration started intensifying in the Gulf states (Rahman, 2011; Fargues and Shah, 2011; Ferrie and Hatton, 2013). The number of migrants of Arab origin increased substantially, particularly those arriving from Yemen and Egypt, so that the total number of migrants in the region increased to 1.3 million by 1985. A third phase of growth came in the 1990s, after the Gulf War. In this period, the Omani government experienced increased revenues, which enabled officials to come up with overly ambitious development plans, involving infrastructural development, and to increase their spending on social welfare (Rahman, 2011; Fargues and Shah, 2011; Ferrie and Hatton, 2013). These developments contributed to an increase in the demand for labour, triggering the Gulf states to call in migrants to close the gap. As a result, the 1990s were characterised by the influx of migrant workers from South Asian countries like Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India, which led the proportion of Arab workers to decline to scarcely 37% in 1990, compared to 43% in 1985 (Ranasinghe, 2015; Storbeck, 2011; Thiollet, 2011; Rahman, 2011; Zerovec and Bontenbal, 2011; Randeree,

2012). The fourth stage may have started as early as the 2000s, corresponding to the decline in oil prices at that time. Research has shown that this period was marked by a slow-down in development projects because of declining government oil revenues. Consequently the demand for migrant workers declined, although the preference for skilled workers rose substantially (Czaika and de Haas, 2014; Fargues and Shah, 2011; Ferrie and Hatton, 2013).

The fifth stage took place after 2005 and was characterised by an increase in the inflow of new migrants from the Philippines, China and central Asian states arriving in the Gulf region. A number of migration scholars have pointed out that this group of migrants intensified the competition for work in Oman (Czaika and Varela, 2015; Fargues and Shah, 2011; Ferrie and Hatton, 2013).

The period from 2006 to 2010 saw an accelerated growth of migrant arrivals attributed to the growing Omani economy due to the increase in oil prices during this period. Oman was protected from the Global Financial Crisis of 2008–2009, so migrants from other countries in the GCC relocated to Oman (Czaika and Varela, 2015). A large body of international research by sociologists and migration scholars has identified the tendency for people to migrate because of economic motives, to realise their HC investments and promote their individual and familial welfare (Zhou and Logan, 1989; Lulle et al., 2019; Zwysen, 2019; see Chapter Three for more information about the theoretical framework of HC). International scholars of migration have agreed that HC affects labour market outcomes, playing a significant role in determining employability for migrants within host labour markets (Zwysen, 2019; Ho and Alcorso, 2004; Rahman, 2011). Accordingly, the rate of immigration is contingent on international variations in the returns to labour, taking into account such supply-side factors as the skill level of migrant graduates or employees expected to arrive in the host country. The impact of nationalisation policies and labour market structures also affect these movements, as international migration studies emphasise (Lu and Hou, 2020; Friberg and Midtbøen, 2019; Russell, 1989). The supply

of labour will increase when there is a clear skills gap, in Oman or any other host country, at least where nationalisation or labour policies accommodate the entry and growth in numbers of migrant workers (Szewczyk, 2014; Csedó, 2008; Jonck and Walt, 2015; Liversage, 2009). A review by Statista (2020) and the United Nations (2019) showed that a majority of recent migrant workers have arrived from Asian countries. Indeed, 2016–2019 statistics by Statista indicate that up to 188,000 migrant workers came from Bangladesh in the period, while 63,000 came from India, 45,000 from Pakistan and 21,000 from the Philippines.



**Figure 2. 1: Number of migrants from Asian countries to Oman, in thousands (Source: Statista, 2020<sup>17</sup>).**

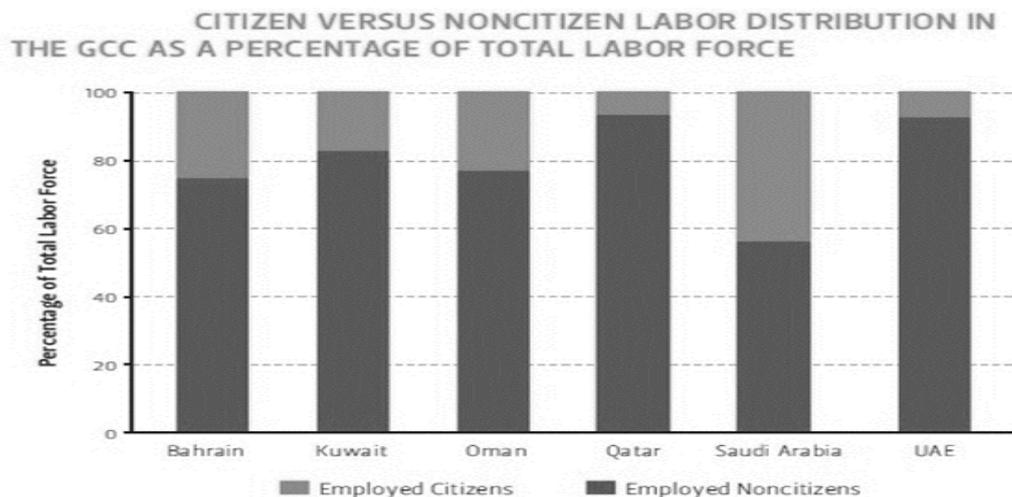
---

<sup>17</sup> I have taken into consideration the Copyright guide issued by the university for all figures in this chapter (Source: The University of Sheffield Library, 2020a). I have reformatted the figure by using licensed software (Photoshop through creative Cloud), then checked for similarity through google image and the Tin Eye site to ensure that the image was sufficiently original.

## Oman

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
International migrants (thousands)	304.0	539.6	623.6	666.2	816.2	1 856.2	2 286.2
International migrants as a share of total population (percentage)	16.8	24.5	27.5	26.5	26.8	43.5	46.0
Refugees (thousands)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.7
Refugees as a share of international migrants (percentage)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Females among international migrants (percentage)	20.2	22.6	21.7	20.8	19.3	16.4	16.4
Median age of international migrants (years)	32.5	32.5	33.6	33.9	32.3	32.7	33.5
International migrants by age group (percentage)							
0-19	12.8	12.8	14.4	13.5	11.6	6.0	12.8
20-64	85.9	85.9	85.0	85.9	87.8	93.6	84.8
65+	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.4	2.3
Migrants originating from the same SDG region (percentage)	10.5	10.5	10.5	8.7	7.3	7.3	7.3

**Figure 2. 2: Composition of migration to Oman, 1990–2019 (Source: United Nations Population Division, 2019).<sup>18</sup>**



<sup>18</sup> Statistics compiled by the UN shows that the number of migrants and refugees to Oman has been rising since 1990, from just about 304,000, to 539,000 in 1995, 632,000 in 2000 to ultimately just below 2.5 million in 2019. As previously discussed, I examined statistics from various sources including secondary data and annual public reports and also consulted government experts, during my field research, about the distribution of Omani and migrant graduates in the Omani workforce according to various characteristics. Unfortunately, I was unable to find reliable and rigorous statistical sources.

**Figure 2. 3: Composition of the labour force in GCC countries in 2014: Citizens vs. migrants (Buttorff et al., 2018).**

Taking the analysis of Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 into perspective, Oman has today become increasingly dependent on migrant workers to the extent that foreigners make up nearly half of the entire population, even as workforce nationalisation policies have failed to realise their declared objectives, as I mentioned earlier (Bontenbal and Aziz, 2013; Khan and Krishnamurthy, 2016; Randeree, 2012). For instance in a regional context, figure 2.5<sup>19</sup> shows the distribution of employment between citizens and migrants in GGC economies in 2014, indicating that the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman have the highest level of migrants employed in their national labour markets, while the KSA has the lowest rate of migrant employment in the workforce as Saudi citizens predominate (Buttorff et al., 2018; ; Zerovec and Bontenbal, 2011; Randeree, 2012).

International migration research suggests that economic factors, rather than purely social factors, have been the key drivers for migration to Oman and the greater Gulf region (Yalçın, 2015; Diop et al., 2018; Jureidini, 2010). The economic and social reasons for migration could be explained in terms of push<sup>20</sup> and pull<sup>21</sup> factors (Piore, 1979). Pull factors are the benefits that migrants expect in the destination countries that draw them in, such as employment opportunities, higher wages, improved medical facilities, political advantages (such as political asylum) or social relationships (Portes and Borocz, 1989; Piore, 1979).

---

<sup>19</sup> See section 2.4.1

<sup>20</sup> Push factors are risks in the home country that force migrants to leave for a destination country. Examples include wars or an inability to find gainful employment (Klaus and Pachocka, 2019; Van Hear et al., 2018; Jenkins, 1977; Davila and Saenz, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Pull factors are the rewards in the destination country that attract migrants to leave their home countries, such as higher salaries or better employment opportunities or job security (Jenkins, 1977; Kloc-Nowak et al., 2020).

In the next subsection, I undertake a review of some scholarly perspectives on the role of migrants, particularly in filling in the skills gap, in the Oman economy and GCC countries.

### **2.3.2 The role of migrants in the economies of Oman and other GCC countries**

In depicting the role of migrants in the Omani economy, some scholars have depicting migrant workers as gradually displacing local workers in the Omani labour market or as filling labour shortages and reducing friction within the Omani economy (Al-Lamki, 2000; Ghosal and Porkodi, 2014; De Bel-Air, 2015; Chalcraft, 2010). Such research draws attention to the steady migration of mostly semi-skilled and unskilled labour to fill labour shortages in developing sectors, particularly in the T&H and construction sectors. Migrants have had no choice but to take on transitory roles, as the Oman government has not allowed them to settle in the country permanently (Ghosal and Porkodi, 2014; De Bel-Air, 2015; Chalcraft, 2010). However, a related body of research shows that many skilled migrants have also come to work in Oman (Ranasinghe, 2015; Shapira, 2014; Sarah, 2011), some originating in regions outside Asia, such as the UK and the US. As part of an emerging body of scholarly work on modern-day British migration flows to the Gulf region, a study by Walsh (2014) drew attention to the diversity of British migrant ‘communities’ in major cities in the GCC states, where a majority of the British migrant workers were high-skilled workers. Some of these migrants have worked for long periods, allowing them to be eligible for citizenship in Oman under terms and conditions set by Omani citizenship law (Zahra, 2015; Sater, 2014). In my view, the presence of highly skilled migrant workers implies that they are crucial to the health of the Omani economy. For instance, a body of international scholarship has argued that the labour market integration of migrants improves with time as they accumulate a host-country skills base or knowledge base, while at the same time the locals begin to appreciate the significance of skill diversity in the host economy (Liu-Farrer et al., 2020; Catron, 2017; Ciabattari et al., 2018; Anderson and Ruhs, 2010; Parsons et al., 2018; Zwysen, 2019).

In the next sub-section, I review literature on the *kafala* system, showing its origin and its current status in the labour markets within the GCC.

### **2.3.3 The *kafala* system**

Traditionally, *kafala* has been the term used to refer to worker sponsorship systems in six Gulf states, namely Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman (Mehta, 2017; Khattab et al., 2020; ILO, 2017). *Kafala* or sponsorship has been the provision used since 1950 to regulate the link between employers and all categories of migrant workers including unskilled, semiskilled and highly skilled workers, as well as migrant graduates<sup>22</sup>: all fall under the umbrella of the *kafala* system regardless of economic sector (Indrelid, 2018; Hvidt, 2019). Under this worker sponsorship system, the immigration status of a migrant worker is legitimately tied to an employer in Oman – the sponsor – throughout the period of their contract. Migrant workers ‘cannot enter the country, transfer employment or leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from the sponsor’ (Damir-Geilsdorf and Pelican, 2019; Diop et al., 2017; Fargues, 2011; ILO, 2017).

The *kafala* system was intended to provide temporary, transient labour that could be introduced into the country rapidly at times of economic prosperity or boom and pushed out in periods of economic recession (ILO, 2017; Khan and Harroff-Tavel, 2011; Hvidt, 2019). On the other hand, research to date evaluating the impact of the *kafala* system reveals mixed results. In effect, *kafala* policies seem to have achieved their primary goals from the 1950s to the early 1980s. However, in the late 1980s, they started encountering challenges, particularly a growth of an undocumented migrant population that built up in the GCC countries in the 1990s, related

---

<sup>22</sup> As discussed earlier, in this study ‘Omani and migrant graduates’ are defined as having postsecondary qualifications in the T&H discipline or being highly qualified workers in the T&H sector. The terms ‘Omani and migrant graduates’ and ‘Omani and migrant workers’ are used interchangeably in this study.

to the growth of private recruitment agencies (Damir-Geilsdorf and Pelican, 2019; Fargues, 2011; Kakande, 2015; Khalaf et al., 2015; Hussain, 2014; Sloan, 2014).

Building on this understanding, I examined the body of migration studies investigating the *kafala* tradition. I observed that some researchers endorse the requirement that migrants depend on their employers to live and work in the country legally (Khan and Harroff-Tavel, 2011; Damir-Geilsdorf and Pelican, 2019; ILO, 2017). At present, no specific Omani law protects workers of migrant origin. The Basic Law of Oman addresses the rights of workers as citizens, and makes only minimal reference to migrant workers, notably Article 11(4) concerning the duty to protect public property. Additionally, employers are given excessive control over migrant workers as exemplified by Article 40 of the Labour Law, which provides employers with the right to dismiss migrant workers without prior notice. As I mentioned earlier, migrant workers are also not allowed to begin work for a new employer without the express authorisation of their current employer (Ratcliffe, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2016a). For this reason, some workers of migrant origin may face an incentive to resort to irregular modes of employment. At the same time, some employers have been less inclined to terminate contracts or to let migrant workers go during durations of economic recession than the intended practice, which has enabled some migrant workers to become semi-permanent residents. Yet, *kafala* policies could still be criticised for facilitating abuses of the rights of migrant workers, because these workers lack legal status in the country and legal means to enforce their rights. In fact, employers may prefer to hire migrant workers precisely because there is no law in Oman to guarantee the protection of migrant rights, which could distort the national labour market (Pande, 2013; Vora and Koch, 2015; Azhari, 2017).

Some social research conducted in the Gulf states has documented unexpected negative results of *kafala* policies, the most prominent of these being to undermine the desirability of employing domestic nationals in the private sector. Unlike migrant workers, nationals can freely and

forcefully exercise their contractual bargaining power because of their citizenship status. Also, the governments of the GCC, including the Omani government, tend to take the side of their nationals against private sector employers when it comes to concerns ranging from wages and benefits negotiations to resolving issues of employee dismissal (Damir-Geilsdorf and Pelican, 2019; Alaali and Rees, 2019; Fargues, 2011).

Another negative aspect of the *kafala* system, which has been repeatedly identified by researchers, is that it has strengthened the belief that migrants are more productive and manageable than nationals, making them more attractive to employers in the private sector (Khan and Harroff-Tavel, 2011; Malit and Naufal, 2017). Hence, the system is in itself a double-edged sword: it exposes migrant workers to exploitation while undermining the employment of local nationals (Diop et al., 2018). In effect, the *kafala* system counteracts any perceptible positive effect from nationalisation efforts (Ganji, 2016; Azhari, 2017).

Migration has brought about some opportunities for highly skilled labour including higher wages, which encourage mobility across national borders and economic sectors and investment in HC (Kolbe and Kayran, 2019; Kogan, 2004; Kristen et al., 2016; Knight, 2015). Some migration scholars have attempted to investigate the impact of an influx of migrants on a host country's labour market and have concluded that, as a sociological approach, the HC theory provides a relevant framework for studying labour and public policies (see Chapter Three for more information about the HC theoretical framework). HC hypothesises that trends in the labour market, labour productivity, economic growth and labour mobility depend on the degree to which the state invests in HC, including through education and nationalisation policies (Kreyenfeld and Konietzka, 2002; Akbari and MacDonald, 2014). Meanwhile, the source countries experience 'brain drain', despite gaining income in the form of remittances. The resulting process ensures the movement of skilled workers across the border (Robertson, 2006; Boxman et al., 1991; Damelang et al., 2019). However, this also means that a country needs to

be cautious while welcoming migrants because of the implications of migration for HC development. Migration policies like nationalisation and *kafala* and educational policies should thus be coordinated, to encourage investment in employees and the mobility of labour.

In the subsequent sections, I provide a review of the literature on gender roles and attitudes in Oman and the influence of such attitudes on patterns of women's employment throughout the Gulf region.

#### **2.4 The role of gender in women's employability**

In this section, I explore the patterns of women's employment in the GCC countries while placing a particular emphasis on the perspectives of Omani and migrant women. Gender is a very important theme in this study, affecting the participation of men and of women among both Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector (see Chapter Five and Seven for further discussion). Previous research has clearly documented Omani and migrant women's limited participation in the labour market, despite their higher levels of educational attainment compared to one decade ago (Momani, 2016; Young, 2016).

Studies in the Gulf region have revealed gender-based differentials in employment, specifically in the UAE labour market (Al-Waqfi and Al-faki, 2015; Shayah and Sun, 2019). Scholars have highlighted the impact of specific, local factors on women's working conditions compared to those of men. Emiratisation policies have compounded gender gaps in UAE labour markets, and the *kafala* system has failed to address the gender gap. In fact, gender-based differences are less apparent among Emirati workers than migrant workers, due to the limited policies in force to address gender differences in employment opportunities, including income and promotion (Al-Waqfi and Al-faki, 2015; Dito, 2008). In general, studies in GCC states have demonstrated the need to promote gender integration in the labour force, drawing particular attention to differences in pay and employment conditions, workplace discrimination and the

public and private sector composition of employment (Buttorff et al., 2018; Young, 2016). Family and cultural norms, and other societal factors, help to explain preferences for public sector employment or staying home, rather than working in the private sector, which differ by gender.

Across the GCC a tension emerges between educational achievements and access to the labour market by gender, showing limited opportunities for female participation and employment and employability challenges. For example, women have obtained access to educational institutions and have excelled in a wide range of programmes, yet their employment opportunities remain limited, particularly in the private sector (Karoly, 2010; Metcalfe and Mutlaq, 2011). Bridging the gap between education and employment remains a challenge for women in the GCC (Patterson et al., 2020; Metcalfe and Mutlaq, 2011). Gender gaps in both employment and employability are an international concern and demand further examination in the GCC generally and in Oman, in particular. From an economic standpoint, reducing gender gaps in labour force participation could make a significant contribution to GDP growth in Oman, and in the GCC generally. Many GCC countries could see their average annual GDP growth increase, which would be a significant result during the current economic stagnation due to low oil prices (Buttorff, Al Lawati, et al., 2018; ILO, 2018; Young, 2016).

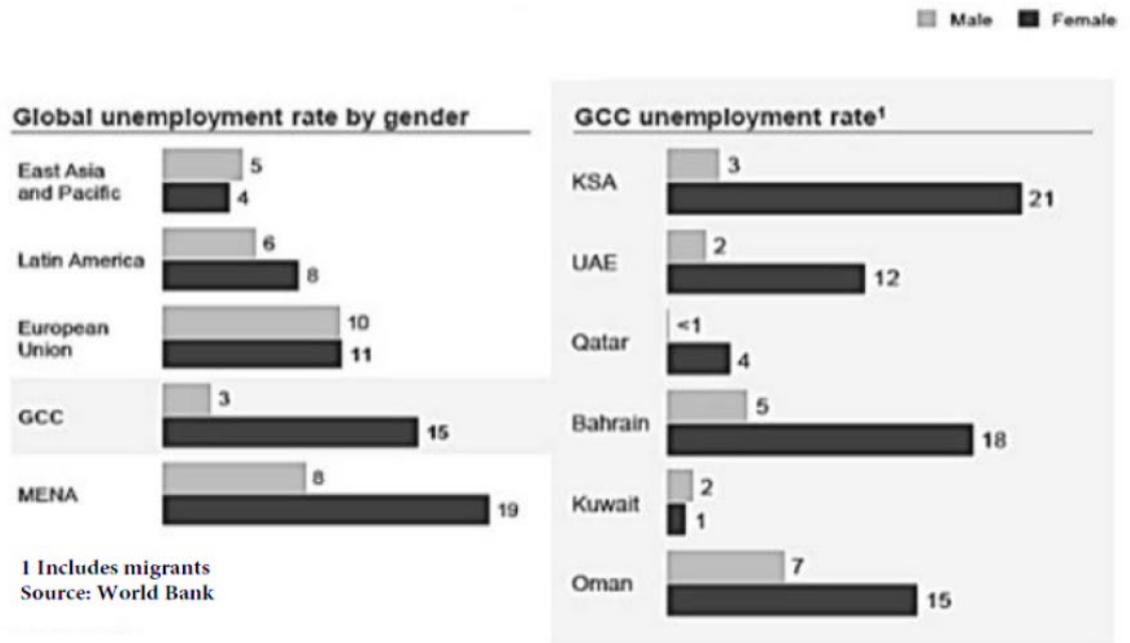
As a researcher, using a gender-aware framework allows me to develop a fuller picture of the employment patterns in the T&H sector in Oman and to arrive at a more rigorous and reliable interpretation and analysis of phenomena, to reach my research aims and objectives and address my research questions as discussed in Chapter One.

#### **2.4.1 Patterns of women's employment in the GCC**

The relationship between women's educational attainment and their participation in the labour force across the six countries in the GCC appears to be inconsistent and complex. In general,

women in the Gulf states seem to have reasonable access to educational opportunities, as more women are graduating from universities today than a decade ago (Mirza and Karolak, 2019; Momani, 2016; Murray and Zhang-Zhang, 2018; Young, 2016). Indeed, in such countries as Kuwait and Bahrain, more women are graduating from universities than their male counterparts (Buttorff et al., 2018; Momani, 2016; González, 2018). The Global Gender Gap 2014 and 2020 report published by the World Economic Forum showed that women were generally well-educated by international standards, although fewer of them were employed. In Kuwait, for instance, in 2014 women made up 67% of university graduates, yet only 51% of female graduates were employed (Young, 2016; World Economic Forum, 2020). Women in the Gulf region, both migrants and natives of GCC countries, have been marginalised within private sector labour markets where a clear preference is often given to men (Varshney, 2019). Estimates by the United Nations Development Programme and the ILO have shown that the GCC has the lowest rate of employment for women, 26%, in relation to the global average of 56%. Around 76% of men in GCC states are employed, which is similar to the global average of 74% (ILO, 2018). By contrast, in 2013, Saudi women only made up roughly 6% of the national workforce (Young, 2016). Figure 2.4 shows statistics compiled from the World Bank in 2020, which differ in detail.

Meanwhile, unemployment rates by gender in the GCC from 2012 to 2020 reflect the reality that states like the KSA, Bahrain and Oman employ fewer women than men, which suggests that gender indicators in the GCC are unbalanced compared to other regions like East Asia and Pacific and the European Union (EU) in terms of female unemployment (Sperling et al., 2014; The World Bank, 2020; also see Figure 2.4).

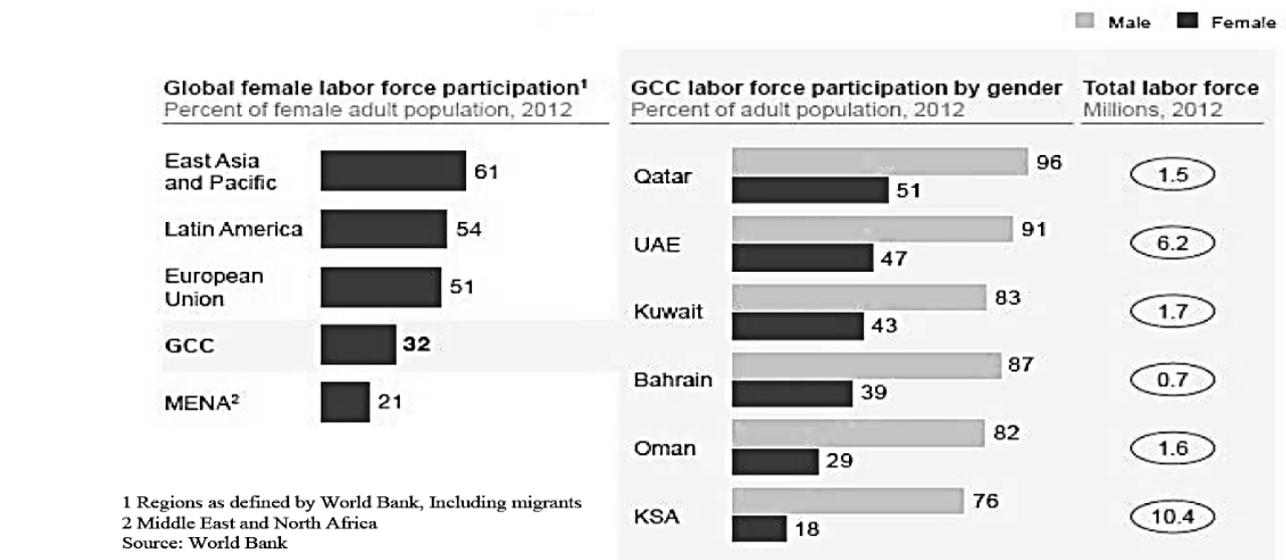


**Figure 2. 4: Global and GCC unemployment rates by gender (including both citizens and migrants) in 2012 (Sperling et al., 2014; The World Bank, 2020).<sup>23</sup>**

In the same context, women<sup>24</sup> in Oman and the KSA have the lowest rates of labour force participation among GCC countries in 2012 (Sperling et al., 2014). In comparison, male native-born and migrant workers in Qatar and the UAE have higher rates of labour force participation than other GCC countries. Compared to other indicators in an international context, the GCC and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) show lower rates of participation for women in the regional labour markets compared to the EU and East Asia and Pacific regions (see Figure 2.5).

<sup>23</sup> As illustrated in Figure 2.4, the World Bank study documented wide gaps in unemployment rates by gender within the GCC compared to other world regions. However, as I reported above, the data were limited for aspects like education levels, gender, age, nationality or ethnicity, economics sectors including the T&H and other important criteria.

<sup>24</sup> The World Bank has calculated these rates by comparing the number classified as unemployed in relation to the total number of labour force participants. The critical question here is whether migrant women and men would consider themselves labour force participants and unemployed in the GCC. If some members of the migrant labour force enter the country as family members of a person already working in Oman and are also part of the labour force, unemployment could occur, the data used by the World Bank are not clearly defined in relation to migration status.



**Figure 2. 5: Global and GCC labour force participation by gender (including both citizens and migrants) in 2012 (Sperling et al., 2014).**

In terms of women’s participation in political leadership, the GCC, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE have allowed greater political liberalisation, as women in these countries are more active in representative and legislative institutions than in other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman (Jabeen et al., 2018; Koyame-Marsh, 2017; Young, 2016). For this reason, I would argue that women in countries where they are more prominent in the workforce (although still forming a minority) have greater opportunities for leadership or political participation than in countries with less participation of women in the workforce (Momani, 2016; Miller et al. 2017; Varghese, 2016).

In the next subsection, I present a review on the body of literature on the effects of education on women’s employment in the Gulf states.

#### **2.4.2 Effects of education on women’s employment in the GCC and Oman**

Higher levels of education for women in Kuwait have not necessarily led to elevated rates of employment due to social, cultural and religious barriers (Alzuabi, 2016; Buttorff et al., 2018; Young, 2016). Government policies support for women’s educational attainment does not seem

to reflect a higher level of integration into public and private sector employment. In terms of HC theory (see Chapter Three), if the state makes more educational opportunities accessible to women through its policies and women are therefore better positioned to participate in the service economy, it would follow logically that more women should enjoy the rewards of their investment in education through more senior positions and higher salaries. This has not generally been the case within the GCC. My research seeks to unravel how women have been able to access educational institutions and graduate in higher numbers yet have remained unable to find employment in proportionate numbers, especially in the private sector – such as in the T&H sector.

In Oman, women have historically faced difficulty gaining access to educational programmes, particularly in such technical fields as engineering or agriculture (Belwal and Belwal, 2017; Momani, 2016; Varghese, 2016). Gender role expectations and sexist attitudes deter some Omani women from pursuing university degrees, even while women's educational attainment outpaces that of their male peers across the Gulf region (Al Sadi and Basit, 2017; Amzat et al., 2019; Ennis, 2019). In this study, I take into account such internal and external factors as labour market segmentation among both male and female citizens and migrants, religious and cultural attitudes, social norms<sup>25</sup> and women's responses to patriarchal structures and employers' perceptions regarding gender. In Oman, there is strong evidence that women's participation in both the private and public sectors is comparatively low and is substantially skewed towards the public sector. While more women have higher education in Oman (32%) than Bahrain (14%) or Kuwait (20%), only 1% of women are employed in key government leadership

---

<sup>25</sup> Social norms define the practices and rules of behaviour that are considered acceptable within a community or society. Most traditional social norms in Oman are expressed in relation to the text of the Holy Quran (Roex and Rözer, 2018; Stam et al., 2016).

positions, compared to 8% in Bahrain or 2% in Kuwait; the reasons for this may include Omani conservatism, political choices and gender discrimination (Young, 2016).

<b>Bahrain</b>			
<i>Level of Education</i>			<i>Percent of Women in Parliament</i>
<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	
18%	35%	14%	8%
<b>Kuwait</b>			
<i>Level of Education</i>			<i>Percent of Women in Parliament</i>
<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	
24%	17%	20%	2%
<b>Oman</b>			
<i>Level of Education</i>			<i>Percent of Women in Parliament</i>
<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>	
14%	43%	32%	1%

**Figure 2. 6: Women in leadership positions in relation to educational attainment in 2015 (Adopted from Young, 2016).**

There is a clear gap in existing research regarding the reasons for this unequal distribution of employment, which I seek to investigate. In this research project, I explore Omani and migrant employers’ perceptions of women workers (both Omani and migrant women) as well as the challenges Omani women experience in spite of the social policy (nationalisation) efforts to strengthen their participation in economic development.

## **2.5 Conclusion and summary of research gaps**

From this review of the literature, a critical mass of migration and sociological scholarship appears to agree that nationalisation policies have failed to encourage the employability of Omani men and women. This research highlights concerns about Omani attitudes towards working in the T&H sector, and raises questions about their attitudes towards Omanisation policies, as well.

Research to date has failed to explore attitudes towards and implications of nationalisation policies in relation to the employability of Omani graduates, in a migrant-dominated labour market like the T&H sector, as a factor in achieving Omanisation objectives. This clearly represents an important gap in previous research. Additionally, while a body of social science studies has explored the practical aspects of labour force nationalisation policies and how they may affect the labour market structure of Oman, they have not explored how such policies condition the experiences and perceptions of migrants and Omani graduates as they seek employment in the T&H sector (this research gap is explored in Chapter Six, in the analysis of interviews with employees and graduates). Additionally, previous studies have not investigated the perspectives of migrant and Omani employers, a research gap this study addresses in the analysis of interviews with demand-side representatives (in Chapters Five and Seven). As well, the perspectives and experience of policymakers have also not been explored in previous research (see Chapter Six for an exploration of this topic).

In relation to the attitudes discussed above, education is also an important theme in my study, to be discussed in Chapter Three in relation to HC theory. Gender is a factor in education, and women's educational attainment plays a contested role in relation to employment in the GCC region. In general, women are obtaining improved access to educational opportunities, as more women are graduating from universities across the region today than a decade ago. In the context of Oman, however, it appears that gender roles and sexist attitudes are deterring some Omani women from their pursuit of university degrees, even as women's educational attainment outpaces that of their male peers in the broader GCC context. On the other hand, Omani men's participation in the public sector remains comparatively high, as they also prefer working in the public sector because of its greater job security. Fewer Omani women seek employment in the private sector and instead prefer to work in the public sector or to stay at home compared to migrant women who are willing to work in any sector.

Omanisation policies, and related nationalisation initiatives, have been a central focus of both local and international research. However, I have found a number of gaps regarding their overall impact on the employability of Omanis in the T&H sector, suggesting that these effects remain relatively under-researched. Studies to date have failed to explore the relevance of Omanisation to contemporary economic and social transformations affecting labour markets, changes which should be addressed explicitly (see Chapter Six for additional detail). A lack of awareness by locals, especially university graduates, of the opportunities in the T&H sector could be another factor discouraging Omanis from seeking employment in the sector, but up to now these suppositions have not been supported by evidence: a research gap to be explored in the present study. From reviewing research into nationalisation policies across GCC states, a clear gap in research has been identified regarding the employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates, both men and women, in the T&H sector. My study will attempt to fill this gap by examining the effects of gender roles and dynamics on attitudes towards the T&H sector, including gendered perspectives on the role of income on attitudes towards the sector for Omani graduates and by investigating the gendered occupational roles that shape migrants' attitudes towards work in the sector.

In the next chapter, I will present and discuss the theoretical framework (HC theory) and why I decided to adopt this theory to underpin my study.

## CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY

### 3.1 Introduction

My study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector. The central aims around which my thesis is organised are: first, to understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates and, second, to identify modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of both male and female Omani graduates in the T&H sector. Accordingly, this theoretical framework chapter is structured in relation to two crucial themes of this study: the role of education and nationalisation<sup>26</sup> policy. Human Capital (HC) theory offers three key contributions to this study: first, it provides a set of concepts that can be used to describe labour market phenomena based on the cultivation of skills and knowledge by individuals through education, training and experience to accumulate economic and social value (Perales, 2010; 2013). Second, it offers an explanatory framework based on the presumption that men and women (both Omani and migrant graduates) invest in education, knowledge, training and skills in pursuit of reward such as greater employability in the T&H sector. (However, as discussed in Chapters Five and Seven, in reality this relationship is complicated by other mediating factors). Finally, HC theory also offers a language that has already proved salient to policy discussions of education and nationalisation policy in Oman.

I decided to apply HC theory to my study for several reasons. First, concepts and descriptions based on HC theory can be used to explore how investments in HC affect the differential employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. Second, HC theory

---

<sup>26</sup> As discussed in Chapters One and Two, nationalisation is a public policy that aims to strengthen the local workforce by replacing migrant workers with local citizens (Wickramasekara, 2016; Fargues, 2011; Hertog, 2014; Thiollet, 2019; Valenta and Jakobsen, 2016; Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019).

offers a theoretical model that can prompt hypotheses about the relationships between education, migration and measures of socioeconomic outcomes relevant to individuals and the Omani government. In fact, the foundational narrative of HC theory has established a research agenda that relates labour market behaviour and employment patterns to the economics of education and productivity (Becker, 1993; Marimuthu et al., 2009; Sawyer, 1978).

In addition, on a policy level, Oman has already adopted a strategy called ‘from Oil to HC investment’, to promote economic growth based on employing highly qualified graduates rather than relying on the oil sector (Times of Oman, 2019; 2020; Oman Daily Observer, 2020; Phillips and Phillips, 2019; Marimuthu et al., 2009). In addition, the Omani government is now investing considerably in providing scholarships for young women and men, inside and outside of Oman, to make T&H sector employment more enticing. Other countries offer evidence that sustained, inclusive economic growth can be built on labour force approaches based on HC, as in the case of Singapore in Asia and Norway among the Nordic countries (World Bank, 2020; Yan Min, 2018). Meanwhile, countries like Oman may not compete effectively in the global economy unless their domestic labour forces can be prepared with the capacities needed for the knowledge-based economies of the future. In the T&H sector in particular, few qualified Omanis have been available to fill the jobs created by new investment in the sector, so qualified immigrants are required to fill these skill gaps. Therefore, I have retained HC theory as a theoretical language throughout my research process because it has commonly been adopted by Omani policymakers (Times of Oman, 2019; 2020; Oman Daily Observer, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2008; Looney, 1990).

This chapter elaborates the rationale for my decision to adopt HC theory as the framework underlying this study. This point will be covered through a literature review covering sociology, economics, education and international migration studies, exploring the relationship between HC, individual and social values in relation to economic benefits.

This chapter is divided into five main sections. The first of these begins by describing the origins and significance of HC theory. The following section interrogates HC theory in relation to gender, raising issues about the employability of graduates and of migrants in domestic labour markets and the demand side of the labour market, using a gendered lens. The next section examines the role of HC investment in the employability of domestic graduates and of migrants in domestic labour markets and the demand side of the labour market. These are followed by a discussion of HC theory in relation to nationalisation policies and an overall assessment of the strengths and weakness of HC theory – along with complimentary approaches used to address some of these weaknesses. Then, in the concluding section, I summarise how I adapted the theoretical framework of HC to examine such variables as migration, education and nationalisation policies, which form the backbone of this research project. In addition, I present an overall assessment of some strengths and limitations of HC that are relevant to this research project, as well as complementary approaches used to address some of these weaknesses.

### **3.2 Background of HC theory**

The concept of HC theory refers to an analytical framework used to describe labour market phenomena. Individuals (Omanis and migrants) are understood as investing in themselves by employing education, skills and training, and realising their future opportunities for employment and employability through migration. The language of HC theory defines investment as spending on assets (such as education) that will generate revenue in the future for individuals, families and national economies (Becker, 1993). The return on investment in HC can be measured using the same cost-benefit analysis and investment evaluation techniques that have traditionally been applied to physical capital (Marimuthu et al., 2009; Sawyer, 1978). In fact, HC perspectives have profoundly impacted a range of disciplines from economics, education and sociology.

International research in the sociology of labour markets has established fairly strong relationships between such components of HC as education, skills and other drivers of productivity on the one hand and income on the other (Tanner et al., 1999; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005; Stolzenberg, 1975; Mastekaasa, 1992). The research traditions of HC theory have characteristically focused on individual-level data, identifying individual attributes including personal motivations for investment in HC and expected individual rewards, such as wages. HC theory offers the dominant explanation of the mechanism through which this is attained in a typical labour market, for reasons that will be set out in the remainder of this section. HC theory has also been used to attempt to explain the gender and ethnic segregation of workers within the labour market (Mintz and Krymkowski, 2010; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005).

William Petty first used a precursor of HC theory in 1676 in his work *Political Arithmetic* to take stock of the national workforce. Petty, however, did not apply his estimates to support causal relations between HC and economic growth (Kiker, 1966; Machlup, 1982). Following this, Jacob Mincer reintroduced and updated the concept in the 1950s, observing that, in any society, an effort to invest in education and training enables people to improve their competencies and allows them to participate in higher-income occupations. Until 1961, however, HC theory had not yet been applied to education, health and housing policy. Theodore Schultz (1961) took a more sociological perspective than his predecessors, significantly advancing the theory while asserting that a policy emphasis on education and training was not enough, and that that people have the potential to invest in themselves in diverse ways.

In an attempt to decompose earnings into various components, Ben-Porath (1967) identified HC as an individual component of earnings capacity after examining education, immigration and choice of occupation. More recently, Gary Becker (1993) has demonstrated that investment in education helps individuals to acquire advanced skills and competencies, which provide them with improved labour market positioning. HC also theory suggests that, from a demand-

side perspective, firms will make efforts to exploit the knowledge and skills in the labour force that are relevant to each organisation (Boxman et al., 1991; Patzina and Wydra-Somaggio, 2020; Knoke and Yang, 2003; Schuller, 2001). From the perspective of society as a whole, HC theory offers a general organising principle for how firms in the economy should behave and makes inferences regarding the behaviours of individuals as they seek improved outcomes from their investments in HC (Sawyer, 1978; Sweetland, 1996). HC research to date has challenged sociologists to explore the significance of HC to national labour force policies, including initiatives by states, particularly in the Middle East, to protect the welfare of local and migrant workers through nationalisation initiatives.

Gender is another factor operating in labour markets that has complicated the explanations rooted in HC theory. Coleman (1988) explored the interaction between social capital (SC) and HC and how social and family relationships contributed to the resources men and women bring to labour markets. Subsequently, a body of international sociological literature focused on HC and gender has identified women's increased participation in the labour force as among the most significant developments in contemporary society. Investment in education and knowledge, and its social impacts, are some of the most important issues raised by HC theory, as I have mentioned earlier. Wider social structural factors like gender and class stratification, increasing employment for married women, reorganisation of families, decreasing single parenthood rates and changes in gender roles are all encouraged by investment in the HC of women in particular (Winslow-Bowe, 2009; Rich, 1995; Ngo, 1992; Coleman, 1988). Meanwhile, research on sex segregation has been motivated by the need to explain why, despite increases in women's employment and educational attainment, their experience in the workplace has not substantially improved over the years. For instance, individual behaviours and gender roles based on the perceptions and attitudes of women and men are correlated with labour market behaviour and HC attainment. This means that efficient labour markets would

afford equal treatment in employment and fair income to both men and women, based on their HC (Vella, 1994; Smith, 2002; Abendroth et al., 2013).

As a result of these uneven impacts, researchers have criticised HC theory because it does not address the roles of family relationships, interpersonal relationships and social networks in employability. This raises the possibility that HC theory could be supplemented by other theoretical frameworks, like SC or social network theory, for the purposes of this study. Relying on HC theory to interpret women's expanding prominence in the labour force, Rich (1995) studied women's employment experiences and employment trends in the banking industry in the US from 1940 to 1980. This study documented a number of aspects of HC theory that make it suitable for understanding processes of occupational feminisation. He argued that the labour market functions using a stringent price rationing mechanism, where parties sell or purchase labour-power, and the labour market is brought into parity with price competition. What this shows is that the HC (or skill productivity) attributes of prospective employees are significant, both for employers seeking to purchase labour power and for employees selling labour-power. Therefore, maximising returns to HC is a significant animating factor in labour markets. The same study also provided some empirical confirmation for HC, demonstrating how men's HC is effectively used to construct gendered labour market differences. Rich examined the average HC attributes of male workers and employers, which enabled him to determine whether changes in the demand and the supply of male workers were connected to a change in the gender composition of labour, as projected by HC theory. HC theory illuminates the variation in the sex distribution of the workforce as an outcome of job fit. When their productivity attributes or skills attributes vary in a manner that supports the HC supply of women over that of their male counterparts, women will be substituted for male workers. Therefore, the HC explanatory framework interprets feminisation in the workforce based on technological and other relevant variations in the labour processes, where the skills

required for a specific job vary in ways that would support an increase in women's HC (Coleman, 1988; Rich, 1995). HC theory has also been used in studies in varying national contexts, such as that of the UK, offering an interpretation of the importance of gender perspectives on labour market characteristics. For example, one study examined the influence of occupational feminisation on income in female-dominated occupations in particular sectors and the gender wage gap between men and women (Perales, 2013).

These applications of HC theory depend on the concept that workers are transformed into valuable national or organisational resources once they accumulate knowledge and skills by way of training or experience (Bol et al., 2019; Hunter and Leiper, 1993). These skills are what make them employable (Tomlinson, 2008; Tholen, 2015; Hall and Farkas, 2008). On the other hand, feminist scholars have also examined the influence of patriarchal structures and family decision-making on women's employment in various national contexts, including how these factors limit women's employment opportunities. (Moghadam, 2004; Batton and Wright, 2019; Stier and Yaish, 2008; Coleman, 1988; Rich, 1995). However, some sociological scholars have used HC along with other theoretical or conceptual frames, because of the limitations of HC theory to be discussed later. The current study primarily deploys the lens of HC theory to look into the role of investment in education by both Omani and migrant graduates.

In the next section, I explain sociological justifications that have been offered for using HC theory, to explore gender differences in HC and to determine the factors that affect women's and men's participation in the labour force.

### **3.3 Gender and HC theory**

Sociological arguments developed in various contexts internationally have justified the relevance of HC theory in examining whether nationalisation policies (that facilitate investments in education, social roles, training, childcare and medical services) can increase

investment in HC for men and women and thereby promote their participation in the labour market (Abendroth et al., 2013; Lips, 2013; Perales, 2013). Therefore, I seek in this thesis to investigate if this wider literature is relevant to Oman (see Chapters Five and Seven).

HC theory has been applied in sociological research internationally, to show how men and women invest in education while expecting such returns as improved employability and higher wages (Abendroth et al., 2013; Lips, 2013; Perales, 2013; Jacobs, 1999). HC theory hypothesises that variables like education, migration and job training guarantee better returns in the labour market for both male and female workers. For instance, previous international sociological studies in some European countries have demonstrated that education and HC investment lead to better employment prospects better occupational status for women; the combined impact of these changes has been a reduction in gender gaps within European labour markets (Abendroth et al., 2013; Mooi-Reci and Ganzeboom, 2015; Laferrère and McEntee, 1995). In their study of the US labour market from 1970 to 2000, Pandey and Kim (2008) observed that the median annual income tended to be significantly higher for women college graduates in comparison to high school graduates. Their findings also suggested that female graduates were more likely to find employment and benefit from higher earnings, and they observed a trend whereby their improved earnings tended to lift women and their households from poverty, primarily when they were unmarried (Pandey and Kim, 2008).

Historically, social policies favoured heterosexual marriages. Pandey and Kim (2008) also observed marriage decisions to have been shaped by a highly intricate combination of factors, including community attributes, family attributes and individual attributes and attitudes. They were also shaped by employment status, educational attainment, personal values, income, opportunities to establish strong relationships and other career opportunities. The relationship between the traditional roles of women as housewives and women's changing educational and career patterns, HC accumulation, labour market participation and family decisions have been

at the centre of continuing international debates concerning the sociology of the family (Blossfeld and Huinink, 1991; Kramer and Kramer, 2016; Sullivan and Gershuny, 2016; Gowayed, 2019; Blossfeld and Jaenichen, 1992). In this context, one of the limitations of HC theory is that it ignores the structural inequalities that create and foster gender inequality (inequalities between women and men in particular professions) through family relationships (Olson, 2013; Redden, 2020).

Ochsenfeld (2014) also observed that horizontal gender-based segregation in higher education led to economic inequality according to gender. The patterns of women's employment depended on gender roles in society: international sociological research has shown that specific tasks tend to be undervalued socially, which in turn leads to them being economically undervalued because women perform them. In effect, culture plays a critical role in the undervaluation of specified jobs, which is the basis for another criticism of HC theory (Ochsenfeld, 2014; Abendroth et al., 2013; Tam, 1997; Bukodi and Dex, 2010). In response, theories relating cultural capital<sup>27</sup> to gender dynamics could compliment HC theory, shedding light on societal and cultural challenges that may affect the participation of women in any sector. For example, the roles of patriarchy<sup>28</sup>, masculinity<sup>29</sup> and femininity<sup>30</sup> in Omani society constrain women's decisions about joining the labour market because of the expectation that an Omani woman receive the permission of her father or older brother before seeking work in

---

<sup>27</sup> Cultural capital includes social assets (like language, education, habits of thought, styles of speech, forms of dress and others) that individuals inherit from their society and its traditions. Cultural capital works as a social relation and incorporates accumulated cultural knowledge, which confers social status and power (Brown, 1995; Jarvis, 2020).

<sup>28</sup> Patriarchy theory draws attention to the fact that, in a social system like Oman, men hold predominant social power through their roles of family and political leadership. In addition, in patriarchal societies like Oman, property and wealth, including business ownership, are typically inherited through the male line (Walby, 1989; Hartmann, 1976).

<sup>29</sup> Masculinity is a collection of attributes, practices and roles correlated with men in a particular society (Hodges and Budig, 2010; Thébaud, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Femininity is a term used to designate the characteristics, roles and attributes of women in society (Duffy and Ridinger, 1981; Pleck, 1975; Paechter, 2006).

any sector. Also, I will explore subsequently how cultural capital could compliment HC theory in addressing the influence of Islamic cultural practices towards the T&H sector, which contributed to negative attitudes towards employment in the sector (see Chapter Five, Section 5.3). As previously discussed, I have chosen HC theory as a starting point to explore why Omani graduates continue to be unemployed despite their HC accumulation within the T&H sector. The Omani government perceives that investing more money in education will help the government to reduce the social problems arising from unemployment among graduates. Additionally, the government of Oman has repeatedly proclaimed that Omanis must assume leadership positions in the T&H and other economic sectors instead of continuing to rely on migrant workers to fill the skill gaps arising from economic diversification.

Women are disproportionately socialised into selecting fields of study that provide them with a greater level of cultural, rather than economic capital, while men are more likely to invest in fields of study or jobs that provide them with greater economic capital (Ochsenfeld, 2014). This point of view may explain how investment in HC affects the differing employment patterns of Omani males and females, as Omani women could be seen as preferring jobs that provide them with greater cultural than economic reward (Al-Lawatia, 2011; Arab News, 2019; Pulse of Oman, 2018; Rich, 1995).

Meanwhile, Ochsenfeld (2014) also argued that wage inequalities between men and women who had graduated from college could be explained for the most part by changes in the distribution of and demand for specialised HC. However, from my comprehensive review of the literature I observed ongoing debates among social scientists, internationally, about the relationships between gender inequality in employment and career, HC accumulation and labour market success, as previously discussed (Abendroth et al., 2013; Tam, 1997; Bukodi and Dex, 2010). The HC approach points to the interpretation that women may be more conscious than men of the cultural and Islamic norms placing restrictions on their appropriate

work environments, and may also incorporate employment interruptions more rationally into their decisions about what to study. As a result of these factors, they might tend to select labour market segments that are more compatible with culturally assigned gender roles, even to the extent of some of them accepting lower wages (Polachek, 1995; England et al., 1988; Bibb and Form, 1977).

One fundamental explanation for differences between male and female characteristics is that childbirth is an important part of many women's experience. Still, there is some possibility that differences related to childbirth and child rearing could become less prevalent (McManus, 2001; Western and Sirois, 2019; Lacroix and Vidal-Coso, 2018). While women from industrialised nations tend to get into the labour market before childbirth, recent research also shows that women are increasingly likely to remain in the workforce without interruptions related to child-bearing. In any case, childbirth and subsequent child care responsibilities have been identified by sociological researchers as fundamental factors that constrain the labour market participation and career choices of many women. However, the division of care responsibilities for children relates to the roles of both women and men. Scholars have discussed how different policy approaches can influence the division of responsibilities among male and female parents in relation to gender equality, as in the extended parental leave policies of the Nordic countries and government provision of childcare for preschool children in most of the European Union (EU). I will discuss the parental leave policies in the UAE later in this section (Eydal et al., 2015; Sundström and Duvander, 2002).

As suggested above, one reason for gender differences in work experience is that women tend to withdraw from the labour market while in the process of family formation. The disruptions in women's employment experience due to family formation and subsequent responsibilities have been identified by researchers as negatively affecting their career prospects and future earning potential (Combet and Oesch, 2019; Khattab et al., 2018; Stier and Yaish, 2008;

Grönlund et al., 2017). On the other hand, continued employment by mothers, even on a part-time basis, has been proposed to reduce HC depreciation and mitigate the possibility of social exclusion and the risk of poverty (McManus, 2001; Western and Sirois, 2019; Lacroix and Vidal-Coso, 2018). Accordingly, this issue leads to a criticism of HC theory: jobs offered on a part-time basis in certain occupations and economic sectors tend to be constructed as women's jobs and are attributed lower status, further entrenching occupational segregation by gender. Other theories besides HC may be needed to explain occupational sex segregation, its contribution to the gender wage gap and how this issue can be addressed in social policy (Perales, 2010). For example, I will discuss devaluation theory in detail (in section 3.6) to help evaluate HC theory in relation to alternative conceptions.

Government efforts to invest in education, child care and medical services are rapidly transforming women's participation in the labour markets of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). A study of the MENA labour markets by Torabi and Abbasi-Shavazi (2015) showed that increasing investment in women's HC through nationalisation policies is expected to bolster the region's economic growth. Their research aimed to establish the role of women's HC in facilitating economic growth in the MENA; their findings showed, in MENA countries, that women's education and HC had a positive impact on economic growth. At the same time, HC can increase women's confidence to engage in social and political activities (Torabi and Abbasi-Shavazi, 2015; Phillips and Phillips, 2019; Marimuthu et al., 2009).

In addition, some countries in the GCC have introduced parental leave policies; for instance, in 2020 the UAE gave men five working days of paid parental leave every year in both private and public sectors to encourage them to undertake more childrearing responsibilities, which could contribute to reducing gender inequalities in the labour market (Tapp, 2020). However, these policies have not yet been introduced in Oman, raising the question whether

implementing these policies alongside with Omanisation would help Omani women and men to join the T&H sector.

In a broader context, one critical insight from HC theory is the light it sheds on gender wage inequality and the differences between men and women as they advance in their careers (Perales, 2013). One common argument points out that women typically earn less than men, while women's access to the more senior or managerial positions in organisations is limited (Fernandez-Mateo, 2009; Perales, 2013; Hultin and Szulkin, 2003; Leicht, 2008). However, most of the sociological studies emphasise that, for labour markets to work most efficiently, women should receive the same pay as men based on their accumulation of HC.

With respect to labour supply, HC theory indicates that the education and training of female graduates determine the returns they expect from a job. On the demand side, employer decisions also depend on the market value of HC (Burroni et al., 2019; Froyland et al., 2019). In other words, employers will hire Omani or migrant graduates depending on how efficiently the labour market operates in different sectors in the economy and how efficiently employers can utilise prospective employees to achieve greater economic productivity. However, the interpretation HC offers to explain labour demand and hiring decisions has been subject to extensive criticism; for example, employers preferential selection of candidates for reasons other than HC or productivity, and engage in other preferential or discriminatory practices including occupational sex segregation, wage inequalities between men and women and other forms of workplace discrimination (McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Midtbøen, 2015; Gaddis, 2015; Di Stasio et al., 2019). HC theory suggests that employers hire graduates with the highest expected productivity for their companies. However, HC-based strategies employed by individuals and countries do not always offer robust mechanisms for integration into the labour market. Some employers have applied discrimination in hiring and imposed gender income

gaps; for instance, some women obtain less income and opportunities for promotion than men because of employer preferences. Research to date has confirmed that, contrary to the assumptions of the HC framework, employers are not always guided by academic qualifications and job experience in their hiring decisions (Ahmad, 2020; McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Midtbøen, 2015). In particular, the types of HC attained in universities and colleges are less significant than more workplace-specific forms of expertise in determining whether a candidate is employable (I will discuss employers' perspectives on graduate employability in detail in section 3.4.3).

The next section discusses the reasons I adopted a theoretical framework of HC theory to guide my research.

### **3.4 Understanding why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector**

HC theory fits with the key research objectives of this study, as it proposes that a nation and its people obtain economic benefits from investments in such activities as education, skills training or migration, that in turn bring returns like higher earnings or improved lifestyle. For instance, in HC theory, migration is viewed as an investment in the human factor in production, which involves economic costs and returns (Reitz, 2001; Sjaastad, 1962; Iredale, 2001; Hall and Farkas, 2008). People choose to migrate or move to find employment more relevant to their education and skills if the anticipated future economic returns surpass the expected costs of migration (Mincer, 1958). Given the right labour market conditions, skilled migrants seek to realise their prior investment in HC by seeking a beneficial employment situation in host countries such as Oman. Meanwhile, prospective host countries employ strategies to fill their labour gaps by attracting migrants rather than depending entirely on domestic investment in education (as I discuss in section 3.4.2). For the broader society, these kinds of investments bring about an increasingly productive and efficient workforce and hence more economic

activity and more societal benefits (Zwysen, 2019; Zhou and Logan, 1989; Hollingsworth et al., 1996). HC theory raises, but does not answer, a number of key questions in this area, including why the Omani people and government invest in education for the T&H sector, yet few Omani graduates are employed in T&H compared to migrant graduates. Members of the latter category seek to improve their earnings and lifestyles by migrating to other locales with better job opportunities.

The following section assesses the adequacy of HC theory to address the three primary research gaps identified in Chapter Two, based on my comprehensive review of the literature. First, I explore migrant graduates' perspectives on how they can realise their HC investment by moving to Oman and taking T&H sector jobs. Second, I inquire into Omani graduates' perspectives about why they have been reluctant to take T&H positions: do they not see the sector's status and working conditions as effectively realising their HC investment? Third, what influence do employer attitudes towards Omani and migrant graduates have on labour market dynamics. The current study will address these gaps by exploring both the perspectives of demand- and supply-side participants in this labour market and examining how investments in HC affect Omani and migrant graduates' differing employment patterns in the T&H sector (These research questions, gaps and others will be addressed in the data chapters five, six and seven).

In the next subsection, I demonstrate how HC theory helps identify factors that may contribute to the employability of graduates within national labour markets.

### **3.4.1 Employability of domestic graduates**

HC theory proposes that people invest in education in the expectation of returns – such as a greater level of employability and higher wages – in a freely competitive market where economic self-interest guides people's behaviour, including investment patterns (Reitz, 2001;

Liu-Farrer and Shire, 2020; Staniscia et al., 2019; Marimuthu et al., 2009). In a Canadian study, Grayson (2004) established that graduates with greater levels of general skills and subject matter expertise tended to be more employable than those with narrower experience or less HC investment. Comparable findings have been reported in New Zealand: Smyth and Strathdee (2010) examined the returns on higher education investment among people who graduated between 1997 and 2008. While it was evident that individuals with investment in higher tertiary education had higher earning power than those with low investment, their employability depended on more investments in generic skills as forms of HC.

The concept of HC is more important in the national context of countries like Oman, which experience shortages of skilled labour in the context of a continuously growing economy. For instance, according to a World Bank report in 2021, Oman is projected to rank fifth globally for economic growth in 2022, at 7.9%. This ratio exceeds all Gulf and Arab countries in the MENA. Accordingly, this ratio suggests that Oman will still need graduates and the skilled labour of both Omani and migrants with more HC investment to meet the labour market demands associated with its economic growth (World Bank, 2021; Times News Service, 2021; Times News Service, 2018b). However, in terms of demand side, employers often prefer to select what they believe to be the best available talent for the job, rather than hiring local people because of nationalisation policies. Previous research has suggested that HC contributes to the value of graduates for prospective employers; these graduates therefore have competitive advantages as they obtain employment that matches their qualifications (I will discuss employers' perspectives on graduate employability in the following section, 3.4.3).

Omani graduates typically seek jobs that provide higher wages and job security; as discussed in Chapter Two, they generally choose employment in the public service rather than the T&H sector. Some positions in the T&H sector have higher status and salaries, but access to them depends on such forms of HC accumulation as education and work experience and also on the

organisation's financial capacity to offer attractive salaries. International research has confirmed that HC investments raised domestic graduates' productivity and increased their lifetime incomes, because employers promoted candidates to fill high-ranking positions according to qualifications they had acquired (Staniscia et al., 2019; Marimuthu et al., 2009). However, critics have challenged this understanding, claiming that the higher incomes of educated domestic graduates simply reflected their potential productivity, rather than particular forms of HC accumulation such as education, knowledge and skills obtained through the educational process.

HC concepts have gained popularity internationally in relation to the debate about employment and employability, security and flexible employment conditions. HC theory has also helped researchers to understand the factors that might affect employees' perceptions of domestic graduate employability. In many national and regional contexts, researchers have debated the options of employers, universities and governments, interpreting the employability of national graduates based on the practical implications of the theoretical perspective of HC. Labour market factors have become a key factor in the successful employment profile of national graduates. However, expansion in higher education has resulted in an oversupply of graduates in many disciplines; as a result, graduates take longer to find their first jobs and may become under-employed, as many are forced to accept jobs that do not need a degree qualification (Clarke, 2018; Donald et al., 2019).

In the next subsection, I discuss the relevance of HC theory to explore the employability of migrants, along with some limitations of this approach.

### **3.4.2 Migrants' employability**

HC has also been a key concept in international migration studies. This approach assumes that skilled migrants will often invest in themselves through international migration and mobility,

in pursuit of such returns as improved earnings or enhanced lifestyles, as I discussed earlier (in section 3.3; Staniscia et al., 2019; Demireva and Fellini, 2018; Emilsson and Mozetič, 2019). Labour market outcomes, such as the employability of migrants, are understood to be determined in large part by HC, since professional skills and educational attainment are correlated with labour productivity (Demireva, 2011; Zwysen, 2019; Demireva and Fellini, 2018; Lulle et al., 2019). However, this assumption that employment is distributed strictly according to merit, so equal qualifications and skills result in equal opportunities for labour force participants, has been questioned as the following sections explain in greater detail.

Also, some employers practice discrimination in the hiring process and select graduates based on their gender, age, ethnic backgrounds or other factors rather than their HC accumulation (I explain this further in section 3.4.3). As a result, migrant graduates may suffer discrimination in employment and income in the labour market, reducing their labour market returns and productivity (Zschirnt and Ruedin, 2016). This is another limitation of HC theory, and it raises the question whether other factors must be cited to explain occupational discrimination, besides HC.

Empirical research has investigated the employability and employment patterns of skilled migrants in both public and private sectors, based on their HC realisation through employment, in the UK in the period between 1971 and 2002. Demireva (2011) found significant differentials among new migrants in their employment rates, labour market participation and employability, depending on migration policies as well as their level of investment in HC. Other research on migration policy in the UK focused on HC to explain the employability of skilled migrants. Madziva and colleagues (2016) showed that work permit systems and migration policies affected the segments of the labour market within which migrants obtain access to jobs. In Chapter Two, I pointed out difficulties relating to the *kafala* system and discrimination in employment, income levels and working requirements, in Oman and other

GCC countries, which provide the basis for another important critique of HC theory. For instance, the *kafala* system and Omanisation policies can add friction to Omani labour markets and prevent the effective deployment of HC. While HC theory does capture certain important aspects of these labour market dynamics, other factors also apply.

Even if migrant graduates were to invest massively in education and migration in pursuit of jobs that would reward their investment in HC, they would encounter complications in the form of restrictive migration policies and Omanisation policies in host countries like Oman. Such employability challenges arise in relation to migration and labour policies, issues of xenophobia and racism and poor proficiency in the local language.

HC theory is also unable to theorise the geopolitical power relationships that mediate the direction of migration flows in important ways. As a simple example, Europe and North America receive migrants from lower-wage countries both in the form of workers who accept lower-wage jobs, and in the form of international students who may be induced to remain in the country that hosted them, representing a form of ‘brain drain’ (Pellegrino, 2001). High-wage economies that have been historically dependent on resource industries, like the GCC countries, face a different geopolitical situation. These countries lack the accumulated prestige, cultural and social capital, and HC that Europe and North America now possess; however, they can nevertheless attract migrants in very large numbers based on favourable terms of international trade and high wages. Meanwhile, some countries that have been in similar situations before, like South Africa, have declined from high-income to medium-income economies as their terms of trade became less favourable, but remain attractive as hosts of migrant workers from lower-income countries. In the global political economy, no outcome is inevitable or even strongly predictable (Hyndman, 2012; Lulle et al., 2019).

Countries of origin may invest in the HC accumulation of their citizens, but they risk losing this investment because of the process of ‘brain drain’ whereby host countries take advantage of their opportunity to import high-quality embodied capital (Radonjić and Bobić, 2020; Le, 2008; Cañibano and Woolley, 2015). Meanwhile, the Omani government has the option not to invest in its domestic labour force because it can easily attract migrant workers from poorer countries like the Philippines and India. However, social problems such as unemployment among Omani graduates still exist and will increase if the Omani government continues to depend on migrants from overseas. In the same context, could the Omani government convince Omani graduates to work overseas, sending them to other countries or across national borders?

In any case, some countries of origin have increased their investment in producing skilled migrants; in addition to the benefits to individuals, the whole country is expected to benefit from its investment in skilled workers through remittances of wages to their families to improve the economy, as in the case of Zimbabweans who migrate to the UK. Madziva and colleagues (2016) examined how skilled migrants from Zimbabwe, despite the racism and discrimination I discussed earlier, have become competitive in terms of employability because of their strong educational system and their literacy and fluency in English; these two factors make them highly employable in the UK, compared with other nationalities. However, as Madziva and colleagues also show, these migrants have encountered obstacles in transferring this cultural capital and having it recognised and accepted (in section 3.3, I mentioned how the concept of cultural capital might be used to supplement HC theory, helping explain the impact of social attitudes on the employment patterns of Omani graduates). Zimbabwean migrants may benefit from their HC accumulation<sup>31</sup> and their decision to migrate even though they are not treated ‘fairly’ in the UK labour market compared to the native-born (Bloch, 2006). In addition, the Zimbabwean economy may benefit from the receipt of remittances, particularly if its domestic

---

<sup>31</sup> See Chapter Seven.

labour market cannot absorb all of its youthful labour force as men and women graduate (Pasura, 2013). Again, this raises the question whether adopting other theoretical frameworks alongside HC, such as international political economy perspectives, would be helpful to understand the role of remittances in receiving and sending countries and other power differentials in labour migration. Furthermore, this also raises the issue of language proficiency, where migrants with greater knowledge of the local languages and cultures tend to be more employable (Demireva and Fellini, 2018; Brinbaum, 2018; Lulle et al., 2019; Madziva et al., 2016). According to Madziva and colleagues (2016), a strong command of the primary language of business in a national or regional labour market offers migrants access to employment and enhances their job-related skills. This is an important research gap based on the findings of existing literature and raises a question about the relationship between literacy and fluency in Arabic language and in the culture of the host country (Oman) and HC. This dynamic plays a critical role in the integration of migrant graduates into Oman and how their social and economic status could improve through employment in the T&H sector. While my study aims to understand why Omanis are underrepresented in T&H sector employment, I have decided to explore the perspectives of both Omani and migrant graduates, and to use the lens of gender (male and female) as well, to draw meaningful and in-depth conclusions about T&H sector employment.

Previous studies of international migration have focused on different scenarios of acculturation as a form of HC. The first scenario occurs when migrant workers make HC investments ‘back home’ in their country of origin, learning the relevant language and culture before seeking work in a migrant-receiving country like Oman. In the second scenario, migrant workers make HC investments while living in Oman in response to the opportunities and challenges found there. The third scenario is that the children of migrants residing in Oman may gain opportunities to obtain relevant HC even before joining the workforce or deciding to enter the T&H industry;

they may gain legal status to live and work in Oman, through their parents, as discussed in Chapter Two (Kanas and Steinmetz, 2020; Walters et al., 2007; Gans, 2007; Sakamoto, 2007; He and Gerber, 2020). The relevance of learning the host country language and culture and the role of acculturation as a form of HC, and their connections to employability in the T&H sector, remain a research gap in earlier studies and need to be explored.

The pressure to increase the supply of labour is enhanced when there is a clear skill gap, and when nationalisation policies accommodate the entry and numerical growth of migrant workers. This idea is grounded in the core tenets of neoliberalism, where the concept of employability is conceived as a supply-side element and education is conceived as a means to achieve mobility and prosperity in an increasingly globalised world. In this context, workers can migrate to other countries or industries in pursuit of better opportunities, although countries can also select the migrants they want through entry requirements (Demireva and 2018; Lulle et al., 2019; Madziva et al., 2016). As a consequence, globalisation has brought advantages for highly-skilled labour within a higher-wage economy, encouraging mobility across national borders and economic sectors and valorising investment in HC (Emilsson and Mozetič, 2019; Hagan et al., 2011; Becker, 1993).

International migration scholars have investigated the effects when migrants enter the labour market of a receiving country and have concluded that, as a sociological approach, HC theory provides a relevant framework for studying labour and social policies, and the employment and employability of local and migrant graduates. However, as discussed earlier, the assumption of economic rationality (based on a meritocratic distribution of employment) is highly questionable, both from the employer's perspective and from the perspective of labour. For example, prejudice and stereotyping, as well as precarious conditions for migrants and for female workers, may discourage potential employees from investment in HC, while employers may also employ graduates below their capabilities or capacity (downskilling), which denies

them the returns they expected from their HC investment (Ahmad, 2020; McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Midtbøen, 2015; Sivaly, 2017; Bulat, 2019).

Studies following the HC approach have underscored the magnitude of the shock a supply of new workers can cause and emphasised the role of the government in reforming social policies to regulate the labour market (Kanas and Steinmetz, 2020; Lu and Hou, 2020; Czaika, 2019; Remennick, 2013). On the other hand, countries of origin experience ‘brain drain’, despite gains in terms of remittances. The resulting process ensures the movement of skilled workers across the border (Hagan and Thomas Wassink, 2020; Dumitru, 2014). Hence, within the context of HC theory, migration policies should work jointly with educational policies to encourage investment in people and the mobility of labour, by ensuring a balance between the demand and supply sides of the market (Tani, 2019; Warman et al., 2015; Boucher, 2020). Appropriate interventions will avoid any adverse socioeconomic consequences that might result from the presence of workers who are surplus to the needs of the host country and its employers, which could create social or even demographic problems. However, HC theory shows serious limitations here, as it does not take sufficient account of the complex realities of the lives of migrants, treating them and their families as commodities that can be moved back and forth at will.

In addition, scholars like Hagan and colleagues (2011), examining European countries and the US have emphasised the relationships between social connections, informal channels of labour market information, previous HC investments and ethnic enclaves and niches linked to the country of origin, all of which are understood to shape patterns of employment and migration (Hagan et al., 2011; Nee et al., 1994).

Ethnic enclaves and occupational niches<sup>32</sup> represent informal channels for employment and employability in host countries like Oman. These networks and niches represent a challenge to HC theory: from one perspective, unhealthy practices of employment relying on informal channels hinder the economic rationality on which HC theory is based in balancing employment and wages. For example, some migrant graduates rely on relatives and friends to identify opportunities in the host country, while demand-side social networks influence some employers' decisions to recruit migrant graduates (Leschke and Weiss, 2020; Zhou and Logan, 1989; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Gilbertson, 1995). In Chapter Eight (section 8.5), I suggest that the relationship between informal SC and HC offers an opportunity for researchers to explore further the role of interpersonal relationships and social networks in relation to employment and employability. Meanwhile, scholars like Blossfeld and Mayer (1988) have suggested, in an international context, that labour market segmentation theory<sup>33</sup> could offer an approach relevant to contexts like that of the Omani T&H sector. In a simplified form, this approach sees the labour market as divided into two segments: the first or primary segment consists of relatively permanent jobs, with good career prospects, allocating graduates to good jobs on the basis of race and sex (Kiersztyn, 2020; Hudson, 2007; Constant and Massey, 2005) – one example might be the public sector in Oman. The second segment consists of temporary jobs, allocating graduates to low paying jobs on the basis of race and sex, usually in the service

---

<sup>32</sup> The theory of ethnic or immigrant professional enclaves and niches refers to a set of economic activities (sectors or professions) where specific ethnic or migrant communities are disproportionately concentrated. For instance, the percentage of migrants of Asian origin in the construction sector in Oman and throughout the GCC - are at least one-and-a-half times greater than the percentage of all employment that category of workers represent (Bolíbar, 2020; Gratton, 2007). In migration and other sociological literature, 'enclaves and niches' refer to the clustering and concentration of ethnic minorities in a particular industry or sector in the labour market (Spindler-Ruiz, 2020; Hamilton et al., 2018; Light, 2007). However, SC theory and migration networks provide the social basis for ethnic enclaves and niches (Li, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Labour market segmentation theory means that the labour market structure is divided into several segments or groups based on types of professions, race, sex, industry and geography (Polavieja, 2003; Blossfeld and Mayer 1988; Hudson, 2007).

sector, which could include the T&H and media sectors in Oman (Polavieja, 2003; Kiersztyn, 2020; McTier and McGregor, 2018).

Along with labour market segmentation theory, immigrant occupational niche theory offers another perspective that might supplement HC theory to address the employment patterns of migrant graduates in the Omani T&H sector. Sociological and economic studies have also investigated occupational niches in relation to HC, examining the relationship between labour market segregation based on gender, the structure of ethnic niches and the employment of migrants in specific ‘enclave’ sectors (Schrover et al., 2007; Spindler-Ruiz, 2020; Mok and Platt, 2020; Zhou and Logan, 1989). Research in the US and Australia has identified an interaction between gendered labour markets and HC, expressed in occupational niches and ethnic enclave industries. In such cases, women of migrant origin seem more likely to rely on their investment in HC (for instance advanced degrees and training) to obtain successful labour market outcomes in the host country, while men depend more on work experience and immigrant niches (Zhou and Logan, 1989; Light, 2007; Rajendran et al., 2020).

In the next subsection, I discuss the relevance of HC in explaining the demand-side perceptions of the labour market, particularly the perspectives of employers concerning graduate employability.

### **3.4.3 Employers’ perspectives on graduate employability**

Previous research on employment patterns has tended to focus on the supply side of labour markets, namely, on the attributes and accumulation of HC. In spite of this, some international studies have also attempted to examine the demand side of the labour market – the role of employers in the hiring of graduates (Bills et al., 2017; Di Stasio and Van De Werfhorst, 2016; Protsch and Solga, 2014). Employers play a crucial role in determining the types of HC investment that both employees and employers make. At the same time, employer engagement

is a significant precondition for the implementation of active labour market policies<sup>34</sup> in developed countries like the UK and US and for localisation policies in developing countries like Oman, as well as for employer investment in employees through training (Bills et al., 2017; Bredgaard, 2018).

A study of the Finnish labour market noted that, contrary to the economic rationality<sup>35</sup> assumed by HC theory, employers will make hiring decisions based on subjective criteria. The study found that some employers significantly prefer Finnish graduates over graduates of five different ethnic backgrounds, in spite of their similar demographic and HC characteristics (Ahmad, 2020). Previous international research has also shown that employers are the main force behind investments in migration, attracting migrant graduates from various countries wishing to realise their HC investment in education through the use of migration and labour market policies (Holbrow and Nagayoshi, 2018; Damelang et al., 2019; Iredale, 2005). At the same time, employers act as crucial mediators that ensure the distribution of individuals across different sectors and vocations and determine the allocation of earnings among individuals through their employment practices (Froyland et al., 2019; Sharda, 1998; Benda et al., 2019; Olsthoorn, 2016; Fossati et al., 2020).

A set of researchers has argued that two economic theories provide the primary, and potentially competing, explanations for observed employer bias, gender and racial wage differences (Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005; Polachek, 1981; Olson, 2013). The first is the theory of HC investment, which stresses labour market supply. This perspective asserts that differences in

---

<sup>34</sup> Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are government interventions in the labour market to support unemployed graduates to find employment. ALMPs were prominent in the Scandinavian countries, although over the 1990s they spread in popularity in all Europe (Bredgaard, 2015; Bonvin and Moachon, 2007; Ingold and Stuart, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Social scientists define the economic rationale for HC theory as the assumption that there is a logical reasoning process behind the economic decision to invest in individual labour value through education and knowledge in society to obtain earnings (Tudzarovska, 2013; Paulsen, 2001).

investments in education and on-the-job training are a principal cause of wage differences between men and women and between black and white workers. The second is the theory of economic discrimination, a demand-side explanation whereby differences in workers' wages at similar levels of education and training are attributable to employers' preference to hire and promote one sexual or racial group over another.

Employer hiring discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and other characteristics distort employer hiring decisions and thus limit employment opportunities for historically excluded groups. Research in psychology, sociology, economics and management offers insight about the mechanisms of prejudice and interventions to mitigate its effects, but important questions remain. Although there have been notable gains in the employment situation of racial minorities in some national labour markets, significant disparities remain. For instance, African Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed as whites in the US, while Hispanics are marginally unemployed. The wages of black and Hispanic workers continue to be well below those of whites. Sociological studies on employment outcomes also reveal significant racial differences not accounted for by observed HC characteristics (Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005; De Jong and Madamba, 2001). Tomaskovic-Devey and colleagues (2005) provide evidence from a fixed-effects model indicating that black men spend longer looking for work, gain less work experience and have a less stable employment than whites with otherwise equivalent characteristics (Pager and Shepherd, 2008; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005).

Meanwhile, some employers may be influenced by their own gendered or ethnocentric biases, which can undermine the effectiveness of incentives for HC accumulation in labour markets (McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Midtbøen, 2015; Gaddis, 2015). The ideal of economic rationality, implied by HC theory, assumes that employers typically focus on what could offer value to their organisation while hiring, while employees will respond rationally to the

incentives (mostly financial incentives) that employers signal to them. In addition, employer behaviour comes first, since the HC argument is that employer decisions structure the rational economic decisions of prospective employees. For instance, from the standpoint of economic rationality, employers would have no reason to prefer either Omani or migrant or male or female graduates, provided that they each have the requisite skills needed to improve their productivity. Social prejudices or biases, nepotism or cronyism represent obstacles to the assumption of economic rationality embedded in HC theory. In the context of the supply side, Omani and migrant graduates invest in HC in the expectation of higher pay. However, these investments will not be economically rational in cases where prospective employees cannot reasonably expect to receive these returns because of unpredictable or biased hiring decisions. Accordingly, as stated earlier, I decided to adopt HC theory for this research project based on the policy assumption, operative in Oman, that investment in HC such as education and skill development is an effective way to enhance labour productivity and national income.

#### **3.4.4 The risk of employability:**

The analysis of employability in terms of HC is highly contested, and there is not enough room here to explore the complexities of the debate. For the purposes of my thesis, I note that Becker's classical exposition (1964) was selected based on the latest literature on migration. This literature includes the notions of a 'war for talent' and a conflict between Omani graduates and migrant graduates, in which Oman's continued economic success is seen as being dependent on flows of skilled migrants from less developed regions, like South Asia. The concept of employability plays a crucial role in informing labour market policy agendas in Oman (including Omanisation policies and also the *kafala* system; these policies are difficult to separate but regulate different groups of workers: see Chapter Two), in the GCC and beyond. Employability is a significant factor for individual workers, the supply side of the labour market

(Fugate et al., 2004) and attracts much attention in higher education, academia and other actors interested in improving graduates' employability (Mason et al., 2009; Yorke, 2004).

Although the available literature offers a range of definitions of employability, policymakers have recently used the term to refer to the skills and attributes of individuals affecting their employment. Employability is strongly correlated with certain components of HC, such as measures of education and accumulated knowledge. In addition, HC is not always transferable among national contexts. This is somewhat related to language: it is generally argued that immigrants who speak the official language like Arabic in Oman have a better chance of more positive results in the workforce (as will be discussed in Chapter Seven, Section 7.3). Perceived employability is defined as an individual's perception of their potential to obtain a new job. From a demand-side perspective, employers consider employability to be an individual characteristic, based on the accumulation of human capital (such as education and skills) that enhances a person's capacity to obtain and maintain employment and add value to the organisation (Berglund and Wallinder, 2015; Lindsay et al., 2007). Employability represents the qualities and competencies needed to fulfil the changing demands of employers and clients and thereby to realise employee aspirations and potential. From an employer perspective, a graduate with appropriate employability skills and attributes may be 'employable', but if only the minimum standard of qualification is met, no job offer may be made (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). Meanwhile, some employers may be influenced by their own gendered or ethnocentric biases and make hiring decisions based on subjective criteria, which can undermine the effectiveness of incentives for HC accumulation in labour markets (McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Midtbøen, 2015; Gaddis, 2015; see Chapter Three, Section 3.4.3, concerning employers' perspectives on graduate employability). However, employability is a challenging concept that brings together the words employment and ability, meaning the ability to find a job (Vanhercke et al., 2014, p. 592). From the standpoint of economic theory, employability

highlights the interaction between personal and structural factors, including the ways individuals evaluate their opportunities for success in the labour market and how they approach their job search. Previous studies also emphasise the importance of subjective as well as objective measures of employability (Di Fabio, 2017; Okay-Somerville and Scholarios, 2017). Perceived employability has been linked to proactive behaviours, flexibility and adaptability, all critical for success in contemporary labour markets. High levels of perceived employability appear to reduce stress and are therefore related to health, well-being, engagement and life satisfaction (Clarke, 2018). Research in other areas of the social sciences has shown that although education might be a precondition for employability, it is not a sufficient condition. The expansion of higher education in Oman is intended to reduce inequalities in the labour market between men and women, and between Omani and migrant workers, but at the same time has led to horizontal diversity and an oversupply of graduates. Research shows that selection arguments gain in relevance as the availability of graduates from different socio-economic backgrounds and multiple higher education institutions increase employer uncertainty. Employability, therefore, depends on multiple factors; the concept of relative employability seems limited as it primarily addresses market conditions. Meanwhile, the concept of contingent employability has been proposed to indicate that economic, social and personal factors have a decisive impact on employability (Suleman, 2021). The employability of graduates depends on HC, education, skills and cultural suitability, social background and stereotypes, personal images and labour market conditions. While some of these factors are common to the individual potential for entrepreneurship as well, other personal traits, particularly the ability to take risks, are seen to be more influential in this context.

In this thesis, I adopt the position that employability is better understood through the consideration of both structural and individual dimensions. A central question in the current thesis is what makes individuals (Omanis and migrant graduates) perceive themselves as

having high or low employability. To understand this, I examine the concept of employability from two different perspectives. Employability may be determined by the employee's resources and the individual's possibility to acquire new employment or be derived from labour market conditions. A specific individual or a group of individuals with certain qualifications (HC accumulations) will find it easier or more difficult to obtain a new job.

HC theory also fails to encompass the employability of graduates and the effect of social status on education and labour, which are not taken into account fully by the earnings function. Arum and Roksa (2014, p. 57) point out: 'Rewards to employability are related not just to income but also to employability status and prestige'. In social settings, individuals are generally asked about what they do in Oman, due to the boundaries of the Islamic and cultural norms (See Chapter Five; section 5.3), not how much money they earn. Some studies identify status goals and effects, and variations in the respective roles of earnings and status outcomes according to gender, field of study and 'college quality', making comparisons both between countries and over time. This raises the possibility that HC theory could be supplemented with other theoretical frameworks, like social capital theory (SC) or social network theory, for this study, (as mentioned in Chapter Three, section 3.2). For instance, graduate employability can be understood through a SC framework as the sum of social relationships and networks, which help mobilise graduates' existing HC and bring them closer to the labour market and its opportunity structures. SC can shape and facilitate graduates' access to and awareness of labour market opportunities and their opportunity to exploit them. For instance, scholars like Bourdieu (1986) outline SC as the resources that individuals have access to, due to membership or ties to specific groups. Their participation in Higher Education (HE) gives them the basis for developing the necessary 'transition links' with other key social actors. Such awareness is partly derived from experiences within the graduates' social and cultural milieu and linked to salient social influences, such as family and community members and peers. The critical issue

is how to exploit these resources to pursue access to employment in the T&H sector (Tomlinson, 2017). Another critical issue for graduates' transition to employment is the ability to identify and exploit opportunities, especially given the key role of other influential individuals in their lives to help them learn about and access employment and employability opportunities during employment transitions. For example, significant attention is now being paid to the progression and labour market outcomes of graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds, given the continued underrepresentation of certain minority groups such as migrants and black graduates in the elite professions.

The concept of SC, alongside HC, could also be relevant to analysing the employability of Omani and migrant graduates, referring to the strength of individuals' relational bonds at both formal and informal levels. For my thesis, the influence such ties can generate is seen to be crucial in brokering trust, distributing information and accessing insider knowledge of T&H sector employment patterns. Strong ties with significant others (e.g., family members), in the form of parental knowledge and networks, may be a way to raise awareness of employment opportunities in the Omani T&H sector. However, Granovetter (1985) emphasised the significance of weak ties in forming a relatively thin but influential spread of social connections and contacts – for example, emerging employer contacts. The more social connection individuals can establish, from diverse and knowledgeable sources, the more informed and trusting they may become towards areas of social or economic life with which they had been less familiar.

The literature on skilled migration is slowly adapting to the employability challenges confronting graduates in host economies. The 'war for talent between native and migrants' has tended to be underestimated by analysts. For instance, Zimbabweans who were highly skilled migrants to England initially tended to manifest relatively low socio-culturally appropriate language proficiency for English workplaces, compared to UK citizens. These limitations are

reinforced by cultural effects (some mediated by colonialism and postcolonialism), negatively affecting both individuals' chances to gain employment and employability and the effectiveness of their work once employed (Madziva et al., 2016). Also, skilled Zimbabwean migrants to England faced further difficulties in communicating their employability, due to the dissonance between their concentration on HC in the form of formal education and an English turn towards employability and the need to narrativise oneself in the face of a more fluid labour market (Madziva et al., 2016).

Economic literature has emphasised the employability of graduates in the form of financial advantages associated with acquired or matched skills. Thurow (1976) linked employability to employment opportunities through the employment competition model (Suleman, 2021). Subsequent economic studies based on the wage competition model (rooted in HC theory) have been unable to address employability issues adequately. While certain economists recognise the influence of noneducational background characteristics on labour market outcomes, they interpret these hiring decisions as rational choices associated with employers' tastes or the training costs incurred (Suleman, 2021). From an examination of this literature, I have realised that the understanding of employability is enhanced by considering both structural and individual dimensions. With HC theory offering a framework of analysis, formal education, competence development and job tenure are seen as vital aspects of an individual's perceived employability; therefore, individuals' investment in HC in these respects would be an essential factor in determining their perception of opportunities for new jobs. The perception of employability depends on the Omani economic situation, the supply of jobs in the labour market and employment mobility.

In the next section, I discuss how HC theory illuminates social policies, including Omanisation policies, and whether it offers insight into how to modify such policies to attain better outcomes from nationalisation policies.

### **3.5 Potential modifications to nationalisation policies**

HC theory has been proposed in this study as a theoretical framework to identify potential modifications to policies, like Omanisation policies, which could increase the participation of Omani graduates in the T&H sector. This provides a basis to evaluate how realistic Omanisation policies have been in creating investments for Omani graduates to increase their labour force participation alongside migrant graduates and how they may contribute to higher earnings or improved welfare for Omani graduates. I employ HC theory to help explain why Omani government investment in education has not resulted in increased numbers of Omani graduates entering T&H (as discussed in Chapter Two). Previous sociological studies in the UK, Russia and other European countries have shown that flexible modifications to labour and immigration policies affect the level of returns to investment in HC. Correspondingly, labour productivity, labour mobility and economic growth depend on the degree to which the state invests in HC through education systems, social policies and flexible nationalisation policies. For instance, such policies address certain issues or problems such as the situation of citizens versus EU migrant workers working in the UK during the Brexit transition period; they must continually adapt public policies or immigration practices based on external geopolitical events (Portes, 2020; Barbieri and Scherer, 2009; Zangelidis, 2008; Dietz and Bozeman, 2005; Popkova, 2020; Benda et al., 2019).

Overall, HC theory has offered multiple insights into how the labour market should function. Another interesting study, carried out in the US, concentrated on migrants during their first year working in the US labour market and found a strong interaction between the importance

of HC and the earnings growth of migrants (Akresh, 2007; Van Tubergen and De Werfhorst, 2007). Boxman and colleagues (1991) argued that the concept of HC has a wealth of implications on the labour market; along with other scholars, they reported that individuals with HC gain opportunities to acquire a job (Paju et al., 2020; Liefbroer and Corijn, 1999; Boxman et al., 1991). Where other factors are held constant, people with a greater investment in HC will be more capable of finding a job based on their qualifications and work experience. Correspondingly, as resources could be used to generate other resources, individuals with greater investment in education could be expected to generate more HC. The same could be said for work experience, another dimension of HC. When nationalisation policies push graduates to obtain jobs in T&H, this encourages workers to diversify their experience, acquiring HC. The role of government is understood to be essential, as new skill requirements have the potential to disrupt labour market equilibrium, leading to the displacement of local workers in specific industries (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg, 2013; Păcurariu, 2019). For instance, in such sectors as banking and oil and gas, Omanisation policies have been successful leading to a high ratio of Omani graduates working in these sectors compared to migrant graduates (between 80% and 94%; Oman Observer, 2018; Atheer, 2021). Based on these two successful examples within the context of Oman, in this study I seek to explore how related insights could apply in the T&H sector as well, but without reducing in number or harming migrant graduates in this sector.

The findings of international sociological studies demonstrate that HC has the potential to enhance the returns from labour productivity of graduates in the labour market over the life cycle (Sanders and Nee, 1996; Kosyakova and Brücker, 2020). In the context of Oman, I applied HC concepts to analyse and explore whether such government policies as Omanisation could enable Omani graduates to be more productive and help employers to fill skill gaps in

the T&H sector, reducing unemployment rates among Omani graduates and contributing to an enhanced standard of living and economic development in Oman.

In the next section, I summarize the critique of HC that I have been introducing in earlier sections based on the perspectives of various scholars.

### **3.6 Assessing the strengths and limitations of HC theory**

HC theory has received a high degree of empirical support at a macroeconomic level in various contexts internationally. High levels of HC are associated with high levels of national income, and active labour market strategies to enhance HC have led to higher levels of labour productivity and income levels and job satisfaction for skilled workers. Within Oman, HC theory is already operating in social policy discourse, supporting the extension of funding for expanding postsecondary education and social policy to promote the employment of men and women in such fields as the T&H sector (The World Bank, 2019; Looney, 1990). Enhancement of HC is widely understood to be the prerequisite to a more prosperous and secure future for Oman without the risk of global oil price fluctuations. The assumptions about market efficiency and perfect allocation of jobs based on merit, typically associated with HC theory, are not required to follow it as an analytical approach; instead, I take the approach for this study of observing where these assumptions appear to be questionable in real cases, according to empirical data, and supplementing my explanatory approach with elements of other theories such as gender labour market segmentation and SC theory.

In some countries, HC has been used as a basis for social welfare initiatives, as it emphasises the importance of education for different subsets of the population as they move into transitory or permanent jobs. Some of the populations studied in this context have included women, men, older workers, fathers, mothers, temporary workers, migrants and unemployed people from various social backgrounds (Gash, 2008; Giesecke and Groß, 2003; Giesecke, 2009; Solga and

Koniet, 1989; Zwysen, 2019). At the same time, other theoretical and conceptual perspectives or frames (such as occupational niches and labour market segmentation, and gender-based analysis) have been used to supplement HC theory, to compensate for its weaknesses and explain a range of phenomena where the assumptions of market rationality (both rational choice and meritocracy) are not met in practice. For instance, a sociological scholar like Bolívar (2020) adopted HC theory, SC theory and labour market segmentation to explain gender inequalities, the sexually segregated occupational structure and transnational ties of migrants in the Spanish and Canadian labour markets (Chuatico and Haan, 2020). In addition, from a sociological standpoint, scholars like Perales (2013) have used HC theory and devaluation theory to explain both occupational sex segregation and the wage differences between men and women in the UK. Devaluation theory suggests that male-dominated occupations tend to be more highly compensated than female-dominated occupations, because ‘women’s work’ is devalued by social structures.

Meanwhile, the assumptions of HC theory have also met with criticism, some of which have been discussed earlier in the chapter. A primary limitation of the theory is the assumption that the labour market operates rationally, fairly and efficiently (Pratt and Hanson, 1991; Fix, 2018). This criticism relates to Michael Spence’s (1973) meritocratic<sup>36</sup> assumption, which suggests that HC theory is based on the requirement that education has to be substantially meritocratic for it to apply in a specific national context. Labour markets are assumed to be fair, so people are only ‘limited by their capacity and motivation’ (Sorensen, 1990; Castilla, 2008; Christie, 2019; Kingston, 2006). As a result, HC theory has presupposed a social system where employment opportunities go to those with superior intellect, motivation and capacity. The

---

<sup>36</sup> Sociologists have explained the concept of meritocracy as a social regime where individuals can make progress in society through such capabilities as hard work, talent, effort and merit through their careers rather than through inherent privilege based on family, social class, wealth, race and social background (Kingston, 2006; Reynolds and Xian, 2014; Castilla, 2008).

theory assumes that employees are recruited, paid and promoted based on their ‘marginal productivity’, evaluated by looking at their HC endowment. In other words, the labour market provides an equal opportunity to each individual. This meritocratic approach contends that where people find themselves in the economic structure represents their relative marginal productivity compared to other workers (Domański, 2019; Grimes and Morris, 1997; Dobbins et al., 2014; Tarlau, 2016; Smith, 1986). This can be misleading as it assumes that the labour market automatically allocates an individual to an occupation and a position that matches his or her skills. However, HC theory cannot explain what would happen if the labour market failed to assign jobs to individuals who are educated, because of a high rate of unemployment for example. Such problems relate to the assumption of efficient allocation between the demand and supply sides of labour markets and consequently concerning skill supply and the quality of job opportunities available for local and migrant graduates based on their qualifications (Dobbins et al., 2014; Livingstone, 1990).

In addition, HC theory has also been criticised because of the obstacles faced by people from different social and ethnic backgrounds, gender and racial identities or other statuses (such as local or migrant graduates). Arbitrary factors that impact the employability and earnings potential of employees may undermine the economic rationality assumed by HC theory and make it impossible to realise the investment workers make in HC, as I mentioned earlier (in sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). For instance, people with greater investment in HC are not necessarily more capable of finding a job, despite their qualifications or work experience. For example, black graduates in the UK, EU and the US have less satisfactory employment outcomes than their white counterparts, even at the same level of qualifications (Reeskens and Velasco Aguilar, 2020; Storer et al., 2020; Quillian et al., 2019; Kaufman, 1986). In addition, Reid (2002) observed that among young women in the US, African Americans tended to have lower rates of employment than their white counterparts. According to Christopher (1996), these

lower rates of employment were caused by such structural attributes of the labour market as individual attitudes, discrimination and shifting family structures (Reid, 2002; Newsome and Dodoo, 2002; Browne, 1997; Zwerling and Silver, 1992).

HC theory has also been criticised for the ways it interprets inequalities between women and men, in employment and income outcomes. The theory suggests that men have more advantageous positions in the workplace and higher incomes because they have invested more in HC, as discussed in previous sections. This approach does not recognise social structural factors that may also help to explain these outcomes, such as power structures and relationships, gender differences in access to education and socialisation of men and women towards different specialties or occupations and even discrimination in workplaces where employers may favour male over female employees (Lips, 2013; Smith-Doerr et al., 2019; Huffman, 2013; Cohn, 2019; Gracia et al., 2016; Negrey, 1993).

HC-based approaches are also criticised for failing to adequately explain the existence of gender pay differences among men and women who make an equal investment in HC. The theory provides insights only into how pay gaps could exist for individuals with different levels of investments according to gender, so the theory is only effective where gender-based differences in income are completely explained by gender differences in HC (Cohn, 2019; Smith-Doerr et al., 2019). It also fails to explain adequately how ethnic wage gaps exist in labour markets. Meanwhile, the theory does offer insight into how marginalised ethnic groups, including migrants, may not have the access to higher education required to compete with the more privileged ethnic groups for education opportunities and subsequently in labour markets. However, with its assumption of economic rationality, HC fails to explain why ethnic pay gaps exist in situations where two ethnic groups have equal access to education (Cohn, 2019; Smith-Doerr et al. 2019).

Some scholars of international migration have also criticised the application of HC theory to explain the career choices and mobility of migrant workers. HC theory is criticised for not offering detailed insights into the problems confronting migrants in their host countries (Madziva et al., 2016; Demireva and Fellini, 2018; Brinbaum, 2018). It also fails to explain the discrimination against migrants that is prevalent in some countries (Confurius et al., 2019; Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Ellermann, 2020).

Macro-structural views of employment and employability begin with a critique of the individualistic position of HC. HC theory tends to naturalise employment and employability outcomes and to support the resulting distribution of employment as normatively appropriate. Other theoretical frameworks can be deployed to deal with the weaknesses of HC theory such as devaluation theory, which affirms a negative causal effect of the proportion of women in an occupational category on wages. Meanwhile, gender role theory offers an alternative to the devaluation hypothesis, and an explanation based on the role of culture acting on the sorting process rather than on the valuation process (Ochsenfeld, 2014; Magnusson, 2009; Charles and Bradley, 2002, 2009). According to this perspective, women are socialised in their choices of fields of study to prefer cultural rather than economic capital (Silva, 2005; Hakim, 2000) and pursue fewer quantitative skills (Correll, 2001). In this account, gender composition does not have a direct causal effect on wages because areas that provide little economic capital and few quantitative are expected to pay less for purely economic reasons. Unemployment correlates with either insufficient HC or perverse cultural proclivities like Islamic and Omani cultural norms (e.g. patriarchal and Omani societal expectations). HC theory likewise suggests that any disproportionate concentration of female workers in the labour market results from self-selection rather than devaluation (Tam, 1997). Women are understood to anticipate employment interruptions rationally, when choosing a field of study. In this way, they deliberately sort themselves into labour market segments where non-portable human capital is

less important, albeit at the cost of accepting lower wages (Polachek, 1981). Because devaluation theory makes a robust causal claim, support for this conjecture presupposes a research design that controls for those field characteristics that gender role and HC theory suggest.

Meanwhile, the best way to reduce unemployment may be to change the mechanisms of employment, employability patterns and the attitudes taken by demand and supply sides towards work in the T&H sector (Lindsay et al., 2007; Froyland et al., 2019). For instance, my thesis argues that the individualistic approach taken by HC theory inevitably bases its account of employability too much on individual characteristics, and lacks a macro-level appraisal of the subject. Such arguments might explain why one person has a higher risk of unemployment than another, but they ignore the fact that a complete explanation of unemployment cannot be produced by simply adding up separate, individual-level accounts. Also, the central point of HC theory is that the productivity of black or white workers, and of women or men, is endogenous to market forces, or a result of discrimination in the labour market. If this is the case, it is a mistake to consider productivity within a social group as static or independent of decisions made by employers. Such decisions have critical, dynamic effects on decisions made by black and white workers, or women and men, to invest in HC. Decisions about education and training, especially trade-offs between work, leisure and employment programs, are affected by existing patterns of discrimination.

Moreover, an anti-discrimination policy, relying on markets is badly misconceived (Sunstein, 1991). For instance, in a market that includes discrimination, disadvantaged groups such as black and women workers will be discouraged from investing in such programs. Indeed, reduced investment on their part is perfectly rational. As market actors, women should invest less than men in training to be (say) pilots, economists, politicians, or lawyers, if these professions discriminate against women and thus reward their investment less than men. The

result would often be a vicious circle or even spiral. Because of existing discrimination, these groups invest less in HC; because of this lower investment, discrimination persists or perhaps even increases, because it becomes more rational on a macro level; because of this effect, investments decrease still further; and so on. Black and women workers often seem to invest substantially in HC, even in sectors that treat them inhospitably. In fact, in some circumstances, certain actors respond to discrimination by increasing rather than decreasing their investments in HC. Some racial and ethnic groups have prospered throughout Western history due to such investments, notwithstanding discrimination by employers, customers and fellow employees (Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2005; Thomas et al., 1994). However, there can be little question that discrimination does have a significant effect on HC in many contexts. The discouraging reception known to be accorded to black and women workers perpetuates the exclusion of both groups from specific sectors of the economy. For government policymakers, HC theory offers flexibility in its implementation, allowing for a range of policy effects. Policies such as the reform of Omanisation, government education and training initiatives, equal employment opportunity legislation for Omani and migrant graduates, affirmative action, and pay equity arrangements, can encourage the more efficient and equitable use of human resources.

Risks resulting from HC investment can be classified into structural and non-structural risks. Structural risks result from structural changes in the Omani economy due to fluctuating oil prices, while non-structural risks are mainly due to incomplete information on both sides of the labour market. The structural risks are inevitable due to structural changes, but non-structural risks can be eliminated by spending money to make labour markets more transparent. These risks are higher for HC investment than for physical capital investment; therefore, the returns to HC are higher than the returns to physical capital (Bae and Patterson, 2014; Nerdrum and Erikson, 2001). Given the risks of HC, an individual should understand that their accumulated HC may not produce the expected returns if they experience unemployment associated with

surplus labour or low performance in an occupation where accumulated HC does not have its full productive effect (Nerdrum and Erikson, 2001; Bae and Patterson, 2014).

As discussed throughout Chapter Three, HC theory has faced repeated and often devastating criticisms. In *The Global Trends* (2012), Philip Brown, Hugh Lauder and David Ashton describe the decline in private returns and the dispersion of graduate achievement within unequal and exploitative societies: a world different from that portrayed by HC scholars (Marginson, 2015, 2019). The apparent weakness of HC theory lies in its lack of realism. However, Tan (2014) argues that it is not necessary for the economic rationale of HC to be realistic for viable predictions of employment patterns to be made and normative effects achieved in cases like that of Oman. However, many economists and policymakers believe that a theoretical framework that lacks realism is inherently problematic (Bowles and Gintis, 1975; Schultz, 1972; Holden and Biddle, 2017).

This lack of realism hinders the ability of the Omani government to understand and take action against critical social issues, such as unemployment. HC theory lacks realism in at least two areas. First, HC uses a closed analytical system and assumes its key variables to be independent, but such external effects as prejudices and co-dependence cannot be treated as truly independent. Second, HC unifies two heterogeneous areas, education and labour, as if they were one unified domain. Given that the relationship between education and work involves multiple, complex phenomena (as stated in Chapter Three, section 3.7), no theories can contain all phenomena while maintaining coherence. Clearly, more than one description of education and labour relationships can provide valuable information. For instance, in the context of international labour markets, several theoretical perspectives have been employed to explain the economic and social structures, supply and demand side behaviour and differential outcomes in the labour market, the most significant among which have been neoclassical and segmented labour market approaches. For instance, neoclassical and

segmented labour market theories could compliment the weaknesses of HC theory, particularly through a supply-side lens. Both neoclassical<sup>37</sup> and segmented<sup>38</sup> labour market approaches understand labour markets as areas in which individuals can freely choose a broad spectrum of job options in relation to their skills, tastes and preferences. These paradigms often present different points of departure with various nuances of thought and assumptions in considering various issues, including income inequality, discrimination, labour market structures and unemployment.

These alternative theoretical explanations are valuable in themselves and suggest different policy requirements to address these issues through Omanisation policies, as discussed in Chapter Six. Differences in incomes and employment rates between individuals and social groups are primarily explained through neoclassical and segmented labour market theories, by differences in HC endowments or personal attributes of those individuals and social groups. One of the main criticisms of HC theory is its difficulty addressing employment differences, gender wage gaps and discrimination against minorities like migrants. In the same way, the positions individuals hold in socio-economic hierarchies are considered to represent their potential or productive value. As a result, the remedy often proposed for improving Omani labour market performance and eliminating differential outcomes is to improve the supply-side dimension of the labour market, providing Omani and migrant graduates with more marketable skills, emphasising public investments in general higher education and private investments in specific training.

---

<sup>37</sup> The Neoclassical theory of the labour market states that employees with the same capabilities occupying positions with the same attributes should be reimbursed with the same earnings. If not, the lower-wage employees would migrate to better-paid jobs, and the wages would gradually reach equilibrium (Vercherand, 2014; Brožová, 2015).

<sup>38</sup> Labour market segmentation theory (LMS) divides the market into segments according to such principles as occupation, geography, race, sex and industry. LMS distinguishes between primary and secondary segment workers and jobs (Polavieja, 2003; Blossfeld and Mayer 1988; Hudson, 2007; see section 3.4.2, page 76).

Final agreements between employers and labour market participants are understood to be rational and depend on the skills and personal qualifications of these individuals (supply side) and the relative requirements of employers regarding the specific combinations of skills and qualifications of labour (demand side). In the model of statistical discrimination based on segmented labour market theory, imperfect information on workers' real productivity, rather than prejudice, is the explanation for employers' discriminatory practices (Schwab, 1986). Proponents of the segmented labour market theory have criticised neoclassical approaches to discrimination as causes of unequal access to the job market for different racial and minority groups (Schwab, 1986; Rydgren, 2004). They argue that even taken together, these explanations for employers' discriminatory practices do not substantially address the causes of discrimination. For example, in the case of black Americans, Lafer (1992) considers attributes such practices to employers' desire to exploit cheap labour. He also ascribes such practices to the subjective motives of employers, which are not fully captured by the neoclassical notion of white employers' 'taste' for discrimination (Lafer, 1992). He proposes that employers carry out such practices not just because of 'a personal preference, but as a much deeper enactment of socially defined roles (Lafer, 1992, p. 217).'

Portes and Zhou (1992) also argue against HC theory for its exclusive emphasis on individual skills, which do not address why the rewards to the HC for certain groups are consistently low, while certain other groups are over-rewarded (Portes and Zhou, 1992; Nee et al., 1994). Contrary to the neoclassical ideal of a unitary competitive market, segmented labour market theory argues that the market is divided into primary and secondary sectors (as discussed in section 3.4.2). Returns to HC differ markedly in these two segments, because institutional constraints prevent individuals belonging to various social groups from benefiting equally from their skills and qualifications. As I mentioned in section 3.4.2, jobs in the primary sector of the labour market are characterised by good working conditions, career progression opportunities,

stable employment and high-negotiated wages. On the other hand, the secondary sector is marked by unstable employment, low wages and low possibilities for upward mobility, poor working conditions and high labour turnover. Scholars in various national contexts have argued that minorities, women and other vulnerable groups (such as migrant graduates in host countries like Oman) are more likely to start their careers in the secondary sector, e.g. the T&H industry in the private sector in Oman, because of discrimination, with little chance of breaking into the primary sector, e.g., the Omani public sector (Bailey and Waldinger, 1991; Kogan, 2004). However, the segmented labour market approach has also been criticised for not developing a transparent methodology that would consistently identify a specific number of segments within labour markets, or persuasive criteria for determining segment types or the features that differentiate them (Leontaridi, 1998).

In summary, the essential insight of segmented labour market theory is that the differential rewards to HC for specific individuals and social groups within occupational hierarchies do not stem from their differential skills and education as such, but also originate in broad social forces and entrenched institutional rules. However, none of the approaches discussed above may be sufficient, for instance, to explain away immigrants' differential access to employment chances in their host country. These outcomes arise from the interplay of several factors, including the individual characteristics of the job applicants and the demand side of the labour market: in particular the recruitment practices of the employers who control the job vacancies (Ehlert, 2017; Leontaridi, 1998).

For example, in the American case, racial inequality in economic outcomes, especially among college graduates, persists across American society. Researchers disagree concerning whether this inequality arises from racial differences in HC (e.g., college selectivity, GPA, specialisation of college) or employer discrimination against black job applicants. However, inadequate measures of HC and the inherent challenges in measuring discrimination using

observational data presents a challenge to attempts to determine the cause of racial disparities (Gaddis, 2015). When employers respond to black applicants, the jobs they offer typically carry lower starting wages and are less prestigious than those offered to white peers. These racial differences suggest that a graduate degree, even from an elite institution, cannot counteract the importance of race in the American workforce. Discrimination and differences in HC, therefore, are both found to contribute to racial economic inequality.

*“Education is the most crucial determinant yet discovered about how far one will go in today’s world.”*

— Randall Collins, *the Credential Society* (1979, p. 3).

However, research in several international contexts, using varied methodologies, has identified racial discrimination at different levels of the labour market, especially for low-wage job seekers. The role of targeted racial recruitment and racial differences in employment, for example, has been analysed through experimental methods. Unfortunately, these studies do not show that graduate degrees (a measure of HC) empower disadvantaged groups to mitigate racial discrimination. Meanwhile, direct questions about biased attitudes and beliefs have less validity today than in the past (Gaddis, 2015; Bobo, 2001; Schuman et al., 1985). One reason for this is the development of social awareness of these attitudes and beliefs, producing social desirability biases (Pager and Quillian, 2005). Individuals can display a public facade about non-white workers that hides their actual views. However, when HC is not adequately measured and there are significant differences in HC between whites and blacks, the effect of the omitted variable (HC) is incorrectly attributed to discrimination. The residual attribution of uncertainty is present, so some researchers have turned to field experiments to improve standard observation models and examine discrimination more effectively (Jones and Kelley 1984; Lucas, 2009; Quillian, 2006).

Despite the weaknesses of HC theory, there remain strong justifications for adopting it as the basis of my study. This theory provides a meaningful and comprehensible framework, immediately relevant to policy discourse in Oman (as previously discussed), which will help me to achieve my research objectives, including an account of the reasons few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates. Omani governments have placed a greater emphasis on education as a way to promote economic growth and skills, to fill skill gaps in the T&H sector and reduce the unemployment rate (as discussed in Chapters One and Two). To date, HC theory has been a key discourse in Omani policy development, deployed to address the issue of unemployment and employment patterns in several sectors. Despite the reservations expressed by scholars internationally towards HC theory, it remains central to current global economic and social policy debates and equally so for Oman. In fact, HC theory remains the dominant discourse among policymakers at both national and international levels. HC offers a simple model for legislators and governments to understand and flexible ways to address several social issues like unemployment, employment patterns and economic growth, and it provides a prominent place to education and skills for people (citizens and migrants). However, Omani graduates remain underrepresented in the T&H sector compared to migrants. After examining the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector and exploring the attitudes and perspectives of policy actors along with demand- and supply-side participants in the labour market, I will interpret these from the perspective of HC theory and other relevant perspectives such as gender-based analysis and SC theory.

My study builds on the base of HC theory while acknowledging its limitations; for instance, by looking at the influence of HC investments in the employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector and the limits to economic rationality in these decisions. HC theory also provides a common language to help Omani labour policymakers, labour

market actors, other stakeholders and future researchers evaluate the relationships between investment in education, language and culture as HC inputs and economic and social benefits as outputs as I discussed earlier. Through this lens, it should be possible to modify Omanisation policy to increase the number of Omani graduates in the T&H sector and to enhance labour force diversity (including Omani and migrant employees, both male and female) to meet employer needs.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed certain weaknesses of HC theory, as well as its strengths, for understanding employment and employability in relation to nationalisation policies in the T&H sector. HC theory has helped researchers to understand how educational achievement and the acquisition of linguistic and cultural skills are related to specific employment outcomes for graduates of diverse social and cultural backgrounds. An HC-based approach is therefore also relevant to the T&H sector in Oman, despite some of the weaknesses discussed earlier in the chapter. While migrants undoubtedly continue to face discrimination and labour market segmentation that places them at a disadvantage, they may also be able to capitalise on their accumulated HC to a significant extent, and how much they are able to do this is an empirical question that can be answered, in part, by listening to their own perspectives and those of employers and policy experts. Analyses based on the concepts and language of HC theory can offer valuable insights in such cases, so long as it is recognised that real situations are more complex than the framework's abstract models would suggest.

In sociological contexts, HC theory has been lauded for introducing the concepts used to investigate such social realities as migrant experiences and gender disparities. HC theory has prompted research into key research questions, such as how variables like the education system and nationalisation policies affect the potential for HC investment on the supply side of the labour market. As this chapter has shown, most traditions using HC theory in sociology and

economics have focused on individual-level analysis, emphasising personal attributes like the individual motivations for HC investment and rewards expected on an individual basis, such as wages. Despite its limitations, HC theory offers an object of study, and a policy discourse, that articulate the objectives of this research project: to understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates. It also helps me to identify modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that could increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector. Furthermore, HC theory provides a theoretical framework that can be used – if appropriately supplemented with other frames – to explore how Omanisation policies operate in their national labour market context and whether such policies can realise their objectives given other, underlying factors.

HC theory will also be applied to examine whether increased investment in Omani graduates' HC through education and Omanisation policies is likely to promote Omani participation in the national labour market, especially in the T&H sector, according to the perspectives of participants. HC theory will also offer suggestions about how investments in education, training and other elements of HC could enhance Omani graduates' participation in the T&H labour market, their salary and working conditions and social welfare like unemployment compensation or insurance more broadly, helping overcome such social problems as unemployment. While HC theory is well-established as a dominant discourse for formulating labour market policy in Oman, incorporating other theoretical and conceptual frameworks alongside it will allow richer explanations of the employment patterns of citizens and migrants in the Omani labour market. In research, the best can be the enemy of the good, and any theoretical framework will have weaknesses as well as strengths; after performing the relevant analysis, I will discuss the limitations of this approach, and suggestions for future directions of inquiry, in the final chapter (Chapter Eight, section 8.5).

In the next chapter I discuss my decisions about research methods, the design of the study and why a qualitative research strategy was selected to achieve the study's objectives.

## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins by restating the research questions, aim and objectives of my thesis. An exploration of the research design follows, to give details on how a qualitative research strategy most effectively addresses the objectives of this study. Explanations are also provided for why I chose an interpretive paradigm as the methodological basis for this research. The following section offers detail concerning the pilot study, to indicate how I tested and confirmed the viability of my research questions and the methods used in this research project. A detailed account of the actual data collection processes then follows, emphasising the relevance of the semi-structured and elite interviews by which the qualitative data were collected, as well as how the members of each participant category were recruited to participate in the research. This chapter also includes my reflections on the data collection process with reference to reflexivity and positionality and deals with the key ethical considerations that proved vital for this project, such as informed consent, the promise of anonymity and confidentiality. The ethical challenges I faced as a researcher are also described. The final sections offer a discussion of my experience of analysing the data in relation to themes, both manually and using NVivo software; I conclude the chapter with an assessment of the rigour and validity of my research.

### **4.2 Research questions, aims and objectives**

In response to the state of knowledge described in the preceding chapter's review of the literature, my study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector. In particular, the objectives of this research project are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, might increase the participation of Omanis male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

To achieve this, the primary research question addressed is: *what factors explain the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?* To address this question, I examine the factors shaping demand- and supply-side perspectives about employment in the T&H sector, including their connection to human capital investment and gender-based considerations.

In this context, the secondary questions supporting my research project are as follows:

- i. What factors shape Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, and how do their perspectives compare to those of migrant graduates?
- ii. What factors influence employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates?
- iii. How do investments in Human Capital (HC) affect the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?
- iv. How do Omanisation policies affect the employment of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?
- v. How could Omanisation policies be modified to increase the participation of Omani graduates in the T&H sector?

In the next section, I provide an overview of the research design with particular emphasis on the rationale for using a qualitative research strategy, phenomenological approach and interpretivist paradigm in this research project.

### **4.3 Research design, research philosophy and research approach**

Qualitative research strategies are optimally suited to exploring a phenomenon rather than establishing causal relationships, and given the dearth of research to date concerning the issues under investigation, I realised that qualitative research would be most suitable in this instance. I engaged in detailed face-to-face meetings with my supervisors at University of Sheffield, to narrow the scope of my study and develop an appropriate qualitative design, including aims, research objectives and research questions, as well as sampling and other decisions. In the first year of my studies, I struggled to develop sophisticated research design. My supervisors and department supported me by advising me to present my research proposal, including the research design, in a department conference to obtain more critical insights from senior academic staff, researchers and experts in related themes - many participants in this annual conference were from outside the university. Later, I obtained useful insights from the members of my biannual review committee and then from my confirmation review panel. Finally, I succeeded in passing an ethical review after receiving critical input and comments (see Appendix 36).

The research questions specified relate to the experiences, constructed meanings, feelings and perspectives of research participants, which can best be collected using qualitative approaches. A body of social research scholarship has established that such an approach is suitable for describing the fundamental nature of a research phenomenon from the participants' perspectives and to understand the meanings they attribute to that phenomenon (Blaikie, 2009; Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Mason, 2018; Greener, 2011). In effect, I expected that a qualitative approach would enable me to most effectively interpret the subjective and inter-subjectively constructed meanings held by participants, concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the T&H sector. The research

approach I selected helped me to focus on these meanings, along with the social context within which participants construct them (Bryman, 2016; Tight, 2016).

My epistemological approach is grounded in individual understandings and subjective meanings, perspectives and interpretations of the phenomena under investigation (Smith, 2019; de Gialdino, 2009; Fawcett and Hearn, 2004). By selecting an interpretivist paradigm for the methodology of this research project, I hoped to obtain an understanding of social processes, investigate contextual factors and analyse phenomena based on the interpretations of policy actors and labour force participants (Bryman, 2016). My decision to follow an interpretivist approach was also based on its underlying insight that social phenomena cannot be analysed independently of social actors (Williams, 2000). To a significant extent, this paradigm provided a framework for interpreting Omani and migrant graduates as individuals who are capable of constructing meanings based on how they interpret working in the T&H sector and for examining how employers in the Omani labour market intend to select and recruit Omani and migrant graduates. It also enabled me to understand key social processes by facilitating my investigation of contextual factors and my analysis of individuals as social actors (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Mason, 2002; Maxwell, 2013; Pulla and Carter, 2018). In the current research project, I observed the object of study – the labour market in the T&H sector – to be a complex social phenomenon due to the influence of migrant and host country cultures, religion and Omani social policies. Such social phenomena cannot be analysed independently of the relevant actors, from the migrants and Omani nationals participating in that labour market to social policymakers and representatives of the firms hiring in the sector (Ennis and Walton-Robert, 2018; Phillimore, 2015).

In the next section, I reflect on my experience carrying out small-scale preliminary research at college ‘A’ to assess the feasibility of my research, the obstacles I faced and the time that would

be required. The purpose of this pilot was to improve the study design before engaging in my full-scale research project.

#### **4.3.1 Pilot study**

While I had selected research questions suitable for a qualitative research strategy, I still needed to test the specific questions to confirm their practicability. Therefore, before any full-scale field research I conducted a pilot study – from March to end of April 2018 – in Muscat, the capital of Oman. During this phase I tested my demographic questionnaires, interview guide, consent forms, participant information sheet, research protocols and recruitment strategies (see Appendices 7 to 28). The first phase was planned for college ‘A’, but the timing was not conducive. It was an examination period, and it was challenging to find students available to take part in the pilot. However, I was able to recruit some Omani and migrant students with the help of the deputy dean of academic affairs. Overall, the pilot study showed that the study protocol is feasible, although it indicated that the research project could have a significant impact on the participants’ available time, depending on their other obligations. Recruiting students during the examination period was challenging; however, my experience did show that participants could be recruited according to the specified inclusion criteria. I managed to recruit both Omani students and international (migrant) students.

The pilot study also revealed certain flaws in my research instruments. For one, I observed that starting with easier questions made the participants feel more comfortable, which implied a change to the intended sequence. In testing the interview guide, I realised that the plan for interviewing Omani students contained complex questions about the T&H sector, which could only be answered satisfactorily by interviewees with expert knowledge of the industry. This realisation prompted me to include elite interviews in my subsequent, full-scale study. It also indicated that I had to be more flexible about the length of interviews. I had hoped that 40 to 60 minutes would be adequate for each participant. However, during the pilot I observed that

some interviews ended up taking longer than I had anticipated, which forced me to update the google calendar invitations for interviews I had already scheduled with other participants or even to postpone planned interviews in certain cases. I transcribed the pilot interviews and discussed them with my supervisors, who provided detailed useful and constructive comments. Overall, the pilot study was successful and provided important feedback and rationale to proceed with the study.

In the following section, I provide an account of how I performed full-scale field research for my thesis, in Muscat, Oman. I reflect on how I recruited my 48 participants and interviewed them, from the beginning of the process to the end.

#### **4.3.2 Data collection**

For the main study I spent seven months in Oman, collecting data directly from different categories of participants from March to October 2018. Before conducting this primary research, I assembled secondary data from published documents, reports and websites about the organisations I targeted for the study. These organisations included college ‘A’<sup>39</sup>, government ministries and the public authority of ‘X’, along with various tourism development firms and hotels in Muscat. I researched these organisations to anticipate how to undertake subsequent interviews and to gain insight into their organisational cultures or values, as these represent some of the key actors concerning the Omanisation policies for the T&H sector.

I carried out 48 interviews; the expert participants included two Omani tourism experts from government ministries (one male and one female), two managers from tourism development

---

<sup>39</sup> I have replaced the names of all my participants and their workplaces with pseudonyms in my thesis project. This approach is in accordance with the code of ethics of the University of Sheffield and the latest updates of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). However, for certain quotations and related evidence provided by participants in the three data chapters, I decided to maintain them unchanged – mainly concerning the names of places and certain other organisations. For example, in Chapter Five I have retained the names of the Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI) – Oman and the Public Authority of Manpower Register (PAMR) – Oman.

firms (one male and one female) and ten hotel managers, including Human resources (HR) managers (either migrant or Omani) at various levels of management (five male and five female). Other participants included 12 employees or general staff (either migrant or Omani; six male and six female), 10 Omani or migrant students from college 'A' (five male and five female), two members of academic staff from college 'A' (one male and one female), and 10 Omani graduates who were unemployed at the time of the interviews (five male and five female). Details are provided in Table 4.1.

**Table 4. 1: Breakdown of participants and interview details for primary data collection**

Participant Category	Who	Interview Count	Gender		Nationality/ Ethnicity	Primary Data Collection Methods
			Male	Female		
Government ministries	Tourism experts	2	1	1	Omani (2)	Elite interviews
Tourism development firms	Managers	2	1	1	Omani (2)	Elite interviews
Hotel (5, 4 or 3-stars)	Managers: General managers, HR managers, front office managers, etc. (migrants and Omanis)	10	5	5	Southern European (1) Eastern Europe (1) Southeast Asia (4) Northeast Africa (2) Oman (2)	Elite interviews
	Employees (migrants and Omanis)	12	6	6	Southeast Asia (6) Omani (6)	Semi-structured interviews
College 'A'	Students (migrants and Omanis)	10			Omani (5) Northeast Africa (2)	Semi-structured interviews
		10	5	5	Southeast Asia (3)	
	Academic staff	2	1	1	Northern Europe (1) Northeast Africa (1)	Elite interviews
Unemployed	Omani graduates (who were unemployed at the time of interview)	10	5	5	Omani (10)	Semi-structured interviews
<b>Total</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>		

I used semi-structured and elite<sup>40</sup> interviews to collect primary data, as I was interested in hearing rich stories from participants to glean insights from their different attitudes and perspectives on social reality (Aarsand and Aarsand, 2019; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Mohajan, 2018; Irvine et al., 2013).

I planned to conduct in-depth interviews in Muscat, the capital city of Oman, for multiple reasons. The availability of informants, which can be a significant challenge to researchers in Oman, was one key factor. Muscat is an administrative centre, where I could quickly get in touch with elite policy actors, and is also a centre of the T&H sector where I could reach a large number of migrant graduates and workers. As part of my selection of participants, I made a checklist of policy actors to interview, using the topic guides and Demographic questionnaires I had previously designed. The topic guides included questions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector in Oman (see Appendices 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24).

A purposive sampling method was chosen for recruiting participants, as this selective approach is responsive to desired characteristics of the target population and the objectives of the study (Rapley, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2013; Silverman, 2014). Additionally, I employed ‘snowball sampling’ to recruit participants in certain categories, as I will discuss in subsequent sections. I selected this approach when I encountered a problem reaching managers at tourism development firms and unemployed Omani graduates through purposive sampling. I recalled the advice of one of my supervisors during one of our Skype meetings to adopt plan B, namely

---

<sup>40</sup> For the purposes of this study, I distinguish two kinds of semi-structured interviews, involving elite respondents and non-expert respondents. In social sciences literature, elite interviews involve informants with elite or special status, power and expertise: highly educated and professional experts in the economy and broader society. Working with such participants requires different interview strategies and protocols than those used in semi-structured interviews with regular participants like students and employees. In this study, I considered government experts and academic staff in the field of tourism, as well as managers and employers in hotels and the tourism industries, to be elite informants (Flick et al., 2018; Harvey, 2011; Mikecz, 2012; Huggins, 2014; Aberbach and Rockman, 2002; Goldstein, 2002).

to use snowball sampling. I found this referral approach very useful in terms of its practicality, straight forwardness and efficiency in reaching various research participants with various characteristics.

Before leaving the UK to go to Oman, I sent emails and an official letter from the Embassy of Oman in London, to request access to and permission to conduct research interviews with each category of participants (see Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 48). I placed the necessary phone calls after the project passed the confirmation review meeting and received ethical approval in the UK. Upon my arrival, I realised that I had little local knowledge of Muscat, as I had lived primarily in Suhar City, around 130 miles (210 kilometres) away. Although I had also worked in the district of Alkhair, a small port town in the Muscat Governorate, my knowledge of the metropole was scanty at the time that I started the data collection process. Collecting data, in person, in the national capital proved to be a challenge, particularly as the participants targeted were distributed in many districts.

All participants were taken through similar interview protocols, consisting of semi-structured interviews for most participants and special strategies and tactics for elite interviews (Gray, 2014; Mason, 2002; Maxwell, 2013; May, 2001). For instance, topic guides were redesigned for elite interviews to engage the expertise of these well-placed informants (see Appendices 16, 17, 21 and 24). The invitation letter for research interviews contained the relevant details about the research project as attachments (see Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 48). In addition, for elite participants I made a determined effort to arrange flexible and convenient times, dates and locations suiting their preferences, to respect their busy schedules and the other demands on their time. Since elite participants expected me to be knowledgeable about my area of research, I needed to be ready for any questions and understand power relations and other procedures (see also: Huggins, 2014; Smith, 2006; Ganter, 2017; Darbi and Hall, 2014).

The procedures specific to each category of participants are discussed in the subsections that follow.

**a) College ‘A’**

**i. Academic staff**

My efforts to gain access to college ‘A’ were met with difficulties in booking an appointment with the dean of students. My research prospects were restored, however, when I met one of my old contacts who held a senior position at this institution. She provided me with consent to perform my research and even arranged for some members of the academic staff to (willingly) take part in the research project. They then referred me to other members of staff who were eager to participate.

**ii. Students**

I contacted participants (Omani and migrant students) through the dean of students at college ‘A’, where I had previously conducted my pilot study. However, the actual process of data collection proved to be more complex than my experience in the pilot. In one instance, the dean of students facilitated the recruitment process. She instructed a member of the academic staff (female) to oversee my participant recruitment process at the institution. Later, this staff member nominated one of her best students to participate in my research project and invited me to attend one of her lectures. Before the lecture, she introduced me to the students and outlined the purpose of my study before inviting me to select student participants at my discretion. I chose students who were interested in taking part. I had initially assumed that the migrant students participating in the study were international students. After analysing the demographic questionnaires data, however, I found that all of them were students of migrant origin whose families have been living and working in Oman for decades. At the same time,

some migrants are joined by their families,<sup>41</sup> although not all migrants are able to bring family members to live with them in Oman, as this depends on Omani immigration regulations, including the *kafala*<sup>42</sup> system, which places such decisions largely in the hands of employers (Indrelid, 2018; Khan and Harroff-Tavel, 2011; Longva, 1999; Damir-Geilsdorf and Pelican, 2019; see Chapter Two).

However, while contacting male students was easy, I found it difficult to find female students who were willing to take part in the study. I was forced to call upon students I had interviewed to help me locate peers who would take part in the study. This strategy proved helpful and accelerated my collection of data. Locating potential participants through their peer contacts made it easier to convince them to consent to the interview process, even the female Omani students.

#### **b) Tourism experts in government ministries**

After identifying the physical addresses of government ministries, I looked up their locations on Google Maps. I had to visit each of the ministries that I had identified to request to meet managers with knowledge of the state of affairs in the T&H sector. In this instance, difficulties arose from bureaucratic factors, including complex and opaque organisational structures, protocols and regulations. I made an effort to book appointments with both Omani and migrant tourism experts, faced complicating factors and was asked to wait for months for authorisation. At the time of my fieldwork, several migrant experts were away on annual summer holidays overseas and therefore unavailable within my deadline for data collection. In one instance, I was asked to present official letters from the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat and the Embassy of Oman in London (see Appendix 48) and to seek consent the

---

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter Seven (in particular section 7.3) for more detail.

<sup>42</sup> See the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies in Chapter Two for more discussion of the *kafala* system.

consent of the department's senior management to interview Omani government experts. This requirement was understandable, as the leaders of such organisations value their own time and that of their management team. Ultimately, it became obvious that gaining access to certain organisations would require a mix of strategic planning, diligence, patience and even luck. Obtaining such permissions took time and required patience. Because of this, within the time available, I only managed to obtain consent to speak to two policy experts in separate ministries, both of them Omanis.

### **c) Managers at tourism development firms**

To find tourism development firms in Oman, I began with online research. I retrieved the physical addresses of relevant companies from their websites. However, accessing my target participants in this group was relatively tricky. I had to start at the front office of each firm, where I was asked to register the intended purpose of the meeting, its proposed time and place and also my academic information. I attached my participant information sheet, consent form, interview topics guides and demographic questionnaires to each company's appointment form (see Appendices 15, 21, 26 and 35). Front-office staff would then direct me to the coordination and follow-up department, where I was asked to wait without a specific timeline. Ultimately, I had to concede that my initial plan to recruit these participants was unsuccessful; I had waited longer than I had intended and had to turn to my backup plan. I decided to meet one of the government tourism experts for a second time to find out whether she could refer me to Omani or migrant senior managers in tourism firms who might take part in the study. She gave me the business cards of two Omani senior managers at a tourism firm. They willingly took part in interviews, owing to a formal recommendation from this elite informant.

### **d) Hotel managers**

#### **i. Hotel managers (migrants and Omanis)**

Before heading out to each hotel, I had to conduct an online search of hotels that I would be able to get to, to perform interviews in Oman, before finding their locations on Google Maps. Afterwards, I had to travel to each of the identified hotels and ask at the reception desk to see the managers. Some of the hotels required that I obtain an access card from the security department. I had to fill out additional paperwork to allow me to gain access to some departments, particularly HR. Making contact with the managers was fairly easy, as many of the receptionists were very hospitable. Finding managers of migrant origin was as easy as locating multinational hotels. After meeting each manager and handing them my participant information sheet, topics guides, letters to hotels managers and demographic questionnaires (see Appendices 1, 2, 8, 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 27, 28, 30, 35 and 48), I booked an appointment for an interview with each. I collected data during the summer season in Oman when many tourists arrive in the country for holidays. This meant that hotels were fully booked, and hotel staff were busy. Hotels tend to cluster around certain locations in Muscat, which made it convenient to recruit participants using a ‘snowball sampling’ technique. I contacted many hotels because time was a crucial factor. While initially some managers promised to provide support in recruiting participants, they regrettably were unable to do so because of commitments elsewhere. Some managers of migrant origin did manage to point to migrant workers that I eventually interviewed, who in turn guided me to additional, individual migrant workers. In fact, the roles of friendship and kinship networks proved to be vital to my successful recruitment of employees of migrant origin. Overall, the process of recruiting migrants from diverse cultural-linguistic, ethnic, national and religious backgrounds proved to be a challenge, as I had to anticipate their responses and learn about their specific cultures, values and religious attitudes, as well as other contextual variables like attitudes towards secularism, national political cultures and sensitivity towards religious identity.

## **ii. Hotel employees (migrants and Omanis)**

I contacted migrant and Omani employees through their corresponding HR departments using a covering letter that outlined the nature of my research. I sought permission from their HR departments. In the final stage of interviews, I asked some of the participants to help contact other potential interviewees that fit into certain intended categories. This strategy was intended to increase the likelihood that interviewees would take part in the study and to ensure a sufficient number of interviews. There were also instances where some migrants were concerned about the likelihood that their employers might obtain access to the research microdata, which complicated the process of recruiting migrant workers.

Facing these challenges, I shifted from purposive sampling to 'snowball sampling', directly contacting potential participants through direct referrals from friends and colleagues. While recruiting the migrant participants, I was aware of possible challenges of qualitative migration research and used a range of techniques to minimise the risks posed to participants (as discussed in the Ethical Considerations section). I expected it to be relatively easy to obtain access to migrant workers and managers, since the spatial segregation in Muscat encourages them to visit, socialise and reside in certain places and participate in the same organisations. However, because of seasonal factors these contacts were difficult to pursue, so I had to visit many hotels to obtain a sufficiently full interview schedule.

For this study, I recruited both male and female Omani employees using a purposive sampling strategy, after receiving the necessary approvals from officials and direct managers. Data collection was successful, though I noticed that some Omani women were very shy in an interview format and tended to give short answers to my research questions. I encouraged Omani women participating in the study to give more detailed answers by creating a comfortable atmosphere and facilitating the discussion of feminist issues relevant to work in the T&H sector. For example, I connected with some interviewees by discussing local news about accomplishments, prizes or awards won recently by women in Oman. As a male

researcher, opening the discussion of women's achievements and gender roles was a successful strategy to reach female Omani employees. Meanwhile, male Omani employees appeared very motivated to answer my research questions. I obtained data from them easily, as they could speak with me in two languages – Arabic and English –and the power dynamics were less complicated, since we were speaking from similar structural situations (see section 4.4). In addition, I applied reflexivity and positionality actively throughout the thesis, as these practices were essential during the primary research process and in data analysis (Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

#### **e) Unemployed Omani graduates**

Recruiting Omani graduates who were unemployed at the time of interview proved to be the most challenging of the study's objectives. I experienced difficulties after the public authority of 'X' delayed in providing me with contact information for a list of potential participants. I had sent a letter to this authority requesting permission to take on this category of participants (see Appendices 1, 3 and 48) but when I observed delays in the authority's response, I decided to use the network of acquaintances I had established at college 'A'.

This strategy proved to be a useful backup plan that hastened data collection. Previous interview subjects proposed former or graduate students in their circle of friends, who consented enthusiastically to take part in the research project when I contacted them by phone. I received a list of graduate students from my network in college 'A' and sent it to the public authority of 'X', requesting them to identify and coordinate with Omani graduates who were unemployed at the time. To allow them some flexibility in compiling a broad list of students outside of Muscat, I emphasised to the authority that I was prepared to travel to any governorate in Oman. This would also make it convenient for prospective participants living in far-flung or remote corners of Oman, who would not have to travel to Muscat for the interview.

Officials at the public authority of 'X' explained to me that they would need to check and update the status of potential participants, to determine whether they had continued with additional studies after graduating. Checking the records of participants in the database would allow subjects to be identified; however, there were lapses in communication with the graduate participants. For example, during one interview, a participant asked whether I could help him find a job. While discussing this issue during a Skype meeting with my supervisors, they pointed out that I had erred by describing the activity as 'participant recruitment'. This term was ambiguous and might indicate to the unemployed graduates that I was undertaking 'job recruitment interviews'. I then replaced the 'participant recruitment' with 'participant selection' in describing the process. My supervisors advised me to explain to participants the differences between a research interview and a job interview. From then on, I explained this distinction clearly to participants after providing them with their information sheets, consent forms, demographic questionnaires and interview topic guides.

Overall, I attribute much of the successes I had recruiting and interviewing these respondents to my supervisors, who supported me from a distance during my fieldwork in Oman. They created a relaxed atmosphere for sharing and discussing ideas, which stimulated my intellectual growth, and they also provided a realistic appraisal of my individual needs during data acquisition. The supervisory team offered extensive commentary and advice at each step in the data collection process, during twice-monthly Skype meetings, and provided rigorous and critical appraisals of the ongoing thesis work. They communicated their perceptive criticisms, and I eventually started to interrogate my research project critically and to use rational and logical criteria to evaluate my interviews during the data collection process in Oman.

The next section discusses how I overcame issues of subjectivity and bias while collecting data, by assuming a reflexive position. It also explains how I became more profoundly aware of my positionality before, during and after each interview with my participants.

#### **4.4 Reflections on data collection, with reference to reflexivity and positionality**

Reflexivity and positionality proved to be particularly relevant concepts, facilitating my conscious and analytical self-assessment as I collected qualitative data (De Tona, 2006; Ganga and Scott, 2006; Gawlewicz, 2016; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). When it comes to the interpretation of interview data to discern emergent generalisations, international migration scholars tend to suggest that the process should be entrenched in reflexivity, particularly concerning the power dynamics accompanying the interview setting and similar epistemological questions (Iosifides, 2018; Fedyuk and Zentai, 2018; Dahinden et al., 2020; Bott, 2010; Fawcett and Hearn, 2004). I managed the issue of subjectivity in the research process by taking a reflexive position. Reflexive techniques employed during data collection, such as describing and examining the power dynamics created through the subjective positions within the research process, have helped to guarantee the credibility of my research as they enabled me to overcome my own subjectivity (Riley et al., 2003; Sheppard et al. 2000; Breuer, 2003; Mruck and Breuer, 2003; Braun and Clarke, 2006). This approach also made it possible to discover complex positionalities that strengthened my relationship with interviewees (Ryan et al., 2016; McGarry, 2016; Sheppard et al. 2000). For example, the researcher's ethnic background can be beneficial to establish privileged relationships with migrant research subjects, facilitating access to information in the field. Related benefits result from familiarity with the languages and the physical space of the population of interest. On the other hand, such a close relationship between researchers and their subjects may also be detrimental to the research process (Pechurina, 2014; see the additional examples, below).

With respect to positionality, I tried to indicate my awareness of research participants' power positions and how their perspectives on specific issues depended on their local or migrant status (Please read section (d), Hotel managers and employees, on pages 131 to 136, where you should

find many examples). I was also aware that the specific cultural backgrounds of those I interviewed would affect their perceptions. In brief, I was fundamentally aware of my positionality before, during and after each data collection event as I interviewed participants of migrant origin (Please read pages 126 to 136, where you should find many examples). Existing power differentials posed a particular risk, especially as I had to interview both expert and non-expert interviewees and integrate their perspectives. In both scenarios, my guiding policy was to be completely respectful and acknowledge their worldviews, even if I could not agree with their opinions, and to use data collection methods that empowered them and changed power differentials (Ryan 2015; Chereni, 2014; Botterill, 2015; Amelina, 2010).

Details of data collection in relation to reflexivity and positionality for each category of participants are discussed in the following section.

#### **a) College ‘A’**

##### **i. Academic staff**

Being in a privileged position as an Omani researcher, I came to understand the power imbalances that emerged during the qualitative interviews and the ethical concerns pertaining to these imbalances while interviewing academic members of staff. Interviewing male academic staff was fairly easy; we could relate to each other with relative ease. I observed that the male member of academic staff, of migrant origin, became less formal and more approachable when I told him that I was studying in the UK, which they considered to be prestigious. I had to constantly use polite forms of address like ‘Doctor’ to remind him that he was the authority and that I was a student like any other. At one point, the conversation became too casual and he started asking me about my experiences in the UK; however, I observed that whenever I would call him ‘Doctor’ repeatedly, he would become more aware of the interview format and assume a more formal tone.

The female member of academic staff, also of migrant origin, tended to speak more briefly and to the point. Overall, she was more formal and seemed to be very busy. For instance, when I observed that she was constantly looking at the clock, and neither laughed nor smiled when something was amusing or funny to talk about, I knew that she was determined to keep her distance. In such an instance, I respected her preference to keep her distance and autonomy. This included maintaining a formal tone throughout the interview to avoid any incidents of informality. Both academic staff members were relatively comfortable with a formal tone, as they became more trustful and engaging.

## **ii. Students**

Being an Omani man and a sociological researcher, I was aware that some complexities would materialise while interviewing female students. By contrast, male students were generally easy to converse with during the interview. I realised that they were determined to be very respectful, particularly when they learned about my status as a PhD student and my employment with an Omani government authority. Some became very uncomfortable, and I perceived their sense of inferiority. Aware of these power dynamics, I had to interject humour to undercut my position of authority and to show how much I respected their opinions and how my research project depended on their experiences. This made them feel empowered and encouraged them to be more cooperative.

Meanwhile, more pronounced difficulties arose while interviewing female students. Many would turn down the interview invitation unless they were accompanied by a female friend. I later learnt that this was to minimise suspicions regarding meeting with a male researcher outside their circle of their family. I was fully aware of my earlier experiences during the pilot study, where some female students insisted on taking part in the study only if accompanied by a female friend. Therefore, I interviewed the female participants in 'neutral' settings to guarantee their anonymity and to avoid any ethical or methodological issues. I also observed

more specific problems as a male researcher interviewing female participants. For instance, female Omani students were generally reluctant to reveal why they intended to join the T&H industry. This forced me to try and demonstrate my awareness of the power dynamics and sensitivities around gender roles in Omani culture. Some were also reluctant to reveal whether they would be working in the T&H sector after graduation. However, after demonstrating my knowledge of their cultural background and awareness of gender roles in Oman, and declaring myself a strong advocate of women's rights, they became more cooperative.

Some male and female students also regarded me as a potential employer and kept referring to me as *Sayyid* – Omani for sir. After realising the implications of this, I reflected on how I could position myself differently in subsequent interviews, and engage in forms of dialogue to undercut this impression. I decided to practice absolute openness with regard to my research process, to convince subsequent interviewees that while I was engaged in 'formal research', I also wanted to explore their experiences at a personal level. The tactic of using snowball sampling was also particularly useful in this context, ensuring continuity of trust from one female respondent to the next.

#### **b) Tourism experts in government ministries**

Before interviewing tourism experts in government ministries, I was aware that I would be interviewing individuals with expert knowledge of the Omani tourism sector. As these were senior government officials, I knew that issues of power dynamics would arise. When I ultimately gained access to this organisation, it was also necessary to renegotiate entry into the actual lives of the managers and their workers. These required significant interpersonal skills and procedures, beginning with elegant dress, such as wearing the characteristic *Dishdasha* and tying a traditional Omani *Mussar* – senior policymakers tended to follow the protocol by wearing the Omani *khanjar* (dagger) as a show of respect. I also actively employed verbal and

nonverbal communication strategies and was careful to provide responses in a non-partisan manner. These techniques proved to be effective. Contrary to what I had expected from interviewing other Omani men and women, the two experts I met were very confident, agreeable and open-minded. At the start of both interviews, I felt somewhat intimidated by their level of expertise. I feared that, once they perceived my reaction to their positions of authority and wealth of knowledge, they would become less willing to continue the interview and that, given their busy schedules, they would either discontinue the interview or fail to make full disclosure of their opinions. However, after demonstrating my knowledge of current affairs and of their roles in the industry, they expressed a sense of satisfaction with the power balance and treated me like a peer.

Issues of power dynamics were present throughout, however. I had to ask questions that were culturally and politically relevant, and I knew that government experts tended to have their own political leanings. I also had to be careful to avoid asking questions that could be interpreted as anti-Omani, because experts might be expected to have their own personal agendas about the policy or even political affiliations.

The female tourism expert was a pleasant person. I felt privileged to have this opportunity, as she assured me that she is usually not enthusiastic about granting interviews. She commented that she had only done so because she had found the reasons for my research to be compelling. I realised that she went to great lengths to present neutral answers to my questions. I wondered whether this neutrality was influenced by her deep sensitivity towards the Omani community and its needs or the fact that I had some Western affiliation as an Omani student studying in the UK. Therefore, I started feeling like an outsider<sup>43</sup>. I listened carefully to her and made sure

---

<sup>43</sup> International social scientists and scholars engaged in qualitative research on migration have discussed insider and outsider positionality in qualitative interviews as follows:

that I asked completely neutral questions in turn. I explained to her that, despite being a student in the UK, I had remained faithful to Omani government objectives. I also explained to her that I valued her objectivity but still wanted to hear some of her concerns about Omanisation policies. She willingly provided some criticism, although she was careful to claim that those were her personal views and not positions held by the ministry.

While interviewing the male tourism expert, I realised that awareness of my position as a researcher from a UK-based university was important. I was also aware that Oman's political history and religious values shaped policy preferences and encouraged certain agendas. I had researched about him on Twitter and LinkedIn, observing that he has a reputation for diligence in areas of domestic policy reforms. He was also a government loyalist. As I had been living in the UK, I had to be careful not to insert any Western policy priorities that could be seen to contradict his own policy framework, as this could have made the interviewee uncomfortable. I was aware that interviews sometimes trigger feelings that may cause an interviewee to reflect on an uncomfortable situation in life. Key tools that assisted me in this emotionally charged interview included patience and listening skills, which enabled him to open up without restraint.

### **c) Tourism development firm managers**

My experience interviewing tourism development firm managers was similar to my interviews with the tourism experts in government ministries. The only difference was that, in this

- 
- i. An insider is a social researcher who shares a similar experience, culture, language, ethnic and background, with vulnerable research participants in the study project (Ganga and Scott, 2006, p.2; Britton, 2019, p.9-12).
  - ii. An outsider is a social researcher who does not share similar backgrounds, linguistic, ethnic, culture or experiences with vulnerable research participants in conducting study project (Ganga and Scott, 2006, p.2; Britton, 2019, p.9-12).

Also, see the following sources: Shaw et al., 2020; Irgil, 2020; Hathaway et al., 2020; Mason-Bish, 2019.

instance, the female manager tended to be a strong advocate for gender equality. During our conversation, I became aware that she was very sensitive about how men reacted to her status as a woman in authority. Recognising that she was thriving within a male-dominated society, I knew that I had to demonstrate my respect for her accomplishments. I acknowledged how glad I was that Omani society was changing for the better because of women like her and how much I respected her accomplishments. I observed that, after I made this comment, she became more cooperative. To keep the interview flowing, I used a conversational approach and repeatedly provided positive feedback, recognising her significance for my study. I encouraged her to talk freely about her path up the career ladder and the challenges she had gone through. She seemed to enjoy herself and showed more interest in the research project.

The male interviewee, a well-travelled man, possessed some cultural nuances that I observed to be typically Omani. He went on to tell me about his work and life accomplishments, including those of his family members. He had a wealth of knowledge about current affairs in Oman. Having spent several years in the UK, I felt like an outsider. He feigned surprise at my lack of knowledge of certain current events. I employed patience and careful listening skills. I observed that my active listening made him very comfortable and more willing to offer his insights. When it came to talking about Omanisation policies, I observed that his tone changed. He was very honest about holding a critical perspective towards some government policies, and he even revealed how private firms had been coerced into maintaining good relationships with some state agencies. He insisted on learning my own views about certain political issues; I was careful to ensure neutrality as I provided balanced observations. My neutrality reassured him, although this concern also forced me to be very careful about how I framed my questions to ensure that they were not leading.

#### **d) Hotel managers and employees**

### **i. Hotel managers (migrants and Omanis)**

In a number of cases, managers of migrant origin tended to be reluctant to discuss issues that touched on Omanisation policies – or which might reveal their political stances – with openness or frankness. This disinclination to talk freely to me, a native Omani, was more pronounced when interviewing managers originating from developing countries than among those from developed countries. I made every effort to establish a relationship of trust with each manager of migrant origin. One strategy to reassure these participants was to make compromises about the depth and scope of the interview by deliberately avoiding questions on Omanisation and concerning migrant participants' experiences with Omani managers. This strategy reduced the pressure they felt and proved to be helpful in terms of strengthening a trust and protecting participants from emotional risk. To keep the interviews flowing, I would engage in a conversational approach and provide repeated guarantees as well as information underlining the significance of the study. For instance, while interviewing one of the managers of southern European origin, I allowed him to dwell on his feelings about his home country, family and educational background and his experiences working in hotels. I noticed that he enjoyed talking about issues that mattered to him. He became more interested and engaged in the interview and more willing to offer his time to answer my questions.

While interviewing Omani managers, I identified with their perspectives and showed sensitivity to their experiences working with people from diverse cultures. I gave them explicit guarantees about strict confidentiality, as I observed that some of them were reluctant to reveal certain information about their hotels. I also interviewed them in their offices to guarantee them optimal confidentiality and a sense of security. I had to strive to establish a relationship anchored in the confidence of each participant. I also observed that some managers seemed displeased when I attempted to describe elements of their cultures, common stereotypes or shared experiences. In such instances, they tended to lose confidence in the research process.

For instance, one of the Omani managers I interviewed distanced himself when I touched on his region's (*wilayat*) culture, because each district in Oman has a separate culture and customs. From then on, I decided to be modest in how I expressed my knowledge of their cultures. I would listen attentively, without interjecting my own observations.

## **ii. Hotel employees (migrants and Omanis)**

While interviewing employees of migrant origin, I observed that some of them viewed my research with suspicion. They considered me to be an outsider (Omani researcher) with respect to their social circles and experiences or backgrounds, so that I had to take extra measures to gain their trust (Ryan, 2015; Berger, 2015; Amelina, 2010). Rather than use the concept of insiders or outsiders, Ryan (2015) suggested that an interview process should be pursued with reference to the dynamism of multiple positionalities. I noted that some migrant workers emphasised a need for confidentiality and avoided any subject that could be perceived to be controversial. I was an outsider in relation to the cultural, social and lived experiences of workers of migrant origin who participated in my research. Given this outsider status, I expected it to be particularly difficult to perceive their world in its entirety, much as I intended and attempted to do so. Accordingly, I had to undertake reading about the social and cultural background of the participants of migrant origin prior to meeting them in person. Previous cross-cultural reading was vital, as it enabled me to appreciate their lived experiences in Oman, particularly racism, discrimination and social prejudice. These experiences had the clear potential to affect their meaning-making; by understanding these shared experiences based on previous research, I was able to see beyond limited ethnic perspectives.

One common tactic that I employed to show that I understood their experiences and shared comparable values to them was formulating my research questions, and more generally my language in these interviews, in ways I expected workers of migrant origin to find to be in line with their own values. In my interviews with workers of migrant origin, I would adopt the

content of my communication and style of speech to show that I already understood their background and emotional states and that I respected them at the same time. Whenever I had to go through employers to speak to their employees, I informed the employers of the importance of randomly selecting the participants and maintaining their confidentiality. To avoid exposing participants of migrant origin to the risk of being forced to take part in the interview, I asked to be introduced to the employees. I also asked for permission to interview workers of migrant origin away from their workplaces, such as at a Starbucks café, to increase their level of participation and avoid the risks of interviewing them under pressure or compromising their confidentiality. This was necessary after assuring the participants the data they provided would be kept private and confidential.

I had to position myself differently in the interview setting based on the interviewees' ethnicity, gender and age. Before interviewing workers of migrant origin from different cultures (Au, 2019), including Asian, North African, Northern European, Eastern European and Southern European cultures, I researched their cultural and ethnic backgrounds to align my perspective with their social and cultural worlds or ethnolinguistic identities. While I was aware that background knowledge of each migrant's beliefs, social-cultural context and social attitudes would enable me to take on an affect that would be familiar and preferred by the researcher, I noted some risks. While this tactic facilitated communication, overdoing it could lead to miscommunication with certain migrant participants. The major problem was that building a rapport of this kind would not be feasible because of the limited time available for the interviews, which made it difficult to remove all barriers resulting from age, gender and culture. For instance, contacting workers of migrant origin who worked at reception desks enabled me to view the power differentials involved in migration. Some research participants seemed to perceive such differentials on account of their situation as migrants. In general, they considered themselves to be outsiders and not in charge or representative of their organisations. This made

them feel as though they were the wrong candidates for the interviews and that they wanted to keep the interviews short. Indeed, on top of the time constraints, power differentials were a real issue that stood in the way of completely building rapport with interview participants (Gawlewicz, 2016; Ryan, 2015).

Interviewing Omani Muslim women was a challenge, just as I had expected. Some female Omanis tended to be shy and nervous, as discussed in section 4.3.2. They tended to wear a black dress locally known as an *abaya* and a headscarf that drapes over the head called a *lahaf*. Some wore a burqa, an outer veil wholly covering the face, or a niqab, a veil covering the face except for the eyes. Generally, their responses tended to be short. However, these interviewees agreed to participate in my research for several reasons. First, I informed them from my first contact that my study would explore perspectives and attitudes concerning Omani men's and women's employment patterns in the T&H sectors, through emails and participant information sheets (see Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 25). Second, I informed them that I want to listen to their perspectives about gender roles and other factors that influenced them to work in the T&H sector. Third, I let them know that I wanted to listen to their concerns and issues as well as their accomplishments or success stories in the T&H sector.

Once again, the issue of reflexivity manifested in my interviews with female Omani employees in hotels. They tended to work alongside their male counterparts. For example, the first female employee I interviewed was generally reticent and nearly uncommunicative. She also seemed to be very tense in the interview and responded tersely when asked questions that might seem challenging. By observing her body language, I observed that she was not at ease having an unsupervised conversation with me – a stranger to her. Other female participants also provided short answers, in certain cases, and some even refused to answer some questions. In response, I tried to restructure some of my questions in different formats and to provide a relaxing atmosphere so they would offer their opinions more unreservedly. I understood their sense of

detachment and tendency to keep their distance. I also understood these power relationships, particularly because of the patriarchal Omani cultural values that limit women's self-determination to relate freely with males outside their family circle. As I had observed among female college students, female hotel employees often became freer and more cooperative when they had a friend at close proximity.

#### **e) Unemployed Omani graduates**

Being an Omani and a sociological researcher, I understood the significance of positionality. I also understood what it implies to be an insider in Oman, and how I should negotiate my status throughout the research process. As an Omani researcher, I considered myself to be in the same cultural group as the Omani participants in my study and considered myself as an insider. However, I also knew that my self-perceptions might be different from interviewees' perceptions of me because of my privileged position as a researcher studying in the UK (Ryan, 2015; Britton, 2019). Hence I had to wear local dress, to talk in an open, informal tone, and to demonstrate my knowledge of current national affairs. Participants became relatively comfortable with the informal tone, and became more trustful and engaging. By taking that approach, research can easily become reflexive with respect to the unstable nature of empathy, building a rapport, attaining an understanding and being aware of how much can be negotiated despite manifest power differentials. Indeed, I could perceive a sense of 'inferiority' in some participants and was aware that this was caused by their status as unemployed. For this reason, I showed understanding and patience while interviewing them and tended to encourage them to feel in charge of the interview, by enabling them to talk with very minimal or no interjection. Conversely, I could perceive a sense of 'superiority' while undertaking interviews with research participants with a high level of expertise.

#### **4.5 Ethical considerations**

Throughout the entire research cycle, I followed ethical practices. I paid particular attention to the latest updates of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came to effect on May 25, 2018; this project also went through a dynamic ethics review process, and informed consent procedures, at the University of Sheffield. Before interviewing each prospective participant, I asked for their consent to take part in the study (see Appendix 35; British Sociological Association, 2017; Block et al., 2012; Cusick, 2018; Fisher, 2012; Stanley and Wise, 2010; University Research Ethics Committee, 2018). As I collected data within hotels, government ministries, the public authority of 'X' and college 'A', I first formally requested official authorisation from all relevant organisation (see Appendices 1 to 6). Then, I asked directly for the consent of all research participants in my study, (see Appendix 35). I was committed to collecting personal data only where it was absolutely necessary and helpful for my research. No personal data was collected where there was no necessity to do so. I also ensured that personal data was anonymised immediately after data collection: I used pseudonyms for all participants, workplaces and so on. I recorded the participants' responses in audio format, also with their consent. During one of our meetings, my supervisors advised me to buy a digital voice recorder. Besides buying a recorder as a backup strategy in case of any technical problems, I also downloaded an application called *Voice Recorder* on my Apple iPad tablet. My supervisors' advice and instructions were beneficial in developing a backup strategy for the actual process of data collection. For instance, during an elite interview with a tourism government expert, I did not notice that one of my recorders stopped recording the interview because its storage was full. From this incident, I learned that I should always have a plan A and a plan B, using backup strategies throughout my study (and on into my future life and career pathways). From then on, I downloaded the interview recording as soon as possible after the interview into a password-protected hard disk and USB storage device. I followed all

the latest research and ethical protocols issued by the university; for instance, I carried a code of ethics booklet with me into fieldwork to avoid making any mistakes.

I transferred data from a hard disk and USB stick and anonymised each file by identifying them using codes. The hard disk and USB stick I used was password-protected as I mentioned; I also saved voice recordings of the data in a password-protected file. In the remaining stages of the project, after consultation with my colleagues and former PhD students in the department, I employed the aid of transcribers through such trusted academic services as NVivo Transcription and an academic transcription and translation service called *rev*. While I transcribed 28 transcripts on my own, I solicited the help of transcribers for the remaining 20 transcripts to ensure that I met the deadline outlined in my research timeline. My inability to access some of the elite participants, especially tourism experts, had caused delays. When the transcriptions were complete, I had to make sure that all transcripts only identified participants and their identifying details using codes or altered characteristics instead of specific names or features.

#### **4.5.1 Informed consent**

One basis of the research design for this project was the principle of informed consent for all participants (British Sociological Association, 2017; Tauri, 2018; Wiles et al., 2007). I had to expressly ask participants in government ministries for their permission to include them in my research; I contacted them using covering mails and letters (see Appendices 1 to 6) to explain the nature and scope of the study, and why I found them to be valuable as potential respondents. I also contacted managers from the hotels, tourism development firm and the government officials in public authority 'X' using emails and letters (see Appendices 1 to 6). On the other hand, for migrant and Omani employees in the T&H industry I had to make arrangements to contact them through their corresponding HR departments. To further ensure that all the participants understood the content of the information sheet (see Appendices 25, 26, 27, 28,

29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34), I explained the objectives of the study to each participant, as well as the methods to be used, the expectations the research places on the participants and the risks that they may face. This ensured that all participants would take part in the study out of their own free will. It also ensured that the participants fully understood their rights and the implications of their involvement. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and had the right to avoid answering any question at any point during the interview.

My decision to select migrant workers to participate in the study through their managers or HR managers could pose challenges to their free and informed consent, for fear the interview data they provide might become known to their managers. To mitigate this concern, I scheduled all interviews with workers of migrant origin outside working hours and their workplaces. Furthermore, I informed them that all data would be hidden under pseudonyms and not revealed to anyone. In line with this approach, I observed that the migrant workers were comfortable and happy in the interviews I conducted. The interviews with them were long, lasting for more than one hour because it was outside their workplaces and into a friendly atmosphere. Migrant participants agreed to participate in my research for several positive reasons, beyond the permission they received from their HR managers or employers. First, I informed them from first contact that my study would explore perspectives and attitudes concerning the employment patterns of male and female migrant workers in the T&H sector, through emails and participant information sheets (see Appendices 2, 27 and 30). Second, I informed them that I wanted to listen to their insights about other factors that had influenced them to work in the T&H sector. Third, I informed them that I wanted to hear their concerns and issues and also about their accomplishments or success stories in the T&H sector. Fourth, I convinced them that my thesis would reflect on their positive contribution to the Omani economy and filling its skills deficits. Some of these participants said that they were pleased to participate, and that it

was their first encounter with an Omani researcher interested in migrants working in the T&H sector. They were very motivated to talk, and I decided to listen to them instead of talking. For that reason, my data chapters have tended to be unusually long because: I obtained extensive transcripts from so many participants.

#### **4.5.2 The Promise of anonymity**

In social research, participants' anonymity and confidentiality are at the core of ethical research practice. The researcher has to guarantee participants that the data collected from them cannot be traced back to them in research reports. The basic method I employed to protect participants' anonymity was by assigning them pseudonyms and changing the names of locations (Crow and Wiles 2008; Saunders et al., 2015; Wiles et al., 2008; Grinyer, 2002). In compliance with the GDPR, which requires that all participants be anonymised, I ensured that participants' identity remained anonymous by making sure that personal names, workplaces names, nationalities names and other personal information are not included in the research results – my three data chapters (Cusick, 2018; Shaw et al., 2020; see Appendix 47). I also made sure that all other identifying information is neither disclosed nor shared with other parties. These included names, addresses and workplaces of the participants.

#### **4.5.3 Confidentiality**

To respect ethical requirements, especially with vulnerable participants like migrant graduates and women, the data collection process maintained the privacy of all participants and guaranteed participants their confidentiality (as discussed in previous section 4.5.1; see also Baez, 2002; Surmiak, 2018; Lancaster, 2017; Corti et al., 2000; Tolich, 2004). In the process data collection, there were also instances where migrants appeared concerned about the likelihood of their employers accessing the research data, despite assurances that there would be absolute confidentiality and anonymity. This complicated the process of recruiting some workers of migrant origin, who wished to keep a low profile owing to perceptions of possible

racial discrimination and victimisation by the authorities. One potential interview subject had to decline to participate on these grounds.

By prioritising the protection of participants from any forms of harm, I expected that my research would be consistent with the ethical theory of ‘beneficence’, according to which researchers must ensure the maximal protection of research participants from harm (Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2020; Roth and von Unger, 2018; Oltmann, 2016; Slavnic, 2013). I also depended on the convention of confidentiality to assist in protecting the privacy of all participants, to build rapport and trust and to uphold high standards of integrity. During the research process, issues of confidentiality were addressed by offering assurances of confidentiality through consent form statements that all identifying features such as the name, place of work, addresses and ethnic background of each participant would be altered in the transcription and coding process, both manually and via NVivo software, as described in the previous section.

The next subsection offers a discussion of how I negotiated through some of the ethical challenges while collecting data from participants in this study.

#### **4.5.4 Ethical challenges and self-reflection**

Decisions regarding how to collect data, and related ethical choices throughout the research process, have the potential to affect the willingness of participants to take part in a study (Castillo Goncalves, 2020; McCarthy et al., 2020; Summers, 2020; Elliott and Roberts, 2020; Crow and Wiles, 2008). In my data collection process, I became concerned when some potential participants declined to give their consent to take part in the study. Two workers of migrant origin were worried that their employers might be involved in the research project or could gain access to their data. This concern made it challenging for me to gain access to

migrant workers through their employers. Consequently, I preferred to contact potential participants directly through referrals from their friends.

Some female Omani students had had reservations about revealing why they were not joining the T&H sector. I had to exercise reflexivity to prevent gender and power relations from negatively affecting the interviews. I aligned myself with feminist positions by showing an understanding of the struggles women face. Being an Omani, I would position myself as an insider, for example, by identifying myself using my surname and showing humility so the participants would become more positively inclined to participate (Ganga and Scott, 2006; Britton, 2019).

The next section discusses the process of data analysis; I reflect on how thematic analysis proved to be vital for this research project and offer the rationale for using NVivo software, describing how it facilitated consistency and credibility for my research.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

I used thematic techniques to analyse the qualitative data from the interviews I had conducted. The approach I selected extracts meanings from qualitative data in four phases: data reduction, data display, drawing a conclusion and verification of findings (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998; Creswell, 2014). Essentially, the first phase involves the identification of key categories that address the research aim and objectives and discarding redundant data (Flick, 2013; Guest et al., 2011). In the second phase, data display, I organised and assembled the data to make it more compact and straightforward. The third phase derives conclusions; I used an inductive (bottom-up) approach to identify data patterns or themes that would respond to the study's research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Flick, 2014; Mason, 2002). The last phase consists of verification of the data and research findings (Nowell et al., 2017; Guest et al., 2011; Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Printouts of the transcripts were the starting point of my first phase of data analysis, using stickers, highlighters and pens. I read and re-read the transcripts to become completely familiar with the body of primary data I had collected; I wrote some early impressions on sticky notes. In the next phase, I coded each segment of data that I considered to be relevant to my research questions. I used open coding<sup>44</sup>, meaning that I had to come up with initial codes as well as developing and modifying them based on additional work with the data. I often generated codes or modified existing ones as I went through each transcript as a Word file. During the third phase of analysis, I searched for themes, organising the codes into broader themes related to my research questions. In the fourth phase, I reviewed these themes, gathering the relevant data for each using the ‘copy-paste’ function in Microsoft Word. A clear challenge in managing the large data set was the significant inconsistency of coding and repetition of identical codes used for distinct themes. My supervisors therefore advised that I should consider using NVivo software.

Therefore, I spent considerable time and effort training to use NVivo 12 Pro software to manage the large volume of qualitative data I had collected. My selection of this software was based on practical considerations: it was generally user-friendly, and training enabled me to maximise my use of its functionality, including the capacity to identify inconsistencies in my coding. Using the software to code data involved creating nodes, which are essentially a set of references to certain identifiable themes of interest (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013; Wiltshier, 2011; Blair, 2015; Welsh, 2002).

Compared to manual coding, where I had to print and keep track of many transcripts and use different-coloured pens and stickers to discover emerging themes, my experience with NVivo

---

<sup>44</sup> Coding in qualitative research is the method of labelling and organising the qualitative data to identify and classify various themes and the relationships between them. I used inductive coding, or open coding begins from scratch and create codes based on the qualitative interview data (coding for patterns). All codes start directly from the transcripts. I decided to adopt a method of “structural coding,” whereby, I labelled passages with terms that were linked to the research questions (Belotto, 2018, p. 2624).

Pro 12 was quite different (Saldaña, 2015; 2016). After importing interview transcripts into the software, I created child nodes corresponding to the original coding done manually (The University of Sheffield - IT Services, 2020c; The University of Queensland Library, 2020; Woolf and Silver 2017; see Appendices 38 and 42). Reviewing whole manuscripts, I coded references to relatively broad themes, called parent nodes. I further analysed overlapping or repetitive themes, deriving a hierarchical structure made up of migration, Omanisation and gender as parent nodes, along with 20 child nodes (see Appendices 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46). Eventually, I found that to understand how diverse themes should join together to create a whole, I needed to analyse each theme. However, I found it difficult to associate emerging themes with other developing ideas, and I had to write memos or reminders in this phase of analysis. In fact, I wrote up my analysis using the memo feature of NVivo, linking and unlinking them to nodes in my project as I worked. While the relationships among themes made up diagrams that were too large for my screen, I found it easy to map them visually using large printouts. In this way, I was able to grasp the whole picture and observe the inter-relationships of the various codes. NVivo also allows for the exchange of data using reference management tools like EndNote and Mendeley. For instance, if a researcher conducts a review of the literature using Mendeley and EndNote, they can easily import their references into NVivo. I found these features useful for organising my references and citations and finding the latest journals, articles, papers and textbooks related to migration and social studies (see Appendix 47).

In fact, NVivo encouraged me to extend the coding process, as this was comparatively easy to do compared to working towards a deeper understanding of the data. When my data was collated under descriptive codes, and thematic ideas emerged, I often found it easier to restart the coding process using the new, thematic codes. This process did helped me to assess the strength of my results and to facilitate my evaluation of the relevance of the data I had coded.

The final section of this chapter evaluates the rigour and validity of my qualitative research by assessing how well I attained the four key criteria for research validity, reliability and objectivity: ‘transferability’, ‘credibility’, ‘confirmability’ and ‘dependability’.

#### **4.7 Rigour and validity in qualitative research**

This research design demanded that I apply qualitative methods and go beyond reporting the typical attitudes of Omani and migrant graduates within the T&H sector, to study the underlying factors affecting their employment and employability in the sector. As a sociological researcher, it was my responsibility to use qualitative methods to generate valid research findings; the relevant criteria for demonstrating rigour and validity in qualitative research include ‘transferability’, ‘credibility’, ‘confirmability’ and ‘dependability’ (Le Roux, 2017; Morse et al., 2002; Seale, 2002; Sin, 2010; Juroš, 2011).

Credibility involves the reasons given for confidence in the ‘truth’ value of research findings; strategies to strengthen credibility include prolonged engagement with informants, member-checking, familiarisation with participant cultures and values, peer briefing and triangulation (Golafshani, 2003; Franklin and Ballan, 2001; Madill et al., 2000). Familiarisation enabled me to identify and contextualise my personal biases; before interviewing each category of participants, I familiarised myself with the cultures of each organisation. For instance, prior to visiting government ministries, I read annual reports published by the ministries and captured information from their websites; I also made preliminary visits to each ministry. In addition, I relied on peer debriefing to evaluate emerging insights by seeking the assistance, guidance or insights from peers or people not directly participating in the research (Le Roux, 2017; Morse et al., 2002; Seale, 2002; Sin, 2010). I found my supervisors and other members of academic staff, as well as my colleagues or former PhD students in the department, to be particularly helpful in this regard. At each successive step throughout the research cycle, I presented

portions of my research projects and plans to my supervisors to obtain their feedback, only proceeding to the next stage once I had received their input.

The method of ‘thick description’<sup>45</sup> was the main technique I use to reinforce the generalisability of my qualitative research process (Silva, 2008; Miller, 2006; Malterud, 2001; Salmona and Kaczynski, 2016). To empower readers to evaluate for themselves the relevance of my work to different research contexts, countries, individuals and times, I described each step of my research process in detail. For instance, I used thick description to elaborate on aspects that are specific to the case under study, by exploring the subjective explanations and meanings of my participant's qualitative contributions. For example, when discussing the patterns of entry of Omani and migrant graduates into the T&H labour market, I connected participants’ concerns about possible social tension to related phenomena in other national and international contexts (Rzepnikowska, 2019; Das and Gokhale, 2010; Winckler, 2000). This strategy has offered the potential to make my findings on Omanisation policies relevant in other settings.

Dependability refers to the degree to which a research project is found to be consistent and that its methods can be audited, critiqued and pursued to come up with comparable findings (Maher et al., 2018; Hamberg et al., 1994). This criterion requires an evaluation of the data interpretation, findings and recommendations of a study to ensure that they are adequately supported by the underlying qualitative data (O’Connor and Joffe, 2020; Payne and Williams, 2005; Rose and Johnson, 2020). To ensure dependability, I had to establish an audit trail, documenting all steps of the research process from start to finish. The audit trail included a detailed account of how I collected the data, how I arrived at the themes or codes during data

---

<sup>45</sup> A body of social science literature has explained ‘thick description’ as a practice of paying attention, which provides the reader (an outsider) with full contextual details, descriptions and interpretations of social meaning developed when conducting qualitative research (Ponterotto, 2006; Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Korstjens and Moser, 2018; Freeman, 2014).

analysis and other key decisions (see Appendix 37; Armstrong et al., 1997; Campbell et al., 2013). I found the audit trail to be particularly useful in accounting for the processes I applied while analysing the data to extract meanings, such as data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions and verification of findings (Nowell et al., 2017; Vaismoradi and Snelgrove, 2019; Welsh, 2002; Kurasaki, 2000).

Confirmability describes the extent to which the findings of a research inquiry could be upheld or substantiated by other researchers (Lietz and Zayas, 2010; Le Roux, 2017; Mackieson et al., 2019). The relationship between the data and the ensuing findings and analyses must be transparent to the reader and amenable to subsequent interrogation by other researchers.<sup>46</sup> Noting that I encountered different perspectives from the study's participants, I used reflexivity and positionality as techniques to attain confirmability. I kept a small journal that I used to reflect on my experiences with participants in relation to my interests and values and those of the participants themselves. I also came to understand the dynamics of gender power relations, particularly because of patriarchal Omani cultural values that limit women's self-determination to interact freely with men outside their family circle. To further ensure confirmability, I made an effort to control bias by constantly comparing my data with findings from related research, as well as acquiring multiple points of view from 48 participants in five different participant categories. Paying attention to four critical criteria for research validity – reliability and objectivity: 'transferability', 'credibility', 'confirmability' and 'dependability' – will make my research design more robust and empower me to achieve my research aim and objectives.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

---

<sup>46</sup> In quantitative research, the findings of statistical analysis are often presented in one section with a 'discussion' section following it. However, in qualitative research, analysis and discussion can be combined together; I have selected the latter structure for my three data chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven). See also the following sources: James and Slater, 2014; Lynch, 2014; The University of Sheffield Library, 2020b.

In conclusion, I observe that the data collection method used in this research project was generally a success. In this chapter, I have explained the basis for the five research questions that guided my research to help explore evidence about Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the T&H sector. The chapter also offered an account of how and why the research design was chosen. In particular, the study is based on a qualitative research strategy to help describe the fundamental nature of the selected phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants. I have explained how this approach made it possible to take the subjectively and inter-subjectively constructed meanings and insights concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the T&H sector into consideration. I have also explained the underlying basis for selecting an interpretive paradigm to answer these research questions. The qualitative research strategy and research design that I selected proved relevant to the research project's objectives, facilitating the description of the fundamental nature of the phenomena under examination and to understand the meanings they attributed to that phenomenon addressing why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates, and what modifications to Omanisation policy might increase the participation of male and female Omani graduates in the T&H sector, must begin by understanding the perspectives of participants in the supply- and demand-sides of this labour market. Having selected an interpretivist paradigm as the methodological approach for this research project, I managed to obtain an understanding of social processes, investigate contextual factors and analyse social phenomena based on the interpretations of policy and labour market actors – 48 interviewees. This chapter has also detailed how I carried out a pilot study from March to late April 2018 to pre-test my collection materials and techniques (including demographic questionnaires, the interview topic guide, consent forms, participant information sheets, research protocols and recruitment strategies). The actual process of data collection has also been explained in detail, including how I collected primary data from

college 'A', government ministries, tourism firms, the public authority 'X' and hotels in Muscat, and my experiences with each category of participants during the 32 semi-structured interviews and 16 elite interviews. This account has been combined with my personal reflections on data collection with reference to reflexivity and researcher positionality. Adhering to ethical considerations like reflexivity and positionality has played a key role in my research process, along with the ability to develop backup plans for occasions where targeted participants were inaccessible. Additional discussion has shown how I sought to comply with latest updates of ethical codes and regulations, such as the GDPR, as well as respecting other significant ethical issues including informed consent, the promise of anonymity and confidentiality. Details of how I carried out thematic analysis, using both traditional methods and NVivo software, have also been provided. Finally, the chapter has discussed rigour and validity in the context of qualitative research, to evaluate how my research project has met the criteria for 'transferability', 'credibility', 'confirmability' and 'dependability'.

In the next chapters, I will present and discuss the data and my findings; – these three thematic chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) address themes that emerged through the data analysis. The first of these data chapters presents and discusses factors shaping Omani attitudes towards working in the Omani T&H sector.

## **CHAPTER 5: FACTORS SHAPING ATTITUDES OF OMANIS TOWARD WORKING IN THE OMANI T&H SECTOR**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present data that sheds light on the factors shaping Omani attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, the ways their patterns of employment in the sector reflect their human capital (HC) investments and the factors that influence employers' attitudes towards hiring from the domestic labour force. I discuss and interpret my interviews with employees, managers, students and unemployed Omani graduates concerning these themes. The first section of the chapter deals with the importance of diversity of work opportunities for Omani attitudes towards working in the T&H sector as well as the attitudinal factors influencing employers to hire Omani graduates. I then shift my focus to the effects of gender roles and dynamics on attitudes towards the T&H sector, including gendered perspectives on the role of income on attitudes towards the sector, before considering the role of HC investment in relation to Omanis' employment patterns and job expectations. I finish the first, long section with a discussion about job security as a factor affecting the T&H sector. The second section of the chapter deals with the effects of social, cultural and religious norms. Here, I discuss my observations about the influence of the Islamic religion and Omani culture and how they shape current attitudes towards the T&H sector.

### **5.2 The influences of individual and social expectations on attitudes towards working in the sector**

#### **5.2.1 Perspectives on the role of diverse work opportunities in shaping Omani attitudes towards working in the Omani T&H sector**

In this subsection, I present and analyse data on how Omanis' perspectives on the diversity of work opportunities in the T&H sector influence their attitudes towards working in the sector.

Across the categories of participants, some Omanis communicated their willingness to work in the sector because of the diverse work opportunities they perceived to be accessible within it. I asked Ali, a male Omani employee working at a city hotel, what factors besides salary and pay he felt might shape attitudes towards the sector. He suggested that the varied work available in the sector implied less repetitive tasks for employees:

*What I love about the sector is its diversity, whether cultural, food, business, security issues or people. This diversity of issues brings great hopes for job security and takes away the boredom associated with the familiarity of working on the same tasks repeatedly every day. (Ali)*

Ali's statement communicated an optimistic and positive attitude; he felt that the T&H sector features a range of varied and stimulating activities and events. This image could help attract many Omani graduates to work in the sector, as this diversity could help counter the routine and boring work associated with other economic sectors. Thus, the diversity of work might be one of the main reasons for Omani employees to remain in the sector, reducing the rate of attrition significantly.

On the same issue Salma, a female Omani employee at a city hotel, offered the following:

*What is so inspiring is the opportunity to meet new faces every day, people who are always nice and look to you for help. I think that is one of the most interesting things about working in the sector. You meet a new face with a unique story every day. It is a relief from the routine of just handling phone calls or going back home to stay cooped up indoors or stuck working in an office. (Salma)*

Salma's comment suggests that some participants have a positive attitude towards the sector because they feel it provides them with opportunities to get away from routine tasks. Salma reveals that the sector provides her with a variety of work engagements that enable her to interact with people from different cultures. Ali's and Salma's remarks suggest related attitudes

that could attract Omani workers to the sector: those with a greater risk tolerance and desiring more stimulation in their everyday work might prefer the variety of work the T&H sector offers. Such participants do not seem to be strongly concerned about job security. Instead, they hope that the diverse job opportunities in this sector could contribute to better job prospects in the future. Previous research internationally has determined that the inclusion of workers in varied activities helps organisations reduce the rate of turnover and thus will help institutions retain employees, increase job satisfaction and empower workers with valuable experience instead of losing them due to routine work (Vidal, 2007; Pichler and Wallace, 2009; Chang et al., 2013; Holston-Okae, 2018). Indeed, studies conducted internationally, across various sectors, have underlined the imperative for policymakers to develop strategies to promote worker retention by providing a variety of work and challenging work opportunities (Phillipson et al., 2016; Vidal, 2007; Holston-Okae, 2018).

Ali offered further clarification on this issue, mentioning that:

*One of the interesting things about the sector is the everyday challenges that are related to diversity [variety of work], which are inspiring [...]. I wouldn't leave T&H because there are so many things in the sector that I like. For example, great job opportunities for security officers, autonomy in decision-making and greater pay, which is much higher than what they pay a police officer in Muscat or Salalah city. (Ali)*

Therefore, not all Omani employees have negative attitudes towards working in the T&H sector. Some find a sense of purpose working in a challenging setting that exposes them to varied job opportunities. Ali also hinted that both the pay and inherent interest in the work are higher in his field (the T&H sector), at least from his point of view. However, Ali was working in hotel X, one of the luxury five-star international hotels in Muscat, at the time of the interview. Therefore his perspectives might differ from those of other employees.

While interviewing students at college 'A', I also observed that some of the participants, both male and female, took the issue of diverse job opportunities in the sector very seriously. For instance, Laila, a female Omani student, acknowledged that she has a positive attitude towards the sector because of its diversity:

*As a sector, it is good because there are great opportunities for work everywhere. Of course, it is an up-and-coming sector, and it will be one of the best sectors because it is very diverse [in terms of providing a variety of jobs]. The good thing is that the sector is very promising, particularly because of the many tourists who come to Oman. (Laila)*

By referring to the unique variety of job opportunities offered by the T&H sector, Laila seemed to integrate the same view Ali and Salma had expressed. From these descriptions, I could see how perceptions of the diversity of the sector shaped the attitudes of both male and female Omanis.

I probed further for any difference between male and female participants in this respect. An insight into one likely difference emerged in my analysis of an observation by Jassem, a male Omani student:

*The sector provides diversity for both men and women. Obviously, women are more interested in the sector because it has a variety of jobs to offer them. (Jassem)*

Jassem felt confident that the sector would present him with diverse job opportunities and acknowledged that he has a positive attitude towards it.

Meanwhile, Jassem's remarks that the diversity of the sector is more attractive and supportive to women were supported by Sarah, a female Omani student:

*I have a positive attitude towards the sector; there is no question about that. This is the only sector that we women can enter without restriction and be exposed to diverse types of jobs. It is a lot of fun working in an industry where you can meet visitors from different walks of life. You have to wear neat clothes and a smile and serve the customer,*

*that's all. I love the fact that there is no pressure or even work stress unless perhaps you meet a very rude customer. (Sarah)*

Like Jassem, Sarah suggested that her perceptions had to do with both the nature of the sector itself and how it is generally perceived. Both being students at the time of the interviews, their perceptions of the T&H sector might be expected to be overly optimistic, as they had no practical experience of working in the sector. While interviewing students and unemployed graduates, I observed that a good number of them held expectations about the sector that appeared to have been shaped by the media and by college 'A', about the array of jobs offered in the sector.

On the face of it, the observations made by Jassem, Laila and Sarah (Omani students) on the one hand, and Ali and Salma (Omani hotel employees) on the other, led me to the crucial observation that some participants from both groups shared a positive attitude towards working in the T&H sector, demonstrating an interest in a work environment that could provide them with a variety of job opportunities and the prospect of working in multicultural settings.

In a subsequent analysis of the comments made by participants representing the demand for labour, employers and managers, I noticed that some hotel managers were also convinced that the diversity of the sector (in terms of cultural interaction and job opportunities) appealed to a substantial number of their employees, as well as to themselves as managers. For instance Hamdan, a male Omani manager at a city hotel, acknowledged that before deciding to work in the T&H sector he had wanted to enter a sector that would expose him to diverse opportunities for personal interaction with others:

*Omani employees generally want to work in this sector to attain their personal goals. Personally, I wanted to work in the sector. Actually, I come from a family of bankers. Then, one of my cousins branched out to the hotel industry; I realised how I also really wanted to do something different. Many members of my family are concentrated in the*

*banking sector. I have seen them during the month-end, busy with all these financial issues. I didn't want to stick with that. Another aspect is that I wanted to do something like hospitality, where we serve people. It's not like paperwork, where you mostly interact with paper. I wanted to interact with people, to help people, to understand people. That's what motivated me to come to this industry. (Hamdan)*

Although his family worked in the banking and financial sector, Hamdan reported that he departed from his parents' example and their priorities. This suggests that some Omani graduates actively prefer to work in new sectors and to discover and experiment with new and diverse work opportunities. The potential to meet and interact with new people and to learn new things shapes attitudes towards work in the T&H sector in a positive direction, for those with this inclination.

Pavlo, a male manager from Eastern Europe working at another city hotel strongly agreed that the prospect of working in a sector that provides a variety of jobs was attractive to employees. He said:

*They [the Omanis] have tended to demonstrate a very good work ethic<sup>47</sup> and enthusiasm to work in the sector. Some of them are clearly interested in working in the sector as they feel it offers more room for career progress because of the diverse types of work, which provides them with great flexibility. (Pavlo)*

Besides suggesting that Omani employees generally demonstrate an interest in working in the T&H sector because of their personal career ambitions and goals, Hamdan and Pavlo also seem convinced that employee attitudes are influenced by the shared understanding that the sector provides them with diverse opportunities. Across the hospitality and tourism literature, the T&H industry is depicted as both capital- and labour-intensive, which makes it particularly

---

<sup>47</sup> Work ethic: the set of employee values characterised by hard work, discipline and positive work attitudes. However, in relation to employment practices, the desired work ethic has a substantial impact on the wellbeing of the individuals, as highlighted in international studies on the sociology of work (Sage, 2019; Gerrard, 2014).

attractive to students and graduates (Gong, 2008; Manoharan and Singal, 2017; Schoffstall, 2013). By its very nature, the industry incorporates a variety of subsectors, including restaurants, hotels, events and leisure management, tour guide work, tourism and airlines. Hence, the sector offers a variety of work opportunities, which also means that it recruits talent from a wide spectrum of people (Gong, 2008; Manoharan and Singal, 2017; Schoffstall, 2013).

In the next sub-section, I discuss the factors influencing employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani graduates.

### **5.2.2 Factors influencing employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani graduates**

Having established why Omani graduates generally demonstrate an interest in working in the T&H sector, I wished to understand from the perspectives of Omani employers, and those of migrant origin, why they hired local graduates, and whether their reasons were based on social stereotypes regarding local or migrant workers. For this reason, I asked some of the managers that I interviewed to explain the factors that affected their attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates. For instance, Anna, a female hotel manager of migrant origin from Asia, disclosed that managers mostly focused on filling skills gaps, more than other factors:

*I hire migrants based on their work experience. I also look at the attitudes or work ethic. I believe that many other managers also based their decisions on what would be good for the company rather than what could be based on our personal biases. (Anna)*

From Anna's account, it appears that employers tend to explain their decisions to hire Omani graduates as depending on prospective employees' skills and level of competence rather than on personal attitudes they may have towards Omanis. Hence, employer perceptions of the strength of Omani graduates' skill levels are presented by those interviewed to be a stronger influence on hiring decisions than the managers' personal attitudes. However, employers may nevertheless be affected by their unacknowledged biases towards certain applicants for such

reasons as gender, race and attractiveness, aside from the acknowledged criteria of HC, work ethics and qualifications. At the same time, successful candidates themselves may not know precisely why employers have actually selected them, as highlighted in a body of research in an international context (Nadler and Kufahl, 2014; Harvie et al., 1998).

Discussions related to bias and unethical hiring practices for different groups are a sensitive topic for employers. Migrant employers may not be open to discussing hiring bias in front of Omani researchers like me. Issues of reflexivity and positionality, concerning the power dynamics of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, always arise in qualitative social interviews and especially in immigration studies. Consequently, some managers and employers tried to communicate the positive aspects of recruitment processes to me, while avoiding the issues of nepotism and racism, avoiding potential legal accountability and the possibility for information to leak to the regulatory authorities of the Sultanate, such as the Ministry of Labour, and thereby expose employers to accountability. Consequently, the interviewer was unable to access this information about potentially illegal practices. Therefore, the principle of truthfulness plays a vital role in my study by ensuring that data is rich and reflects the knowledge shared by participants in qualitative interviews. I have attempted to ensure the reliability or rigour of this study by providing sophisticated analyses and interpretations of the data revealed by research participants to ensure quality in a study without bias or subjective interpretations. In Chapter Eight, Section 8.5, I discuss how positionality and reflexivity might affect the findings of my study as one of the limitations of my research.

Anna's response to this question prompted me to inquire from other managers whether such patterns of hiring Omanis based on their qualifications were typical, and were more important than employers' attitudes towards migration status or other factors. I specifically wanted to confirm whether Anna's response represented a pattern among other employers in the Omani T&H sector. Correspondingly, in an interview with Seerjith, a male manager of migrant origin

from Asia working at a city hotel, I observed that he shared the same perspective as that of Anna. Seerjith said:

*I think employers are more interested in hiring a person who can do a majority of the work they can assign to them. Sometimes I tend to think that academic qualifications do not matter as much as work experience or the right skill sets. So, if you are asking whether my attitudes or other manager's attitudes towards Omani or migrant workers play a role affecting the decision to take a worker on board, my answer would be straight no. I wouldn't expect our attitudes to affect recruitment decisions because all managers want to attain greater productivity and efficiency, and whoever can provide it is put in the priority list of our hiring. (Seerjith)*

Seerjith seems confident that employer prejudices are of little significance when it comes to choosing whether to hire an Omani or a migrant worker. In any case, he provides some interesting insights into how some employers approach the question of hiring Omani graduates. For instance, it emerges from his response that employers or managers are driven by the priority of attaining greater productivity and that, for this reason, an objective analysis of an Omani graduate's competence would be more relevant than personal attitudes. In addition, it also appears from Seerjith's response that Omani graduates' investment in HC through education, could have less impact on hiring decisions than other HC investment, for example in skills and work experience.

Clearly, Seerjith and Anna show that Omani employers may focus more on factors they expect to contribute to filling skills gaps in the sector than those that might satisfy socially constructed perceptions of Omani or migrant workers. With this realisation, I assumed that Karla, a female manager of migrant origin, could provide a well-informed explanation for the pattern because she specialises in the hiring and recruitment of Omani and migrant workers. When I asked her what she thinks her company looks at when hiring immigrant or Omani graduates, she said:

*We always go for strong candidates and pay little attention to their citizenship status provided that all employment regulations are complied with. I think they [other hotels] also want someone who can bring value to them. If you are good at communication, we know you will communicate effectively with guests; if you are an excellent cook, we know where to place you. We look at one's qualities to determine if they can fit into a job. If you are qualified or have new capabilities, you get hired [...]. The issue of attitudes may exist, but I don't think it is very prominent. There have been cases of nepotism or lobbying for jobs through friends and relatives but I wouldn't say that such practices are very common. (Karla)*

Clearly, Karla has offered a confirmation of Seerjith and Anna's logic, that employers typically focus on what could value to their organisation while hiring. In Karla's view, employers would have no reason to hire either an Omani or migrant graduate preferentially, provided that he or she has the requisite skills needed to improve their productivity. The only exceptions, in her view, are cases of nepotism or cronyism.

I followed up on this issue with some Omani employees to determine whether they could corroborate employer explanations of existing patterns of recruitment for Omani graduates. While interviewing Kuthar, a female Omani employee at a city hotel, I observed that her perspectives reflected those of such managers as Seerjith, Anna and Karla. When I asked Kuthar what she thought had influenced her employer to hire her, she said:

*Good experience in my area of expertise and a high skills level helped me get the job.*

*I applied for the job like everyone else, was interviewed and got the job. (Kuthar)*

Kuthar's statement shows that the role of employer attitudes on recruitment of Omani graduates is seen by employees to be modest, or even non-existent.

Salma, another female Omani employee, also underscored the significance of job qualifications in shaping employers' attitudes. She said:

*Maybe they [the employers] saw I'm young, beautiful and qualified for the position. But, most importantly, qualification played a more vital role without which I wouldn't have been offered this job. (Salma)*

While Salma agreed with Kuthar that employers in the T&H sector were less influenced by preconceptions than by job qualifications, she provided insights that were distinct from those of the employers. She revealed her perception that employers might also be influenced by beauty and age as factors, so that Omani graduates who are fairly young and considered attractive could benefit from greater prospects of employment. These comments contrasted with Seerjith's observations – noted earlier – that work experience was the major factor in hiring. Related to this point, in Chapter Three (specifically in section 3.6, on assessing the strengths and limitations of HC theory), a body of international sociological research has indicated that employers tend to prefer to hire young white women rather than African Americans in the US labour market (Reid, 2002; Christopher, 1996; Browne, 1997; Zwerling and Silver, 1992; Wingfield and Chavez, 2020). However, my current study supports the findings of other international studies that other factors, such as perceptions of the beauty and age of applicants alongside their qualifications, might influence some prospective employers.

Looking for other evidence supporting Salma's argument, I found similar ideas reported in my interview with Suliman, a male Omani hotel employee. He said.

*Apart from physical factors like attractiveness, they [the employers] look for excellent communication skills. Beauty is understandable, as it is sometimes necessary for our hotel to hire people who can align with the brand image. Right now, I have to improve my communication skills. I hope to learn more foreign languages. Regarding myself, I plan to develop myself through training. (Suliman)*

Of the employees that I interviewed, only Suliman really stressed the possibility that employers might be less influenced as much by physical attractiveness as by job qualifications. While he

recognised that employers might be motivated more by workplace requirements than by personal attitudes, he also made it clear that other factors, such as physical attractiveness, could affect employers' perceptions of candidates. However, several of the managers that I interviewed emphasised the importance of filling skills gaps rather than basing their decisions on personal attitudes, attitudes which have been identified by researchers internationally as contributing to discrimination on the basis of immigration status or gender (Shih, 2002; Zamudio and Lichter, 2008; Birkelund et al., 2020; Purcell, 1997). This suggests that, in general, immigration status discrimination may not be an important aspect of the hiring processes of managers in the T&H sector in Oman.

In the subsection that follows, I present analyses of my participants' perceptions on the effect of gender roles and dynamics on attitudes towards the T&H sector.

### **5.2.3 The effect of gender roles and dynamics on attitudes towards the T&H sector**

The influence of the concepts of masculinity and femininity on the career orientations of men and women became apparent in my interviews with three categories of participants: unemployed Omani graduates, Omani employees and Omani students. The perception that men should not undertake jobs associated with roles gendered as feminine, such as caring for others, may explain why some unemployed male Omanis that I interviewed admitted to negative attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, with the notable exception of management positions. Interestingly, some unemployed female Omanis shared the same perceptions. For instance, Huda, an unemployed female Omani graduate, agreed with the idea that male Omanis were reluctant to work in the T&H sector because of their belief that many of the jobs the sector offers, such as housekeeping, were associated with women. Huda graduated from college 'A' with a bachelor's degree in tourism and hospitality management. She said:

*I have never met an Omani man who was comfortable saying he worked in a hotel unless he was a manager. Some would even lie, claiming to be managers when they*

*were cleaners. On the other hand, women tend to tell everyone that they are working at such and such a hotel. I think this is because the sector is usually considered as intended for women. I think that is why women are comfortable looking for work there, unlike men. (Huda)*

In this comment, Huda has explicitly pointed out that some Omani men do not want to work in jobs considered ‘feminine’, because of their fear of embarrassment based on social norms<sup>48</sup>, which could even lead to shame or disgrace. In this context, Omani men look for higher management positions that would enhance their position and social status. Meanwhile, some Omani women in my study are inclined to accept any job offer, regardless of status consideration. Huda’s statement confirms Salma’s perception, discussed in the previous section, that women are more enthusiastic to work in the T&H sector, given their feminine<sup>49</sup> attitudes, and that their formal qualifications were the most important factors in T&H sector hiring. Some men would rather avoid ‘feminine’ work and may lack some of the same resources in seeking work, as noted by Suliman and discussed previously.

In this context, a body of studies carried out in various national contexts have explored the relationship between the role of gender<sup>50</sup> in relation to specific occupations, as well as masculine<sup>51</sup> versus feminine perceptions of certain careers (Huppertz and Goodwin, 2013; Cross and Bagilhole, 2002; Simpson, 2005). Also, in Chapter Three, particularly section 3.3, I have presented a review of a body of international sociological studies about the gender and HC

---

<sup>48</sup> Social norms define the practices and rules of behaviour that are considered acceptable within a community or society. Most traditional social norms in Oman are expressed in relation to the text of the Quran.

<sup>49</sup> Feminine is a term used to designate the characteristics, roles and attributes of women in society (Duffy and Ridinger, 1981; Pleck, 1975; Paechter, 2006).

<sup>50</sup> Gender roles – in terms of feminine and masculine characteristics attributed to occupations and industries – represent an interesting opportunity for future research, especially concerning stigmatisation and dignity in relation to employment and attitudes (Lorence, 1987; Feldberg and Glenn, 1979; Weisgram et al., 2011).

<sup>51</sup> Masculinity is a term used to designate the characteristics, roles and attributes of men in society (Weisgram et al., 2011; Hardie, 2015; Forsman and Barth, 2017).

theory, and in Chapter Two, particularly section 2.4 and associated subsections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, I have discussed the role of gender in women's employability and the patterns of women's employment in the GCC and the effects of education on these patterns.

Unemployed male graduates like Omar supported Huda's position. Omar said:

*No, we, the men, do not go for the same kinds of jobs as our sisters in the sector. I believe that females are likely to take up jobs that give them more freedom to leave work early to take care of their personal and family needs, even when it is a low-level position. I think that's why women just like the thought of working in the sector. They expect tasks that fit their roles as women [...]. I don't think members of my family or friends will show me respect anymore when they find out that I'm a housekeeper at a local hotel. Lastly, personal needs also matter as well. I have high aspirations to find work as a manager and to earn more reasonable pay. (Omar)*

From Omar's and Huda's statements, Omani men may be less comfortable with the idea of working in the hotel industry because they believe that work in the industry is too feminine. The only exception is for high-status positions, such as management roles. This suggested to me the way deeply gendered perspectives in Oman shape men's long-term investment in dominant roles. This also means that the prevalence of such perspectives could impede the development of the T&H sector, particularly by constraining the supply of local labour. While such gendered perspectives might encourage women to seek careers in the T&H sector, they discourage the participation of men. Some male entrants to the T&H sector may hold unrealistic expectations, feeling entitled to begin in management positions rather than working their way up through promotion after obtaining a good understanding of other roles. The issues raised in my interviews with unemployed Omani graduates like Omar reveal gender issues in the hospitality sector similar to those demonstrated by research in countries like Argentina, China,

Brazil, Indonesia, India, South Africa, the UK and Turkey (Baum, 2013; Clausing, 2018; Roney and Öztin, 2007).

Meanwhile Maryam, a female Omani hotel employee, adds another valuable perspective regarding the gender roles of women and their decisions about working in the T&H sector. She said:

*Unfortunately, Omani women are still guided and managed by their parents. I need to take permission and advice from my father, for every single decision I might to have taken. Even if I marry in the future, my decision to continue working in the hotel will be restricted by my husband, and I'm afraid that he will ask me to resign from my work in order to take care of my children as this has occurred to many of my women friends. (Maryam)*

As Maryam has suggested, patriarchal Omani society still seems unprepared to allow women to make education or career choices for themselves, without the intervention of their male guardians. From Maryam's perspective, it was also evident that Omani society values highly the role of men both in the family and in the workplace, which significantly influences the positions that women and men respectively take in the sector. Meanwhile, Omar's and Huda's perspectives could be taken to mean that men prefer to work in the T&H sector when they are given decision-making roles, and they expect women to undertake more subordinate roles centred on nurturing, caring and hospitality. Cultural values that assign roles to women in the T&H workforce determine women's status and opportunities within the sector.

The Omani Muslim family is, in essence, a patriarchal unit; it has generally been observed in the literature on family dynamics in the Middle East that Islamic family laws have supported patriarchal gender relations and gender stereotypes<sup>52</sup> (Human Rights Watch, 2016b; Alexander

---

<sup>52</sup> A gender stereotype represents the characteristics, features or roles associated differentially with women or men. Gender stereotypes inhibit women's and men's ability to improve their personal capabilities, continue their professional careers and make decisions concerning their lives (González et al., 2019; Gorman, 2005).

and Welzel, 2011). A women's life is thus subject to decisions made by men throughout their lives, whether at the workplace or in the home (Fargues, 2005; Charrad, 2011; Spierings, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2016b; Moghadam, 2004).

Based on the views expressed by students like Suliman, it is plausible that cultural issues concerning the role of women make a significant difference to women's status and opportunities in the T&H sector. A mixed body of international studies, in the disciplines of both sociology and tourism research, has determined that gender role differences may affect gender wage inequality, occupational sex segregation and differential career advancement opportunities in the service and tourism sectors (Haghighat, 2002; Steiger and Wardell, 1995; Haghighat-Sordellini, 2009; Lorence, 1991; Baum, 2013). While participants in this study did not mention occupational sex segregation, the issues of gender wage inequality and career advancement related to later remarks in the next section by Faisal, an unemployed male Omani, who argued that men are still paid more than women even though the T&H sector is largely associated with women.

In the next sub-section, I present and analyse data reflecting gendered perspectives on how income influences attitudes towards the T&H sector.

#### **5.2.4 Gendered perspectives on the influence of income on attitudes**

I wanted to find out from the various categories of Omani participants their perspectives on how perceptions of gender in relation to pay might affect their attitudes towards working in the sector. I observed that while some unemployed male participants believed that they could generally expect higher salaries than their female counterparts with the same level of HC investment, this was not always agreed. Faisal, an unemployed male Omani graduate, felt that women would be more comfortable working in the T&H sector in general, given the low wages associated with it:

*My only concern is that it is tough getting a job in the sector with the kind of pay I want. It is a long wait. Therefore, if I can put it this way, I think attitudes depend on the job. Maybe if I get a job as a manager and earn good pay, then I will have a positive attitude [...]. I think women would have more positive attitudes towards working in the sector. Some of my female friends don't expect to be paid as highly as us, the men. (Faisal)*

Faisal's statement revealed that his acceptance of a job offer would be conditional, linked to the level of the job and the salary he would receive. He appeared to be very ambitious and wanted to reach a high level quickly. He believed that women deserve less income than men because of his cultural outlook and gender stereotypes based on societal influences. In addition, as discussed earlier with reference to Omar, one reason these young graduates are unemployed may be because of their reluctance to acknowledge the need to 'work their way up' to a managerial role over time through promotion. Rather, some male Omani graduates expect to go directly into management roles without any prior work experience: this unrealistic expectation is part of the problem. However, to change these perceptions, the potential returns that could be achieved by working at a lower level and waiting for promotion into more senior roles need to be made more transparent for graduates.

However, some of the unemployed female participants seemed to disagree with this perspective and objected to receiving less pay on the basis of gender. For instance, Huda, an unemployed female Omani graduate, said:

*Recently, I was reading a paper about why we have few women working as company executives. It was funny because what I read is very different from real experience. The author of that article argued that the reason for this is because women tend just to choose low-paying jobs [...]. This is wrong. Women, just like men, want higher salaries, but many employers do not allow this. (Huda)*

Huda believed that when hiring on the basis of educational qualifications or skill levels, employers should consider treating both male and female graduates equally.

Lamya, another unemployed female participant, shared the same perspective. She believed that women also want higher pay, but many employers think they deserve less:

*If I had a job that provided me with sufficient pay and let me perform decent tasks, I would take that job. Recently, I attended an interview with tour guide company X (name changed) in Muscat, but the job was a little disappointing because it did not offer much money. (Lamya)*

It appears, therefore, that while some Omani men tended to think that women would be comfortable earning lower salaries, some Omani women objected to this assumption and instead looked forward to higher earnings as well, based on their HC investment.

Faisal's idea was underlined by a statement by Ali, a male Omani employee working at a city hotel:

*That would be a little complicated because I can't stand the idea that my wife earns more than me or even that she earns while I don't. We are both men here. You must agree with me that it would be unacceptable for women to be paid more than men in the sector. (Ali)*

When Ali drew me into this discussion, trying to elicit my own perspective on whether, as an Omani male, I would consider it appropriate earning less than my spouse, I observed that the success of the interview process was anchored in reflexivity. My study required an interchange of feelings, experiences and opinions with the research subjects. According to Ryan (2015), the process of undertaking social research with participants, specifically in face-to-face interviews, involves a number of intricate and changing boundaries. For this reason, reflexivity may provide a means to search out certain attributes that the researcher and the research subject experience. I felt that being an 'insider' – a fellow Omani man – Ali perceived me with some

level of trust and a possible shared understanding of certain sensitive issues. I observed that he felt freer discussing issues of gender more passionately and intensely than some of the unemployed female graduates, like Lamya and Huda. I could, therefore, understand Ali's strong aversion to the idea of earning less than his spouse (I provide a more extensive discussion of reflexivity in Chapter Four, the methodology chapter).

Yet, to analyse Ali's statement more critically and in the relevant context, I had to integrate the perspectives of other participants. While Ali supported Faisal's belief that women should earn lower salaries and should not complain about it, he also corroborated Huda's argument that this is an issue specific to male expectations. In reality, women expect higher salaries in the workplace just as their male colleagues do. This contradicts earlier research that had shown Omani women to be more comfortable with lower salaries than men (Al-Lawatia, 2011; Arab News, 2019; Pulse of Oman, 2018). At the same time, international sociological research has discussed the effects of HC in relation to gender roles, discrimination and income gaps, as well as how HC investment can even undermine the mechanisms of gender discrimination (Ochsenfeld, 2014; Shih, 2002; Zamudio and Lichter, 2008; Yavorsky et al., 2019; Qing, 2020; Rich, 1995).

To this end, the assumptions underlying the comments by Ali, Lamya and Huda could be explained with reference to HC theory (see the discussion of this theory in Chapter Three). In this context, HC perspectives point to the idea that the gender income gap may change with additional educational investment: the more women invest in HC, the more they will (rationally) expect better employment opportunities within their field of study.

Clearly, Ali, Lamya and Huda have outlined how certain tasks tend to be undervalued socially, which in turn makes them economically undervalued particularly because they are performed by women. For this reason, culture appears to play a critical role in the undervaluation of certain

jobs. In this sense, it appears that women in Oman face gender-based inequalities linked to a ‘patriarchal gender system’ enshrined in article 16 of Oman's constitution, which limits their employment choices in spite of the legislative guarantees given elsewhere in the Omani constitution (Constituteproject, 2011; Musawah, 2017). This offers a context within which to interpret the statements made by Faisal, Lamya and Huda, which reveal that Omani society is neglecting the productive potential of women while allowing men’s expectations to decide how women in the sector should be paid. This confirms the findings of other research, showing that Omani society over-values the role of men both in the family and in the workplace. These cultural values are seen to influence the career orientations of both men and women to a significant extent (Karadsheh and Al Zari, 2017; Miller, 2014; Offenhauer and Buchalter, 2005).

Faisal’s opinion, therefore, strongly conflicted with that of Kuthar, a female Omani employee at a city hotel, despite both being concerned about pay inequities on the basis of gender. For instance, Kuthar stated:

*Sometimes I tend to think that there is some bias in terms of how men and women are paid [...]. Recently, I looked at a male colleague’s payslip and found that he was being paid slightly higher than I am, although he is somewhat less experienced. Over time, I have noticed that my female colleagues are paid slightly lower than male colleagues. Strangely, we have not been complaining about it or even dared to make a formal complaint. It is a little disappointing because when I left my former employers, I expected something fairer because of my experience, but at least I am employed.*

**(Kuthar)**

Indeed, while interviewing Kuthar, I observed her conviction that Omani society is substantially biased in favour of men, seeking to reward them with higher pay and enhanced positions of power in the workplace. Such male-dominant perspectives, enforced by social and

cultural values, ensure that inequalities between men and women will continue to exist in the workplace and will also manifest themselves in the preferences shown by men and women for certain professions or sectors (Holmes and Schnurr, 2006; Heikes, 1991; Erickson, 2005; Reskin, 1988). In this context, the findings of previous sociological studies urged employers internationally to minimise workplace gender wage gaps<sup>53</sup> as well as racial biases in terms of income between men and women because these practices impact negatively on the attitudes of women employees towards working and participation in any sector (Bielby, 2000; Reskin, 2000; Reskin and McBrier, 2000).

From Kuthar's account, I learned that she is not comfortable with the existing gender pay gap at her workplace. On the other hand, she appears to have accepted that such gaps will continue to exist and that there is little she could do to change this state of affairs. While recognising this situation as a problem, it seems more important to her to be employed. From my interviews with Faisal and Kuthar, two divergent perspectives can be discerned. As an unemployed male graduate, Faisal is unwilling to work in the sector unless he can find an employer who would pay him a high salary. Meanwhile, Kuthar (a female graduate who has found a job in T&H) is willing to work in the sector despite earning less than she originally expected. By limiting women to low-paying occupations, Omani culture shows a dismissive attitude towards women's contribution outside the home. Correspondingly, it would be expected that most Omani women, like Huda and Kuthar, are unlikely to seek formal positions of significant power either in the workplace or elsewhere in society. For instance, only two women were elected to the Majlis Al-Shura Council (the Omani Parliament) in the most recent Omani election in 2019, alongside 84 men (Oman Observer, 2019; Majlis Shura, 2020).

---

<sup>53</sup> The terms income disparities, gender disparities, gender wage inequality, gender wage gap and gender pay gap are used interchangeably throughout this chapter to identify economic inequalities on the basis of gender.

In fact, I observed that the reason Kuthar did not complain about this wage gap to her employers was that, just like Huda and Lamya, she felt that Omani society was enforcing its expectation that women should be paid less than men. Awareness of such social expectations made it easier for her to accept lower pay. While Kuthar and Faisal held contrasting opinions, it was clear from Kuthar's statement that she was aware of both the gender pay gap and the poor reputation of the sector, despite not complaining about it. I was not surprised by Faisal's comment that 'female friends don't expect to be paid higher than us [men]', as his attitudes were also driven by conventional expectations in Omani society. These norms expect men to act as breadwinners and to take charge of the family's financial obligations, such as the cost of marriage, housing costs and the expenses of their wives and children. In this context, unemployed Omani men will delay their marriages until they find work, because gender roles, social traditions and norms make them responsible for all costs of their immediate family (Akbari, 2011; Islam et al., 2013).

Some unemployed Omani graduates, like Huda and Lamya, raised another important point: they expect high salaries and would prefer to stay unemployed than accept lower positions in a hotel. Their attitudes about status, pay and seniority are encouraging them to stay unemployed, but this is not good for them or for the Omani economy overall. These comments by Ali and Faisal suggest that Omani men expect to join the labour market while receiving higher salaries than their female counterparts. With respect to income disparities, previous studies in the disciplines of both sociology and tourism have demonstrated significant disparities in income between male and female workers. Studies in the context of Turkey, Norway, the UK and the US have shown gender wage gaps in the T&H sector, even within the same occupation and employing organisation (Cave and Kilic, 2010; Skalpe, 2007; Petersen et al., 1997; Baum, 2013; Clausing, 2018; Roney and Öztin, 2007; Brynin and Perales, 2016).

These strong indications of wage gaps based on gender confirmed my earlier suspicions, after interviewing Faisal and Kuthar, that Omani men and women encountered different outcomes in the face of pressures to join the labour market and to earn higher salaries. Of course, as noted earlier, the T&H sector might not appeal to some Omani men because it is generally associated with lower pay than other industries. At the same time, it is important to note that some Omani men are passionate about working in this sector. After interviewing such respondents as Huda, I became aware that gender disparities in Oman are produced by a more complex set of factors, as the expectations that some of my interviewees discussed seemed to be produced through the social construction of gender roles. Hassan, a male Omani working at a city hotel, seemed to share the same perspective, saying:

*I think societal expectations play a critical role in this. Although there are more women than men in the sector, I think prospective employers are more lenient towards paying male graduates because they sympathise with their roles in the home. Besides, most men who want to work in the sector apply for managerial positions that are likely to come with higher salaries. (Hassan)*

This interpretation again suggests that male Omani participants, such as Faisal and Hassan, would be socially conditioned to expect higher pay than their female counterparts.

After establishing that the perception that the T&H sector pays low wages and salaries shaped the attitudes of some Omani hotel employees and unemployed graduates towards the sector, I was interested in listening to the voice of the demand side by collecting the perspectives of some Omani and migrant hotel managers and employers about gender influences on income expectations for T&H sector employment. I asked Hanan, a female Omani manager working at a city hotel, whether she felt that gendered perspectives on income or pay shaped employees' attitudes towards the sector. She said:

*Omani employees in the company demonstrate positive attitudes. I think that even Omanis who work in the sector are here because they expect to earn a consistent income. A good income would definitely encourage them to have a positive attitude. We cannot deny that our workers provide excellent service. However, the problem lies in the fact that over time the pay they are given may not be adequate, which leads to negative attitudes. (Hanan)*

For this reason Hanan, in spite of arguing that Omani employees have a positive attitude towards the sector, implicitly admits that negative attitudes do exist.

Anna, a female migrant manager of Asian origin, working as a senior manager at another city hotel, also provided interesting perspectives regarding the causes of the attitudes she sees Omani workers as having towards the T&H sector. She commented that their attitudes are dependent on the employment benefits that Omani workers or job seekers expected to obtain in the sector:

*I noticed that they [Omani workers] generally want to be motivated with benefits like health insurance and retirement benefits and, most importantly, higher salaries. I observed that some of them, who had worked for a long time without promotions, were deliberately lazy but would work effectively when pushed. This differed greatly from the work ethic of some of the migrant workers that I supervised. In fact, I have some good examples of Omanis who, like Rabab and Mazen (names changed), improved after being promoted to another position. I'm really happy with this Rabab. Today, she scores highly in work performance. (Anna)*

Reviewing the statements made by some Omani hotel employees and unemployed graduates, and by hotel managers, the dominant assumption is that the T&H sector pays low wages and salaries; this perception has shaped Omani employees' and job seekers' attitudes towards the sector.

Anna's statement contained additional insights calling for further analysis. I was curious to establish why she thought Omani employees might be lazy and whether this was connected to their attitudes towards the sector. When I asked her about this, she refused to comment in detail, saying:

*Our Omani and migrant workers have tended to show positive attitudes towards working in the sector. Frankly, it's not 100% as I would expect because some of them have their reasons to feel lazy [...] to get results, all colleagues have to show the right attitude, whether they are Omani, Indian or even European. Fortunately, we have employees who can show the positive attitude needed to contribute to the team whenever they find the right motivation. (Anna)*

Anna seemed reluctant to elaborate on the issue of 'laziness' among Omani employees and clearly did not want to discuss this subject further. As an Omani researcher, I noticed her care not to seem biased against employees based on their ethnicity or gender. I later learned that her organisation has a non-discrimination/anti-harassment policy; awareness of that and the Omani labour law and policies might have limited her willingness to comment on such issues. In addition, given Anna's awareness of my status as an Omani researcher, she would naturally be reluctant to provide further details that reinforce negative perceptions. Rather, she might be inclined to tell positive stories to avoid any repercussions in the workplace because she is a manager of migrant origin, one of the most vulnerable categories of participants.

Anna was not the only one to raise such questions. Marcelo, a male manager of migrant origin from Southern Europe, working at a city hotel, also shared a concern about Omani employees' disinclination to work and also used the word 'lazy'. He said:

*The only problem is sometimes they (Omani employees) are lazy unless they are provided with an outline of the work that should be covered. However, I know some of*

*my Omani colleagues who have put a lot of effort into their work, earned promotions and felt happy to work in a hotel. (Marcelo)*

Analysing Anna's and Marcelo's statements, it appears that some migrant managers feel that Omani employees, unlike some migrant workers, need an extra form of motivation such as recognition at work (as Anna stated) or promotion at work (as suggested by Marcelo's statement). When the working conditions provided by their employer do not include such motivating factors, they may not be effectively engaged in their work.

Meanwhile, I could also connect Anna's perspective regarding Omani attitudes towards work in the T&H sector to that of Jayaram, a male, migrant manager of Asian origin working at a city hotel. Like Anna, Jayaram believed that some Omani attitudes towards this sector depend on the quality of employment benefits they expect to obtain. In other words, if motivating factors were missing, they would not choose to continue to work in hotels:

*Some Omanis have positive attitudes. But the majority do not want to work in hotels, and we encounter many of them complaining about low salaries and long hours of work. Therefore, we see frequent resignations and job instability. So there are a few Omanis who work in administrative jobs temporarily and then submit their resignations.*

**(Jayaram)**

From Jayaram's statement, I inferred that Omani attitudes towards the T&H sector are not positive unless they are motivated by workplace benefits and inducements. For this reason, it appeared to me that the discussion of actual motivations to pursue careers in this sector would be enriched by examining some of these motivating factors.

Comparing Anna's and Jayaram's perspectives to those of the Omani employees I interviewed, I observed a convergence of opinion. Like Anna, Hanan and Jayaram, such participants as Faisal, Lamyia, Kuthar and Ali also shared the perception that Omani employees' negative attitudes towards the sector may originate from a shared perception that they are underpaid,

seldom promoted and required to work long hours, which causes issues of work-life balance. At the same time, I wanted to understand why some Omani workers demonstrate positive attitudes towards the T&H sector when provided with external motivating factors. I asked Jayaram about this, and he said:

*I think it has a lot to do with a common viewpoint that working in hotels brings shame and does not agree with certain aspects of Omani culture. I have an Omani friend who once told me that he is ashamed when asked in Omani society where he works, and would rather lie and say that he works for an oil company or a government ministry. He also told me that when his salary was raised, he could no longer be ashamed about working in the sector, and instead prided himself on working in it. (Jayaram)*

This underlying assumption seems to be widely shared; Omani employees tend to show negative attitudes towards the sector unless their expectations of higher salaries and promotions at work are met. At the same time, Omani society shows little respect for people who work in hotels; Jayaram's comments suggest that this peer pressure may make Omanis feel embarrassed about working in T&H sector. To recruit Omani workers more easily, wider social attitudes, including gendered perspectives on incomes, may need to change.

In the next subsection, I discuss the income expectations of Omani employees, students and unemployed graduates in relation to their HC investments, and how such expectations affect patterns of employment in the T&H sector.

### **5.2.5 Role of human capital investment on Omanis' job expectations and employment patterns**

To establish how Omanis' investments in HC may affect their differing employment patterns in the T&H sector, I determined whether their expectations of rewards from such investment influenced their employment choice and patterns in the T&H sector.

Consistent with the logic of HC theory, I observed that some Omani employees seemed strongly convinced that their expectations for rewards could not be met in the T&H sector. I found remarks by Ali, an Omani employee working at a city hotel, to be insightful. He observed that some male Omanis are reluctant to work in the T&H sector because of a shared concern that hotels only offer low-wage, insecure, and temporary jobs:

*I have heard some Omanis complain about some hotels only employing people on a temporary basis, usually during seasons when they expect a large number of guests. This is not good, as we, the men, want to establish a home and a family. It is even very much discouraging when you are a graduate. Sometimes Omani banks require Omanis to provide a letter from the workplace to demonstrate a salary starting from OMR 500, sometimes less after deducting social insurance from the Public Authority for Social Insurance [PASI].<sup>54</sup> Some hotels give the employee a salary of OMR 350; after a year or two, the salary becomes OMR 400. How can the cost of the family be covered with a value of OMR 400 monthly [...]? For a single Omani man, marriage alone can cost more than OMR 50,000. Omanis fear the possibility of job loss at any time, especially in the private sector. (Ali)*

In this interview, Ali expressed his concern about the inability of the T&H sector to fulfil the pay demands of Omanis. Relative to the rising cost of living, he felt that hotels should offer better pay, particularly to graduates. Regarding patterns of employment, his remarks suggest that Omani graduates who are more educated tend to desire higher-paying jobs. They are also likely to seek employment in the public sector, owing to fears of employment instability in the private sector. However, some Omani graduates think it is better to be unemployed rather than

---

<sup>54</sup> The Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI) – Oman is a governmental body responsible for implementing a pension scheme for citizens working in the private sector inside or outside Oman, within the Gulf countries (Public Authority for Social Insurance – Oman, 2020). However, citizens working in the public or government sector belong to a different pension fund body (The Civil Service Employees Pension Fund – Oman, 2020).

work in low-income positions in T&H that do not match their investment in HC and their educational attainment. However, if they are unemployed they are materially worse off, so these attitudes may have a negative impact on individual incomes and the Omani economy as a whole. As a comparison, unemployed Omani women, like Huda and Lamya, expected high salaries suitable for their HC investments and expressed similar wage expectations to those of unemployed Omani men; these participants suggested that employers should consider treating male and female graduates equally in hiring and wages on the basis of their educational qualifications or skill levels.

In essence, HC theory argues that as people become more educated, they spend less time to obtain jobs that pay more highly, climb the social ladder, are allowed more autonomy and control over their work, strengthen their social standing and generally obtain faster transitions towards better career prospects and better income (Giesecke, 2009; Turmo-Garuz et al., 2019; Simmons et al., 2007; Solga and Koniet, 1989; Lane, 1993). Female hotel employees like Kuthar also expressed concern about individual expectations regarding pay and benefits. Kuthar believed that what makes the sector less attractive is the general perception among employees that hotels pay low wages:

*The biggest challenge is that some hotels don't pay very well. But, this doesn't mean I should not take a low-paying job. I'm particularly concerned about the fact that it takes a very long time for management to review our salaries. (Kuthar)*

Kuthar's statement revealed something about patterns of employment in and graduates' expectations of the sector. She demonstrated that, just like Omani men, Omani women also expected higher pay (this view is similar to the observation of Huda, an unemployed female Omani graduate discussed in the previous section). However, her statement suggests that, unlike men, women are more willing to take low-paying jobs in the T&H sector. Omani

employees participating in the study tended to agree that the sector generally offers low wages, making it less attractive in relation to the overall Omani labour market.

Related international research has shown that hospitality careers have traditionally been labelled as seasonal and low-paying (Bartram, 2011; Goh and Lee, 2018; Harrison and Lloyd, 2013; Holston-Okae, 2018). Indeed, while interviewing unemployed Omani graduates, I noticed that some of them shared this same perspective regarding the seasonality and low-pay structure of the sector. To investigate their attitudes towards the T&H sector, I asked them what factors they perceived as shaping their attitudes towards it, why they chose to study this field and why they were presently unemployed. Amal, an unemployed female Omani graduate, observed that a typical unemployed graduate has ‘unrealistic expectations’ about the sector:

*We Omani graduates may have some unrealistic expectations that may not be met by our likely employers. From my point of view, we are looking for job stability, fairly high salaries, career development opportunities, international scholarships and sometimes even paid work abroad programmes for a year or two. (Amal)*

Amal suggested that some of the Omanis I interviewed are unemployed because of what she labelled ‘unrealistic expectations’. From Amal’s statement, I discerned that even though jobs may be available in the sector, some Omani graduates come to understand that potential employers in T&H cannot meet their salary expectations. I also learned that some of the students and unemployed graduates were unaware of the salary situation in the sector, or were aware but decided to risk lower salaries while hoping for a more stimulating experience in the sector.

Jassem, a male Omani student, confirmed this gap between student perceptions and the reality of work in the T&H sector:

*I think not many would be interested in the sector because of the few managerial slots they can expect. Still, those who love the sector have taken the risk and met the diverse*

*opportunities they look for. Actually, I don't have any idea about working in the hotel industry because I'm a student right now. I am afraid that I will face some challenges that I cannot solve. I will see how things will going on in future. (Jassem)*

It is clear from Jassem's statement that students and unemployed graduates have high expectations after taking the bold step of investing in education in the T&H sector, despite their relative ignorance of the realities of work in the sector. This gap between educational curricula, the reality of work and expectations of students would benefit from additional, future research.

The potential mismatch between Omani graduates' expectations and the real characteristics of the T&H sector, in relation to the education and training received by students in the field, remains an important aspect of the connection between HC theory and graduates' employment behaviour. Students generally felt that they were qualified upon graduation, having invested in their own HC through education in the T&H studies, and expected to realise the value of their education through higher pay in the T&H sector. In addition, I observed that students often lacked a realistic sense of the reality of work in the T&H sector. More accurate information, learned from their searches for work, have the potential to undermine their expectations or even cause a shock about the reality of work in the sector (see also Bol et al., 2019; Akgündüz and van Huizen, 2015). For example, Waleed – an unemployed male Omani graduate – said:

*I'm not comfortable with how things are turning out. I had expected that having a first-class honours degree would help me find work in the sector that pays well. (Waleed)*

This comment clearly indicates a mismatch between some graduates' expectations and the reality of the job market in the T&H sector in Oman. Further research could productively examine in an Omani context the connections between HC investment through education, curriculum content, students' expectations upon graduation and the reality of work in the T&H sector (Schmelzer and Schneider, 2020; Brzinsky-Fay, 2014; Kucel and Vilalta-Buffi, 2012).

For instance, when I asked Amal why she had decided to join the sector, she said that she had the expectation that the sector offers a variety of jobs, implying a wide range of possible employment. She said:

*I think that most of the jobs in Oman are for the military services sector. They are basically for men. In education and health sectors, there is saturation because there are a large number of women as well as other industries such as banks and financial services companies. Therefore, I decided to take risks and register at college 'A' because there are greater opportunities or options for women to work there due to a few competitions for females to work in this sector. (Amal)*

By implying that she decided to take the risk and join the sector, Amal acknowledges that she was uncertain about her future in the sector but her determination to get the feel of the sector was stronger.

Meanwhile Laila, a female Omani student studying at college 'A', was also excited about the prospects of getting the feel of the sector. She said:

*I was also fascinated by the thought of meeting new kinds of challenges each day by attending to people from different backgrounds. It is a sector that I have always considered to be far from being called a boring sector. (Laila)*

Laila has indicated her belief that the T&H sector offers a lot of novel opportunities that might not be available in other sectors; this is consistent with her ambition and expectations. She also feels optimistic that she will engage in the sector easily, meeting new people on an ongoing basis, which will improve her experience.

Other Omani participants decided to join the sector because of family influence rather than expectations for rewards. In my interview with Sarah, a female Omani student, I learned that some of my participants also decided to join the sector while following a family tradition:

*My family runs a hotel business. I felt it was proper that I remain in the industry.*

**(Sarah)**

As mentioned earlier in the discussion of Hamdan's family, it is evident in Sarah's statement that Omani parents and other elders have a significant influence on the decisions made by their children. It seems that she was affected by her family's expectations; her decision to study T&H may allow her to work in her family's firm in the future.

From the responses Waleed, Sarah and Amal provided, it is reasonable to conclude that some of the students and unemployed graduates had not researched what earnings they should expect, perhaps deciding to ride the wave of the sector's growing popularity. I had an opportunity to find an authoritative statement on the impact of such a wave from Hind, a female tourism expert at a government ministry. In her view, the sector was not very popular even after the ministry was established (by Royal Decree No. 61/2004; Al Bawaba, 2004), which prompted the government – through the ministry – to initiate intense media campaigns to encourage Omani youth, particularly women, to join the sector:

*Although the tourism media sector is weak compared to neighbouring countries, we did our roles at the government ministry with much enthusiasm. We intensified media campaigns and awareness of citizens and residents, and it worked. (Hind)*

I also learned that Ministry's media campaigns promoted the sector as a key component of the government's economic diversification policies *Thanfeedh*.<sup>55</sup> Waleed's and Amal's interest in the sector seemed related to the role played by the ministry in promoting the sector as a career choice for Omanis, as Hind described. It is possible that the popularity of the sector, perceived

---

<sup>55</sup> I have provided more discussions on the government's diversification of the economic strategy in Chapter One and Chapter Two.

as providing a variety of jobs, could have influenced many students and unemployed graduates to study T&H at college 'A'.

Omani graduates' awareness that hotels and other tourism-related employers might not satisfy their expectations as potential employees may contribute to negative attitudes towards the T&H sector. Their expectations for job security, opportunities for career progression and even employer-sponsored scholarships could all have affected their attitudes towards the sector. When I asked Mohammed, an unemployed male Omani graduate, why he is unemployed, he said:

*I just can't find a job. Look at it this way [...] Whenever I apply for a job, I'm told that I'm too qualified and that I should wait for jobs that fit my CV. I feel that this is because I may have asked for too high a salary. Obviously, being a graduate, I expect to be paid well. However, whenever I apply for managerial jobs, I get rejection letters, some of them with unfortunate comments that I lack the requisite skills and work experience. So, I'm really confused. I have asked myself many times how prospective employers expect me to have years of job experience while I am just a fresh graduate.*

**(Mohammed)**

From interviewing graduates like Mohammed I observed that their inability to find work should not be interpreted simply as an outcome of their negative or positive attitudes towards the sector. While interviewing Mohammed, I observed that he was passionate about working in the sector. However, his chances of finding a job were hampered by other limitations of his HC, such as relevant work experience. Yet, Mohammed's experiences are not unique to him or to Oman. In my review of the literature I observed that, on a global scale, recent graduates face the challenge of not having relevant work experience (Schmelzer and Schneider, 2020; Di Stasio, 2017).

I could relate Waleed's experiences to those of Amal. Like Mohammed, Amal seems strongly motivated to find work in the sector. She said:

*Yes, I have long experience in searching for work, and I have submitted my papers to many ministries and a large number of prestigious hotels that I hope could pay well, but unfortunately, there is no response. I always receive replies that I have to follow up with the PAMR<sup>56</sup> to ask them about available jobs. I live in Al Batinah province, which is very far from Muscat. I have posted tweets on Twitter to solve my problem and find a suitable job for me. I am a Bachelor degree graduate, have a passion for working in the tourism sector, and do not lack anything. I have to pay for my large family where we live in difficult circumstances, and my parents have not been working since they retired. (Amal)*

Clearly, Mohammed's and Amal's desire to work in the T&H sector indicates that not all unemployed graduates that I interviewed perceive the sector in a negative light. In fact, they report that the reason they are still unemployed is because of a lack of relevant work experience. They represent a trend that is not exclusive to Oman: the UK seems to have the same issue (The Guardian, 2012; Muffett, 2010; Alsop, 2015).

On the other hand, while interviewing Lamya, another unemployed female Omani graduate, I discerned a perspective about the job situation in the sector that contrasted with that of the informants previously discussed. She said:

*Personal attitudes and the lack of suitable jobs are responsible. I think the key factor is a negative attitude towards certain jobs. It would be demeaning to come out of college 'A' and work as a cleaner. My friends who never went past high school would*

---

<sup>56</sup> PAMR is short for Public Authority of Manpower Register, a government agency in Oman that provides data on available jobs in the job market and the state of the labour market to provide guidance on policymaking. However, the new name of this government entity has been changed based on the new Royal Decree in 2019 to the National Centre for Employment (NCE), effective 2020, Source: (The National Center for Employment–Oman, 2020).

*laugh at me, thinking I wasted my parents' money educating myself. My relatives would rebuke me. I would rather just wait for the right job. It is very painful, but that's it. I'm not in a hurry. (Lamya)*

Lamya experienced her investment in education in college 'A' as a form of HC and felt overeducated<sup>57</sup> for the jobs available to her; she has rejected the idea of working in lower-status positions. In the context of the UK labour market, reports have indicated that more than one third of UK graduates are overeducated for the jobs they are doing, particularly in London (BBC News, 2019a). Lamya attributed her unemployment to the characteristics of certain jobs in the sector, towards which she had a negative attitude. She felt that, although jobs exist in the T&H sector, she had to wait for one that would be acceptable in the eyes of her friends and relatives. Unlike Mohammed and Amal, who attributed their unemployment status to employers' unexpected requirements, Lamya blamed her employment status essentially on her own attitudes towards certain jobs and her resulting choices.

In any case, Mohammed, Amal and Lamya also shared something in common. They all seemed determined to find a job, and each of them alluded to their sense that Omani graduates expected greater returns from their investment in higher education, including greater earning power, improved social status, social stability and enhanced lifestyles. Amal also suggested that an ideal employer would meet these expectations. In spite of these shared expectations, Amal's and Lamya's commentary suggests that imbalances exist between the expectations of graduates and the available returns for pursuing higher education, at least in some cases. Already, international sociological research has shown that labour market imbalances exist because of gender differences among workers, including social attitudes towards certain sectors and

---

<sup>57</sup> Overeducation: a person can be overeducated if they hold more education than needed for the job (Voßemer and Schuck, 2016; Capsada-Munsech, 2019; Borgna et al., 2019; Turmo-Garuz et al., 2019).

different valuation of various credentials (Abendroth et al., 2013; Solga and Koniet, 1989; Lane, 1993). One compelling explanation for such imbalances follows directly from HC theory. Some unemployed participants in this study, both male and female, agree that it is typical for Omanis like Amal, Mohammed and Lamyia to invest in training and education and to expect a prospective employer to offer them rewards proportionate to this investment. According to HC theory, a society can realise greater social cohesion once it accumulates knowledge and skills through the training and education of its workforce, as studies undertaken in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain have demonstrated (Levels et al., 2014; Brynin and Schupp, 2000; Bol, 2015; Ortiz and Rodriguez-Menés, 2016; Di Stasio et al., 2016; Quadlin, 2018; Di Stasio and Van De Werfhorst, 2016). While graduates would expect higher salaries and other benefits, according to HC theory, the interviews conducted for this study showed different perceptions and income expectations among participants, based on gender. In addition to questions of income, I observed concerns regarding job security in the T&H sector.

In the next subsection, I present and analyse data to explain the role of job security in shaping attitudes towards this sector.

### **5.2.6 Perspectives on job security in the T&H sector**

Another phenomenon that emerged in my analysis concerns the perceived role of job security in shaping attitudes towards the T&H sector. I found this to be a contentious issue among the Omani hotel employees that I interviewed. Maryam, an Omani woman working at a city hotel, provided discerning remarks on this topic. She felt that job security was an essential factor shaping attitudes towards the sector:

*In my view, job security is a real concern, as the sector is less stable compared to others. (Maryam)*

From Maryam's explanation, it was clear that she feared losing her job at any time due to fluctuations in the labour market and the economy that might affect her career. Her concern was logical, because job security is a vital matter for many employees due to their obligations both to their family and other, financial commitments. Job security seems to be a significant concern for many Omanis.

Contrasting with Maryam's view, Yousif, a male Omani hotel employee, questioned the assumption that the sector does not offer job security:

*The reason is simple. It is a known fact that some young Omanis do not want to work in hotels because they feel that they do not provide job security. For instance, while transitioning to work here, some of my friends were uncomfortable with my decision and even joked that I might have trouble marrying an Omani woman. It is a common stereotype for Omani women to consider those working in government to be potential marriage partners or to represent the best option for marriage partners. I think this is just a wrong assumption. I mean, I have known people who have worked in the hotel sector for more than 20 years, and they are doing much better than most individuals I have known who work in the government. (Yousif)*

While disputing the assumption that the T&H sector offers poor job security, Yousif felt such negative stereotypes about the sector to affect Omanis attitudes towards it. Graduates are less willing to work in the sector because of fears that it does not guarantee job security. Certainly, Yousif, Maryam, Kuthar and Ali all agreed that certain negative attitudes originated from general perceptions of low pay and poor job security in the T&H sector. These issues represented significant concerns and made the sector less appealing. Previous studies have corroborated this evaluation. Pang's (2010) study showed comparable results when examining the attitudes of polytechnic students in Singapore towards work in the T&H sector after being enrolled in a three-year hospitality course. In the case of highly egalitarian countries, like

Sweden, some studies have observed an ingrained perception that the T&H industry has failed to offer long-term job opportunities or job security, making the industry less attractive to the local workforce regardless of gender (Lundmark, 2005; Bevelander, 2005; Bevelander and Nielsen, 2001). Similar concerns have been raised in other European countries, including Greece and the UK (Quinlan, 2016; Whitton, 2003; Burgmann, 2016; Broad, 1995; Vosko et al., 2009).

In the process of analysing some of the participants' perspectives, I was able to identify the potential negative effects that job insecurity could have on their well-being and work autonomy. As Ali and Maryam demonstrated, participants with permanent contracts showed more positive attitudes towards the sector than those engaged in casual work and temporary contracts. This could explain why Ali appeared undecided as to whether the sector should be viewed positively. On the one hand, he acknowledged that the sector does not pay very well but on the other, he appreciated the idea that challenging work opportunities could contribute to positive attitudes towards the sector. In contrast to Maryam and Kuthar, Ali was working on a fixed-term contract<sup>58</sup> at the time of the interview.

According to Hassan, a male Omani hotel employee, having a sense of purpose (or finding meaning in work) could reduce the material expectations of Omani employees, so long as their jobs in the sector provide a sufficient livelihood. According to him, this happens mainly with Omanis who have established a family:

*Yes, Omanis have a positive attitude. One of the people in Masjid or Mosque (name changed for anonymity purposes), whom we were talking about, has been very happy. He has been in my department for almost five years and feels like he has discovered meaning in his work for his family. He is always on duty on time. One time he took a*

---

<sup>58</sup> More information about the main types of employment contracts is available on (Cheary, 2020).

*short leave because his wife had delivered a baby. He was supposed to return on Monday, and I thought he might not come. However, he came on that Monday and expressed his desire to remain with the hotel. This is a sign of a positive character. It is these employees with a sense of purpose that work more effectively in spite of fears about job security. (Hassan)*

While Hassan's statement shows that finding meaning in work is important, it is not reported to be as significant as concerns about job security in influencing an employee's decision to remain with the hotel. In any case, it is difficult to discount Hassan's observation that the capacity to find meaningful work may encourage Omani employees to develop positive attitudes towards the T&H sector; this finding has been corroborated in many studies conducted internationally. For instance, sociological researchers have concluded that employees in Western, developed countries, particularly the UK, the US and some EU countries, are becoming frustrated with work unless it assures them of job security and also offers opportunities for fulfilment, self-expression and balance between work and family life (Skinner, 2005; Shigihara, 2019; Bielby and Bielby, 1989; Bailey and Madden, 2017).

The next section analyses and discusses data on the influence of social, cultural and religious norms, focusing on the role of gender roles and dynamics in influencing attitudes towards the T&H sector.

### **5.3 Social, cultural and religious norms**

In the following section, I present, analyse and discuss my observations regarding the influence of the Islamic religion and Omani cultures in Oman, and how they shape current attitudes towards the T&H sector.

#### **5.3.1 The role of the Islamic religion and Omani traditions in shaping attitudes towards the T&H sector**

Some participants in this study felt that the potential conflict between Islamic doctrines and practices in the T&H sector contributed to their negative attitudes towards the sector. Initially, this realisation came to me via my interview with Reem, a female Omani student at college ‘A’, who said:

*The sector has its disadvantages. Some of us associate it with religiously unclean activities like serving pork, alcohol and others. (Reem)*

Within a relatively superficial statement, Reem pointed to the potential for conflict between Islamic doctrines – particularly dietary rules, or *halal*<sup>59</sup> – and the practices of the hospitality sector. Reem’s observation illustrates the potential conflict between work in international hotels and Islamic principles, which could expose her to some problems in her future career, in terms of societal and family expectations.

Other students, such as Suliman and Jassem, strongly supported this assertion. For instance, Suliman said:

*It is common knowledge in my class that the tourism sector is not concerned with Islam as it welcomes tourists from everywhere, with different religions. Now, Omanis who subscribe to such beliefs are not likely to choose to work in the sector. That is the reason few of my classmates would choose to work in a hotel that allows them to taste and serve alcohol. So, yeah, religion shapes attitudes. That’s why some people would reject working in the sector because the sector supports secularism. (Suliman)*

Suliman seems to agree with Reem about the challenges facing Omani graduates in a sector where activities forbidden by Islamic law are practiced, giving rise to fears and negative

---

<sup>59</sup> *Halal* dietary rules, specified in the Quran, prohibit Muslims from eating ‘carrion (dead animals) that are killed by strangulation, a blow, a fall, are gored or have been partly eaten by wild animals, flowing blood, pork, alcohol and animals that have been slaughtered with the invocation of a name other than the name of “Allah”’ (Sura’ Al-Baqarah: verse 173).

attitudes. Therefore, some Omani graduates might redirect their career path to another sector or choose to remain unemployed until they find jobs that adhere to religious prescriptions.

Jassem, a male Omani student, shared the perception that religion shapes attitudes towards the sector and added this comment:

*There is a long relationship between our Omani traditions and Islamic traditions. They go hand in hand. Hence, it is possible for some people to refuse to work in the sector when they see some practices in hotels as contravening our traditions. (Jassem)*

Clearly, Jassem's and Suliman's statements suggest that the correspondence between religious and cultural values in Oman tends to shape negative attitudes toward the T&H sector, as its practices and norms are generally considered to contribute to secularism.

Evidence gleaned from my interviews with Reem, Suliman and Jassem suggested a link between Islamic beliefs and negative attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. This relationship between Islam and tourism has been addressed by a body of international scholarship (Brown and Osman, 2017; Battour et al., 2011; Din, 1989). Reem's comment showed that religious and socio-cultural factors may have significant effects on the employment of Omanis in the hospitality sector, an idea corroborated by studies undertaken elsewhere in the Middle East (Jafari and Scott, 2014; Khalid, 2010; Nazki, 2018). I also observed that even those interview participants who were enthusiastic about the T&H sector acknowledged a potential conflict with traditional Islamic values.

During my fieldwork in Oman, I had the opportunity to visit many hotels; I observed that the majority of them provide alcohol and pork to guests, particularly in Muscat. This state of affairs seems to differ substantially from the situation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which completely prohibits alcohol and pork consumption (Cacciottolo, 2015; Engel, 2018; Thistlethwaite, 2015). Oman seems generally to be more liberal than Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, the negative attitudes expressed by some of the participants in this study seem to represent a perception rooted in Islam and the Qur'an regarding the morality of working in hotels that offer alcohol and pork. In Oman, such stereotypes primarily concern international hotels, the most dynamic element of the T&H sector.

The association of hotels with criminal activity, such as prostitution and gambling, also emerged in the interviews. Gambling is illegal in Oman under Article 232, Chapter Seven, of the Omani Penal Code; prostitution is also illegal as specified by Articles 255–256 of the Code (Affairs, 2018). Reem mentioned other issues, including aspects related to intoxication and unclean foods; she considers these practices to be morally unacceptable in Islam and some of them illegal. She told me that while the Omani government prohibits prostitution in hotels, the increasing number of establishments makes it difficult to curtail this practice. On reflection, I could understand why Reem stressed the impact of gambling and prostitution on the reputation of the sector, being both illegal and immoral.

In an attempt to find evidence to support Reem's perception regarding illegal practices, I heard one relevant, even courageous comment from Yousif, a male Omani hotel employee. Many of the most vulnerable participants<sup>60</sup> in the study, such as migrant graduates and Omani women, could not be expected to discuss such issues explicitly with a male Omani researcher. My positionality<sup>61</sup> as an outsider working for an agency of the Omani government would make most research subjects reluctant to discuss illegal practices. Typically, Omani women are inhibited from uttering a word like 'prostitution' in front of Omani men, due to Islamic and cultural traditions and mores.

---

<sup>60</sup> More details about participant categories engaged in my study are available in a table presented in Chapter Four (the methodology chapter), which contains more extensive information.

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter Four (Methodology), in particular section 4.4 and 4.5, for more information about reflexivity and positionality in relation to such ethical considerations and data collection.

*Yes, it is common practice, and everyone knows that some hotels in Muscat – I cannot mention their names as this is beyond my authority – are carrying out illegal practices that violate Islamic principles or the laws and regulations of Oman, such as prostitution, the provision of non-halal meals, gambling, alcohol and others. Some hotels implement these practices secretly and sometimes in public. I think the Omani government turns a blind eye and ignores those practices in order to encourage hotels to invest more in T&H and thus easily integrate into the diversification policies adopted by the government sector and then employ more Omani and migrants. (Yousif)*

From Yousif's experience, working for more than ten years in the hotel industry, it is clear that some of these establishments carry out practices that are illegal in Oman. The pressure to do so is constant, as hotels aim to provide all the comforts visitors expect, and Oman attracts tourists from all over the world to enjoy the sunny climate. Therefore these practices are explicitly ignored, even tolerated by the government, so as not to impede its own plans to diversify the economy<sup>62</sup>, to enhance the role of tourism in the country and then to encourage more graduates to work in this sector. Hind previously commented on the government's media campaigns to encourage Omani graduates to join the T&H sector, in spite of its reputation with respect to religious law. The basic law of Oman enshrines Islam as a state religion and mandates that Sharia laws be regarded as the starting point of all legislation. This explains why prostitution and gambling, which may be considered both legal and moral in other countries, are treated as illegal and immoral in Oman (Al Mukrashi, 2018; Times News Service, 2018a). There appears to be a consensus on the impact of Islam on employment in the T&H sector: since it combines such activities as giving accommodation to unmarried couples, gambling and serving pork and alcohol, Islamic societies (including the KSA and Oman) have grounds to question a person's decision to work in this sector (Din, 1989; Cacciottolo, 2015; Engel, 2018;

---

<sup>62</sup> See Chapter One and Chapter Two, for more details about Omani economic diversification policies.

Thistlethwaite, 2015; Kessler, 2015; Yan et al., 2017). The influence of Islam on occupational choices and sectoral preferences is a significant factor, as the Qur'an offers guidance for Muslims in virtually all human activities.

Some government experts in T&H also believe that the Islamic religion and Omani traditional values have conspired to construct a social stereotype that the T&H sector is unclean, which affects public attitudes towards the sector. For instance Hind, the female Omani government expert discussed earlier, felt that negative attitudes have arisen from earlier perceptions that the sector encouraged secularism to the detriment of religious values:

*Today, some Omanis have a positive attitude towards the sector. Initially, it appeared that few Omanis favoured working in the industry. We at the ministry knew this, as the sector was recruiting many migrant workers: not that they liked it either, but they wanted the jobs. A job would be advertised for work in a hotel, and only migrants would apply. Then, we slowly began to acknowledge that Omanis tend to be conservative people. We associate working in a hotel with adultery, prostitution and alcoholism. Therefore, it seemed as though any person who worked there would be stigmatised; this particularly prevented women from joining the sector. (Hind)*

Hind alluded to the possibility that some Omanis avoided working in the T&H sector for fear of being stigmatised as sex workers, adulterers, alcoholics or, more fundamentally, for violating Islamic and traditional Omani values (Adib and Guerrier, 2003; Gold and Saunders, 1983, Thébaud and Pedulla, 2016; Phillips et al., 2012; Rudman and Mescher, 2013). Omanis may, therefore, fear that such stigma could restrict their social support and opportunities, positioning them as outsiders or outcasts. This indicates that a customary stigma may play a role in shaping the attitudes of Omanis towards work in the T&H sector. At any rate, the role of such a stigma seems to be weakening because of changing attitudes. For instance, Hind suggests that more Omanis are developing a positive attitude towards the sector.

Nurmini, a female manager originally from Asia working as a manager at a city hotel, also felt that social attitudes and cultural and religious practices have contributed to most Omani employees holding negative attitudes towards the sector:

*I wouldn't say they [Omani workers] show negative attitudes, because I know many of our Omani workers who are really enthusiastic about working in our establishment. I have also observed that many of them are reluctant to let their families or friends know they work in our hotel. This is especially the case with our Omani Muslim workers. Obviously, there could be some negative perceptions about working in the hotel within the Islamic communities. (Nurmini)*

Critically, while Hind was convinced that Omanis ought to develop more positive attitudes towards the T&H sector, Nurmini felt that religious factors continued to have a negative effect on attitudes towards it. I identified a similar concern in interviews with Omani students like Reem and Suliman, discussed earlier. Both argued that, despite their preference for the sector on account of the varied career prospects they expected within it, religious doctrines contributed to the general reluctance of Omanis to join the sector.

Still, it would be wrong to suggest that Hind showed a strong conviction about possible positive attitudes held towards the T&H sector by Omanis. Her hedging offers some support for Nurmini's view that cultural and religious factors negatively affect attitudes towards the sector. In the following statement, Hind suggested that Omani attitudes towards the sector were always bound to be negative unless an awareness campaign could eliminate shared stereotypes. She added that:

*No right-thinking Muslim woman would like to be associated with such things; it was these attitudes that were hindering diversification of the economy. After the awareness campaigns that we ran through social media in 2016, things began to change; attitudes have also changed. In fact, the reports that we are receiving now suggest that Omani*

*employees in the sector maintain positive attitudes just like their migrant counterparts.*

**(Hind)**

Based on my interpretation of the perspectives presented by Reem, Suliman and Jassem (students), by Jayaram (a manager) and by Hind (an expert), the connection between religion and the decisions believers made regarding their career choices seems evident. Indeed, as Jafari and Scott (2014) explained in their study about perspectives towards tourism in the Muslim world, the influence of Islam on the decision to pursue a profession can be explained by the concept of the *ummah*.<sup>63</sup> Throughout the global community of Muslims, similar sets of religious beliefs influence occupational and sectoral preferences by promoting either the acceptance or rejection of certain behaviours and lifestyles that are associated with a particular profession or sector (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010; Kovjanic, 2014; Morakabati, 2011).

This could explain why Hind, Hamdan and Suliman admitted that Islamic values affected nearly every aspect of the political, economic, cultural and social lives of Omani workers, such as the choices to pursue education, to seek a career away from home or to work in a particular sector. Muslims try to discern an ethical quality in any human activity, representing either *hasan* (suitability, attractiveness) or *qabul* (unsuitability, unattractiveness). Discerning such an ethical quality is understood to require deep reflection about one's life in relation to religious doctrines (Stephenson, 2014; Winchester, 2008).

Clearly, student participants in this study seemed concerned about adhering to halal dietary laws as underscored in the Quran. My interview with Reem, a female Omani student discussed above, offered one example. Likewise Suliman, a male Omani student, was particularly clear

---

<sup>63</sup> The global Muslim community tied together by religious tenets.

in asserting that some Omanis who hold Islamic principles and values very strongly tended to have negative attitudes towards the sector and therefore rejected the idea of working in it:

*Religion shapes attitudes towards the sector. That's why some people would reject working in the sector because it supports secularism. Oh, I mean practices that go against our Islamic practices. (Suliman)*

Suliman's statement shows that, while young Omanis hold positive attitudes towards working in the T&H sector, religious norms remain likely to affect their attitudes towards it.

Unlike the rest of the participants who provided their views regarding the link between Omani culture, religion and attitudes towards the T&H sector, Hind seemed to be the most aware of tourism awareness efforts: she discussed her extensive experience in marketing and promotion of the sector in the course of the interview. When I asked for more information about her awareness activities, she revealed that World Tourism Day had been among the most effective campaigns to promote awareness of the T&H sector. Celebrated annually on September 27, this event allowed the ministry to run awareness campaigns through the media. As Hind explained:

*We intensified media campaigns to create awareness of positive aspects, using social media to reduce and ultimately eliminate negative attitudes towards the sector. (Hind)*

Hind's statement reveals that the Omani government, despite its weak fiscal capacity, is trying to improve the image of the sector through media campaigns and social media, to attract more Omani graduates to work in the sector and create positive expectations for the future of work in the sector.

In the same vein, the need for social media campaigns to fortify tourism awareness efforts was emphasised in a statement made by Thuriya, a female Omani working as a general manager in the tourism development company. She stated:

*If I am seeing this correctly, globalisation and multi-cultural transitions brought about by the sector are having both positive and negative impacts on Omani culture. Omani youth will pass on our culture to our children and additional generations. They need to preserve our culture. So, while the government is obviously worried about the preservation of the identity and culture of Oman because of globalisation, it is also aware that it can do something. Because of this, I feel that we should have some policies that encourage social media to secure our culture through our youth, preserve the values of our religion and even preserve our mother tongue because these remain our cultural identity. (Thuriya)*

Thuriya's statement echoed the fears that many Omanis have about the negative effects of the T&H sector in diluting Omani cultural traditions. It appears to be because of such concerns that some Omanis are reluctant to see young people, who they expect to pass their cultures through to the next generation, take up jobs in the sector. International literature on the topic has shown that, in any society, the perceived negative impacts of the T&H sector on value systems condition underlying attitudes towards the sector. Besides its cultural impact, the sector is believed to contribute to shifts in individual behaviour, value systems, family relationships, moral conduct and lifestyles more generally (Düşmezkalender et al., 2020; Abdmouleh and Kalai, 2020; Ap and Crompton, 1998; Nazki, 2018).

In spite of these challenges, Hind has offered an encouraging perspective regarding this changing state of affairs. Owing to her experience marketing the T&H sector, her views should be informed by her professional practice and her interactions with many stakeholders in the sector. Hind argued compellingly that attitudes are changing and that more women are now entering the sector. Besides more Omani women becoming aware of the opportunities they could obtain in T&H, the situation is also affected by changing demographic patterns, whereby

women get married later because of their pursuit for higher education. Indeed, Hind observed that:

*There were cases where women could not apply for the jobs because they lacked empowerment. Since education was made free for both genders in the 1970s, more women have pursued higher education and experience greater financial independence after gaining employment. The need to pursue education may make some women reconsider the idea of getting married at an early age of around 18 or so. Seriously, women are changing their perceptions of financial independence and consider the T&H sector as offering them greater opportunities for work and independence from relying on men. (Hind)*

Hind's outlook also represented women's determination to become financially independent and to break away from the traditional norms of dependence on men. This trend seems to carry significant social implications, as women get married only after they have completed their education. From Hind's commentary, it appears that Omani women have traditionally been required to marry when they are 18 or so, having low educational attainment and little financial independence. Such conditions force them to depend on their husbands, but these conditions may be changing for many women.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Participants in this study presented varied views depicting subtle differences in their attitudes towards working in the T&H sector. Indeed, it is impossible to see any category of participants who demonstrate either an intense aversion or an excessive preference for the sector. All the participants that I interviewed seemed to be informed, to different degrees, about the key structural and cultural issues associated with T&H activities. From these interviews, I was able to arrive at a relatively nuanced picture of the sector, with participants explaining its positive and negative aspects. I also observed Omani men are less comfortable with the idea of working

in the hotel sector, as they believe work in the sector to have cultural associations with femininity, in general. The only exception was for high-status positions with management responsibility. In terms of gender differences in their potential participation in the T&H labour force, unemployed Omani men reported that they expected high salaries in return for their HC investments. In fact, they preferred to remain unemployed rather than accept lower positions in hotels; social norms expect men to act as breadwinners and take charge of the family's financial obligations, such as the cost of marriage, housing costs, and the expenses of their wives and children. Meanwhile, unemployed Omani women expected high salaries proportionate to their HC investments. They expressed wage expectations similar to those of unemployed Omani men, suggesting that employers should consider treating both male and female graduates equally in hiring and salaries, based on their HC investments such as educational qualifications or skill levels.

Regarding the influence of religion, some participants felt that the potential conflict between Islamic doctrines and practices in the hospitality sector had contributed to negative attitudes towards the sector. Religion, along with social and cultural traditions, represent complex issues that affect Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. The government has tackled this problem by stepping up tourism awareness campaigns on social media, promoting gradual changes in attitudes that are expected to change perceptions about the sector.

In this chapter, I have addressed my research questions concerning all Omani categories in this thesis such as factors explaining the different employment patterns and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector such as the factors shaping Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector and how their perspectives compare to those of migrant graduates. I have also discussed employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates and the impact of HC on the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the sector. These findings have contributed towards my research aim

concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the T&H sector, and towards understanding why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates.

HC theory, and complementary approaches used to explain labour market dynamics, have provided themes running through all three data chapters. The analytical approach derived from HC theory offers the set of concepts used in this, and previous studies to describe labour market phenomena (as I discussed in Chapter Three). Omani graduates of all kinds affirmed that qualifications are the most critical factor for employment patterns in the T&H sector. Unemployed Omanis often expected higher pay and job security in the T&H sector, to match their investment in the HC and their educational attainment. In addition, the potential mismatch between Omani graduates' expectations and the real characteristics of the T&H sector may explain graduates' employment behaviour to a significant extent. For instance, some Omani graduates think it is better to be unemployed rather than work in low-income positions in T&H that do not match their investment in HC and their educational attainment. The theoretical perspective HC offers suggests that these expectations concerning investments and individual earnings may be subjectively rational. However, certain factors are related to norms that expect men to act as breadwinners and take charge of the family's financial obligations, such as the cost of marriage, housing costs and the expenses of their immediate family as I mentioned previously. Moreover, the influence of the concepts of masculinity and femininity on the career orientations of Omani men and women became apparent in my interviews. For instance, the perception that men should not undertake jobs associated with roles gendered as feminine, such as caring for others, may explain why some unemployed male Omanis that I interviewed admitted to negative attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, with the notable exception of management positions. Some of the unemployed female Omani graduates agreed that male Omanis were reluctant to work in the T&H sector because of their belief that many of the jobs

the sector offers, such as housekeeping, were associated with women. Some Omani men do not want to work in jobs considered ‘feminine’, because of their fear of embarrassment based on social norms, which could even lead to shame or disgrace. In terms of Omani women, some of them affirmed that patriarchal Omani society still seems unprepared to allow women to make education or career choices for themselves, without their male guardians’ approbation, which significantly influences women’s decisions about work in the T&H sector and the positions women and men respectively accept in the sector. Overall, broader social attitudes and cultural values that assign roles to women in the Omani workforce seem to determine women’s status and opportunities within the T&H sector. In addition, broader social attitudes, including gendered perspectives on incomes, might encourage women to seek careers in the T&H sector while discouraging men’s participation. In terms of Omani women graduates, they are more enthusiastic about working in the T&H sector, given their positive attitudes; they identified their formal qualifications were the most important factors in T&H sector hiring. In this context, HC perspectives point to the idea that the gender income gap may change with additional educational investment: the more women invest in HC, the more they will (rationally) expect better employment opportunities within their field of study.

Many employers affirmed that gendered perspectives on income shaped employees’ attitudes towards the sector. In addition, employers tended to explain their decisions to hire Omani graduates based on potential employees’ skills and competence, rather than on any personal attitudes towards Omani graduates. My research participants affirmed that employers would have no reason to hire either an Omani or migrant graduate preferentially, provided that he or she has the requisite skills needed to improve their productivity. The only exceptions, in a view expressed by certain interviewees, were cases of nepotism or cronyism (Wasta).

Overall, I observed that among unemployed Omani graduates, both men and women seemed determined to find a job in the T&H sector. Some of the participants in this study felt that the

T&H sector did not guarantee job security; they also felt that negative stereotypes about the sector affected social attitudes towards it. From the perspective of the demand for labour, some hotel managers and employers seemed strongly convinced that aspects of the sector such as its capacity to offer a variety of job opportunities make the sector attractive to Omani workers. Employers report that they are focused on filling skills gaps rather than on their personal attitudes, in their hiring decisions. Additionally, there are suggestions that hotel hiring processes may also be affected by gender, physical attractiveness and age. Regarding employment patterns, Omani graduates confirmed their expectations to be based on HC investment: they desire higher-paying jobs and feel that their qualifications represent the dominant factor in T&H sector employment. However, as I discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.3), research to date has confirmed that employers are not always guided by academic qualifications and job experience in their hiring decisions, contrary to the assumptions of HC theory. Meanwhile, such other theoretical and conceptual perspectives as labour market segmentation, occupational niches and gender-based analysis compensate for the analytical weaknesses of HC theory and offer explanations for the range of phenomena where the assumptions of market rationality (both rational choice and meritocracy) are not met in practice. As discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.3), cultural capital theory could help address the influence of Islamic cultural practices towards the T&H sector that contribute to negative attitudes towards employment in the sector, as mentioned by various participants in the study. In addition, other theories besides HC may be needed to explain occupational sex segregation, its contribution to the gender wage gap, and how it can be addressed in social policy. For instance, devaluation theory explains occupational sex segregation and wage differences, proposing that male-dominated occupations are more highly compensated than female-dominated occupations because 'women's work' is devalued by social structures. Also, labour market segmentation theory could offer an approach relevant to such contexts as Omani

graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. Labour market segmentation theory sees the labour market as divided into two segments, with the first or primary segment consisting of relatively permanent jobs with good career prospects; graduates are allocated to this segment based on race and sex (or nationality or citizenship or immigration status might be more relevant in an Omani context). Potential examples of this might include the public sector and the oil sector in Oman. Meanwhile, the second segment consists of temporary jobs, to which graduates are also allocated based on race and sex or nationality; these are usually found in the service sector, including the T&H and media sectors in Oman.

In the next chapter, I will present and discuss data on Omanisation policies and their perceived impact on employability in the T&H sector.

## CHAPTER 6: OMANISATION POLICIES

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse and discuss my participants' perceptions and attitudes regarding the theme of Omanisation and its place in Oman today. In doing this, I explain the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector, how Omanisation policies affect the composition of employment in the sector and how Omanisation policies could be modified. In this context, I discerned that Omanisation can be viewed through different lenses (including demand-side, supply-side and legislative aspects). Therefore, I have organised the evaluation of Omanisation into two subsections. In the first, I discuss attitudes towards Omanisation in light of evolving employment patterns and the impacts of migration. In the second subsection, I present my participants' perceptions about the relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social changes. The second section incorporates two key interrelated themes: first, the relevance of Omanisation to current economic concerns and second, the relevance of Omanisation to current social concerns.

In the next section, I narrow down the theme of Omanisation to its relevance to current social migratory trends and current economic and social changes. I looked into participants' views regarding the fit between Omanisation initiatives and the current states of affairs in the country and globally. In this context, I examined the points of views of migrant and local employees about how these policies affect their employability in Oman and to explain their different patterns of employment and employability in the T&H sector. In the following subsection, I discuss and analyse my participants' opinions regarding the factors that influence their attitudes towards Omanisation policies in relation to current patterns and implications of migration.

## 6.2 Evaluation of Omanisation

### 6.2.1 Factors shaping attitudes towards Omanisation in light of evolving patterns and impacts of migration

In this subsection, I analyse and discuss participants' responses regarding their attitudes towards Omanisation in relation to the evolving patterns and impacts of migration. I inquired from the study's participants how they felt the policy had affected their chances of getting employment and whether such effects had influenced their attitudes towards these policies. Their responses provided insights into their understanding of the patterns of Omani and migrants' employment and employability in the T&H sector.

Among the Omani participants who demonstrated positive attitudes towards the policy, there was a perception that the policy made a positive contribution towards the employability of Omanis in the private sector<sup>64</sup>, in spite of the sector employing many migrant workers. For instance Maryam, a female Omani hotel employee, said:

*I think it is a good policy that may help the Omani government to encourage more Omani youth to get employment in the private sector where we have many migrants. The country still faces extreme levels of unemployment and I think we still need the policy. (Maryam)*

From Maryam's statement, I understood that she views the policy as allowing for the inflow of migrant workers while still making sure that Omani graduates are employable. Maryam's interpretation was also shared by Alexander, a male member of academic staff at college 'A' of migrant origin from a Northern European country, who said:

---

<sup>64</sup> The private sector includes various economic sectors, including the T&H industry in Oman. Typically, I realised that participants preferred to discuss the private sector in general rather than the T&H sector in particular, throughout the data collection process, perhaps due to the influence of official media and social media. Therefore, I decided to place the quote in the data chapters as it is without any personal amendments/intervention. Besides, some of the transcripts have been translated from Arabic to English before being uploaded to the NVivo pro12 (see Appendix 43).

*From my experience, however, I think the government has done so far so good with the Omanisation policies in terms of shaping employment patterns by allowing local graduates as well as migrants to find jobs in the sector. I think it brings a balancing effect in the labour market to ensure that a fair proportion of both the migrants and locals can be employed. (Alexander)*

Like Maryam, Alexander's positive attitudes towards Omanisation seemed to be shaped by the thinking that the policy facilitates employability. However, they differ in that Alexander thought that the policy provided a suitable environment for the employment of both migrant and Omani workers while Ali, an Omani employee working at a city hotel, thought it makes Omanis more employable. Alexander believed that the policy was helping the government in its nationalisation objectives and in facilitating migration.

Meanwhile, some participants expressed the feeling that Omanisation policies have limited the employability of migrants. Among the participants who shared this idea was Ali, an Omani employee working at a city hotel. He stated:

*I wouldn't say I believe in the policy. I do have a negative attitude towards it. Omanisation may sound like a good policy, but it becomes bad when it doesn't seem to assist in filling the skills gap or prevent unemployment of locals. However, it will also be a bad policy if it is perceived negatively by migrant workers and forces some of them to consider returning to their countries. (Ali)*

Ali's statement communicated his perception that Omanisation policies limit the employment of migrants and that they could, in turn, limit the availability of skills for the sector. Ali's understanding was corroborated in a statement made by Maria, a female of migrant origin from North Africa working as a member of academic staff at college 'A':

*Somehow, I don't feel that when the policy can be beneficial to the interest of migrants when it is seen to have focused on supporting the employability interests of Omanis.*

*This may certainly mean that migrants would be unemployable in the long-term. It will also mean that the capacity to access certain unique skills expected from migrant workers becomes limited. (Maria)*

From Maria and Ali statements, I concluded that Omanisation was understood by these respondents to be poorly aligned with the current patterns and impacts of migration. Some migrant workers believe that such policies focus on protecting the employment interests of the locals at the expense of migrant workers. Clearly, Maria's perspective corresponded to that of Ali: both participants perceive these policies as limiting the employment potential of migrants and inhibit the T&H sector's access to certain unique job skills associated with such workers.

This perspective was further developed by Sushma, a female manager of migrant origin from Asia working at a city hotel. Sushma depicted Omanisation as restricting the supply of migrant workers:

*There have been some cases of displeasure with the policy, particularly when it is not possible to recruit migrant workers to fill specific skill gaps. It is a disappointing policy as it limits migrant applicants who seem to want to come to work in the sector. This limits our access to migrant labour. (Sushma)*

Sushma's statement illuminated a viewpoint and attitudes reflecting the demand side of the labour market, which is an essential aspect in my study. It is clear that some managers feel frustrated by Omanisation policies as they carry out their daily work; the restrictions placed by government authorities do not seem appropriate as a response to global migration trends. The difficulties these managers encounter as they strive to attract and empower highly qualified migrants may negatively affect the achievement of the goals and visions of the organisations they serve.

Some of the migrant managers that I interviewed supported the assertion that Omanisation limits the employability of migrants, which in turn restricts the access of T&H employers to

certain skills. For example Pavlo, a male manager of migrant origin from Eastern Europe working at a city hotel, shared this perspective. Like Sushma, he also appeared disappointed with these policies, because they limited the number of migrants who can work in the sector:

*The migrants now have a fear of the Omanisation policies that may cause deportation at any moment, which negatively affects the sector [...]. I have some concerns regarding the enforcement of the Omanisation policies, as it affects the dynamics of work in the sector. I think the policy needs some revision by understanding the social policy global trend. (Pavlo)*

Some employers and managers thus felt that Omanisation could only be a positive factor if it did not limit their access to cheap migrant workers. This indicates the existence of a consensus among the employers and managers that I interviewed: that these policies should be adapted to current requirements.

However, not all workers of migrant origin actually represent cheap labour. In fact, from Ali's statement discussed earlier, it appears that Omanisation would be more efficient if policymakers modified such initiatives to ensure that migrant workers were selected to fill existing skill gaps in the labour market. A similar perspective can be drawn from my interviews with a lecturer at the college, who said:

*I think, if we consider the current migration trends, globalisation has transformed the world, and no country can foolishly claim that discouraging migration can be healthy for an economy. Omanisation policies focus too much on Omani's interests, which can affect how it is perceived. The policy should accommodate migrants' interest. (a lecturer at college 'A'<sup>65</sup>)*

---

<sup>65</sup> Due to the ethical risks of exposing the identity of the informant who made this critical observation I refer to them only as 'a lecturer at college A' in this instance.

The lecturer's statement is understandable, as managers and employers are largely motivated by better performance and profits (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; Toma et al., 2019; Kajackaite and Sliwka, 2018). In my own understanding of the role of managers, they are company agents aiming to maximise value for shareholders. Therefore, I had expected them to view Omanisation in terms of whether it enabled them to access skilled labour from abroad or to cut labour costs by paying migrant workers lower wages. Already, studies in the context of Oman have shown that Omani employers tend to prefer migrant workers because they provide a cheaper source of labour (Bontenbal and Aziz 2013; Zerovec and Bontenbal, 2011).

However, this idea was not restricted to managers and employees. Some Omani graduates believed that their own attitudes towards these policies were shaped by the extent to which they ensured access to a pool of diverse skills. Consistent with this thinking Mohammed, an unemployed male Omani graduate, stated:

*While the policy is supposed to encourage employment, it does not as it may reduce the number of investors who migrate to Oman to provide employment. I have come across some news articles that report on how some migrant investors and workers are showing their displeasure with the policy because it limits labour mobility. Already, many local companies that try to adhere to the demands of the policy or recruiting a specific number of migrants have adequate staff and are not able to absorb more job seekers. Omanisation may discourage both migrant investors and workers from coming.*

**(Mohammed)**

While Mohammed underlined how the policy might limit the variety of skills available in the T&H sector, other participants also felt that such a tendency was inconsistent with the Omani government's goal of ensuring the diversification of its economy. Mohammed's and Pavlo's explanations of the limitations of the policy seemed to reflect the concern that these policies were in conflict with current migratory patterns and the demands of a free labour market. These

comments may also display the readiness of these participants to be global citizens and to accept that globalisation and migration are increasingly inevitable.

Closely related to the concern that these policies were failing to facilitate skill diversification in the T&H sector was the idea that they were inconsistent with current trends regarding economic growth and labour migration. Both tourism experts I interviewed revealed that their negative attitudes towards these policies were linked to the ongoing perception, across the T&H sector, that Omanisation efforts are irrelevant to current social and economic trends. Mahdi Omani, a male tourism expert at a government ministry, observed that such policies might not be suitable under current conditions where migration is shaped by globalisation. Indeed, sociologists and migration scholars have argued that globalisation facilitates large-scale migration between Oman and other, more diverse and geographically distant countries of origin (Steiner and Wanner, 2019; Haas et al., 2018; Mahroum, 2001). Such trends affect labour supply and demand, as Mahdi suggests:

*In my very opinion, Omanisation policies are not very relevant to today's migratory patterns. It is an old policy whose history goes back to '88, I mean 1988. The policy is putting the tourism business into an embarrassing situation. It also makes the sector less attractive to people who want to migrate to work, live or invest. (Mahdi)*

As a senior official within a prestigious government authority, Mahdi was a social policy decision-maker with extensive experience of the issues related to the implementation of Omanisation. He believed that such policies have created problems with several parties in both public and private sectors, mainly in the T&H sector, and therefore he has come to the conclusion that Omanisations policies cannot remain in their current form. Furthermore, he expressed his belief that these policies needed to be subject to an additional round of review because of the confusion they have caused for a number of stakeholders. (In Chapter Eight, I provide policy recommendations relevant to this re-examination.)

Negative attitudes towards Omanisation could also be linked to the understanding, expressed by the two tourism experts I interviewed, that Omanisation policies could only be effective if migrant workers were allowed to fulfil certain skill gaps in the Omani labour market. Indeed, a tourism expert at a government ministry<sup>66</sup> also stated that negative attitudes towards Omanisation are linked to perceptions that it may hinder economic growth in Oman through its effect on migration:

*There is a clear understanding of the ministry that the policy has its negative sides as it is not in sync with globalisation realities like high levels of migrations globally [...] I think migrants and Omanis should have the same rights and responsibilities. In the ministry, the employees here are migrants and Omani who are subject to the Civil Service Law and receive the same salaries, vacations and incentives based on their degree of employment [...]. We have migrants who have been working with us in the ministry for more than 35 years. In my experience working with them, they love Oman a lot and do not want to go home. Moreover, they have a national affiliation to the country. (a tourism expert at a government ministry)*

The expert's views also brought up an important point: she asserted that Omanisation policies downplay the significant role of migrants throughout the Omani labour market. She thought this to be improper, as migrant workers should receive fairer treatment when it comes to accessing work. However, my interviews with migrant workers themselves contained responses that ran contrary to such expectations, expressing surprisingly positive attitudes towards these policies.

---

<sup>66</sup> I have considered ethical risks for exposing my participants' identities, especially when making comments critical of government policy in Oman. In the case of particularly controversial comments, I have suppressed such information as the name of the government ministry concerned.

Such favourable perceptions seemed to arise from migrant workers' knowledge that Omanisation has the potential to balance the positions of Omanis and migrant workers in the labour market. Indeed, some of the migrant workers I interviewed thought that Omanisation was ensuring balance in the employment of Omanis and migrant workers, even though it has largely been promoted and understood as aiming to replace migrants with Omanis. Anna, a female migrant of Asian origin working at a city hotel, was strongly convinced that Omanisation was suitable as it balances Omani and migrant job priorities:

*The policy does not state that migrants should not be employed or given a chance; it just recommends the ratio of migrant and Omani workers that an employer should follow. I think that is very justified and does embrace the spirit of globalisation. Since some Omanis are indeed jobless, they too deserve a chance to work. (Anna)*

Anna here has expressed her belief that both categories deserve employment and empowerment within the context of Omanisation policies in the T&H sector because the labour market should be open to everyone. She indicated that Oman belongs to a global economy; therefore, opportunities should of necessity be given to everyone, including Omani and migrant graduates.

Gamal, a male migrant of North African origin working as a front office manager at a city hotel, also stated that Omanisation policies might be realistic if they balanced the interests of Omanis with those of the migrant workers:

*Omanisation can be excellent when it is seen to protect both locals and migrants and has credibility and transparency. The law should be the same for all. It has to be balanced. (Gamal)*

It appears, therefore, that the primary condition that migrant workers gave for considering the suitability of Omanisation policies is that they ensure balance in the employment of Omanis and migrant graduates, while attaining the government's principal goals of increasing the

number of Omanis employed in the sector. It is also possible that these participants were reluctant to express criticism of the policy to me because of fears that they could be seen to be disloyal to Oman's legal framework. In Chapter Four (on methodology) and both Data chapters Five and Seven, I discussed the issues of reflexivity and positionality arising because of my position as an Omani man.

Overall, some of the migrant workers and managers that I interviewed appeared undecided about the suitability of the policy, perhaps because they found themselves the beneficiaries of current trends regarding globalisation and migration. Meanwhile, some insisted that they have positive attitudes towards it, including Kumar and Rahul, students of migrant origin from Asia, who argued that it is a suitable policy because of its fairness:

*It is a fair policy. All countries would surely want to serve their citizens with jobs first.*

*It is working in the interest of Omanis. It is a good policy. (Kumar)*

*Strangely, I do support it. I tend to imagine that every country would want to give out jobs to the natives first. The role of the government is to provide jobs to the citizens. So, it is in line with good governance. (Rahul).*

Reflecting on their experiences, it is possible that these participants might have elected to support the policy owing to their status as migrants and their understanding that I, the interviewer, work for the Omani government. Recognising my identity as an Omani, I emphasised my role as a student researcher while conducting my fieldwork. These participants of migrant origin may have wanted to show that they are at peace with Omani social policies like Omanisation to avoid controversy.

At the same time, other participants chose to express different opinions. Unlike his fellow migrant students, Arjun associated his negative attitudes towards Omanisation with a growing

perception that the policy is in conflict with the effects of globalisation, such as greater labour mobility:

*No, the policy is not justified. I think it is not proper in the age of globalisation. I have friends who want to work in Australia as well as Australians who want a job in Oman.*

**(Arjun)**

Arjun has concluded that Omanisation policies would work better if they were more flexible and open to interpretation. Allowing qualified migrants to enter the Omani labour market more easily would recognise the ambitions and aspirations some migrant graduates have, to contribute effectively to the Omani economy.

Indeed, even many Omani hotel employees and academic staff felt that Omanisation policies should ensure a multiplicity of skills from migrants within the sector, while managers of migrant origin wanted to ensure greater access to cheap labour from migrants. Accordingly, it can be inferred that Omanisation initiatives affect access to skills and cheap labour depending on their implementation, as both of these aspects of the labour supply relate to migration. On the face of it, many participants in this study held opinions about the relevance of Omanisation to Oman's economic diversification policies *Thanfeedh*.

In the next section, I analyse and discuss participants' perceptions of the relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social changes.

### **6.3 The relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social changes**

#### **6.3.1 Relevance to current economic changes**

One theme that did emerge from the interview data concerned the effects of Omanisation on the employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates was the emerging priority that the labour market should have an array of skills, in light of contemporary economic trends. In particular, unemployed Omani graduates understand that Omanisation initiatives have outlived

the usefulness because these policies have not changed to align with Oman's current objective of diversifying its economy. While interviewing the participants in this study, I came to understand that they have internalised Omani government's economic diversification goals, characterised by strategic efforts to broaden a variety of industries and workers.

Maha, a female Omani unemployed graduate, felt that the priority given to Omanisation was unsuitable and had not been able to adapt to recent economic changes:

*It is not suitable because it is not part of Oman's economic diversification goals. Due to the changes we see in the economy where more industries are being developed, I would expect that policies and regulations should encourage a variety of workers, skills and talents. (Maha)*

Maha emphasised that, for Oman to realise its long-term economic development goals, it has to acknowledge the significance of a diverse workforce rather than fulfilling certain narrow political ambitions. She continued this line of thought further:

*Actually, my point is that while the policy may be working to please some policymakers like members of the Majlis Al-Shura,<sup>67</sup> who just want to please their constituencies whom they represent in government, these policymakers are unaware that the Sultanate is in another level of economic development that requires that if diversification has to work, then there has to be a free atmosphere where employers compete for scarce talents, whether locals or migrants. (Maha)*

Accordingly the impact of migrants, in bringing new skills to diversify the labour market and shaping perceptions regarding Omanisation, cannot be underestimated. A body of international migration scholarship has shown that a less restrictive labour market, where government policies encourage qualified migration to fill skill gaps, is linked to improved labour market

---

<sup>67</sup> A legislative body in Oman regarded as the lower house of the Council of Oman (parliament), consisting of democratically elected representatives (Majlis Shura, 2020).

outcomes: migrants bring in new skills and competencies and enhance economic development in their host countries (Corluy et al. 2011; Redbird and Escamilla-García, 2020; Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; Boucher, 2020; Mesch, 2003; Pager and Shepherd, 2008; in Chapter Two, section 2.3.2, I discuss the role of migrants in the economies of Oman and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in terms of existing, empirical literature).

Maha's remarks showed that she was informed of Oman's current goals of diversifying the economy, which Omanisation could hamper by limiting access to talents and skills from abroad. However, Maha's remarks were also surprising in that, at the time of the interview, she was unemployed. I had expected her to support the policy to limit competition for jobs. Similarly Faisal, another unemployed Omani graduate like Maha, argued that such policies were not suitable for the sector as they did not adequately address current economic concerns:

*The policy does not address current goals to diversify the economy. I think this policy was created exclusively by the government without taking into account the opinions or suggestions of other parties such as employers, employees, citizens and migrants.*

**(Faisal)**

Faisal seems convinced that the failure of Omanisation initiatives came about when policymakers failed to include the concerns and views of diverse stakeholders and actors in the Omani economy, leading to its overlooking the critical issues currently facing core actors in the Omani labour market.

Therefore, to my surprise, I detected a feeling on the part of some unemployed Omani graduates that Omanisation policies should be done away with as incompatible with the government's economic diversification policies *Thanfeedh*.<sup>68</sup> I had expected them to support Omanisation

---

<sup>68</sup> As I discussed in Chapter One, the diversification policies are the process of increasing the number of sectors or markets in an economy to ensure reliance on multiple sources of income nationally (Supreme Council for Planning – Oman, 2016).

initiatives, as the policy had been intended to increase their participation in the labour market. However, this contrary perspective was shared by a number of unemployment graduates that I interviewed. Another example came from my interview with Lamya, a female Omani unemployed graduate. She said:

*I don't agree with the policy. As I had explained to you, the reason why I decided to take a course in the tourism and hospitality sector is that I appreciate working in an atmosphere that has an assortment of people, cultures and employment opportunities. There have been discussions in class and even on social media that Omanisation can limit such things. So, I guess you now understand my position. (Lamya)*

Lamya's perspectives regarding these policies were comparable to those of Faisal and Maha. All of these participants seemed to share the understanding that the policy has, indirectly, limited their employability by limiting access to diverse work opportunities through the growth of the sector. It also appeared that they did not view migrants to be a threat to their employability, necessarily, perhaps because they have come to a realisation that migrants – as a by-product of globalisation – were inevitable contributors to a diversified economy.

Looking back, I had not expected that unemployed Omanis would be particularly aware of the goal of economic diversification. At the outset, I had expected to obtain only superficial information regarding Oman's economic diversification goals from them during my fieldwork. Sometimes this expectation was met: for instance, in my interview with Huda, a female unemployed Omani graduate, I observed that she was not very well informed about Omanisation:

*I don't know much about it [Omanisation policies] in detail, although I understand that implementing it is a problem because of the existing skills gaps. I have heard about certain quotas being set for each sector. But, to tell you the truth, I have never taken the time to find out much about it. I know that it is working. (Huda)*

Huda's statement shows that even some unemployed Omani graduates who lack information about the policy understand the importance of having a variety of skills in the labour market. It also appears from Lamya's, Faisal's and Huda's statements that diversification goals have recently dominated the media in Oman, making it a critical subject of discourse that many participants could relate to. For instance, unemployed Omani graduates mentioned that social media platforms like Twitter have played a significant role in Oman in terms of providing updates on the economic diversification goals of the government, particularly since the 2016 oil crisis that negatively affected the country's revenue. Lamya, Faisal and Huda appeared concerned about current economic and social conditions, following recent coverage of issues that could directly affect their potential to find jobs, earn a good income, maintain a comfortable family standard of living, have good health care and access other social welfare services.

Previous studies have attested to such personal goals and priorities (Ali et al. 2017; Al-Lamki, 2000; Atef and Al-Balushi, 2016; Das and Gokhale, 2010). At any rate, Lamya, Faisal and Huda each communicated their fears that the T&H sector would suffer from an extreme labour shortage unless migrant workers were allowed to fill the gap between labour demand and supply in the sector. This perception may have influenced their evaluation of Omanisation policies, and it is also possible that some of these participants were also concerned that Omanisation initiatives could discourage international investment. Clearly, in this case they would be likely to feel that such policy could negatively affect their opportunities for employment, given that reduced investment would translate to reduced employment opportunities. From this perspective, competition from migrant workers would be less of a concern than attracting international investment and new jobs to Oman. Broadly speaking, this indicates the growth of human capital in Oman, whereby those who are educated understand the importance of migrants to diversify the economy's skills complement.

The opinions expressed by unemployed Omani graduates did not diverge significantly from those presented by the tourism experts that I interviewed. In fact, the two perspectives seemed to be closely connected. Lamy'a's, Faisal's and Huda's opinion that policymakers had not been very thorough in their consideration of ongoing economic changes is further highlighted by a tourism expert at a government ministry<sup>69</sup>. Being a high-ranking government official, he mentioned that while he is aware that the policy has its negative sides, he could not discuss some of the relevant policy considerations because of his position as a civil servant.

Mahdi also argued that, while initially there were strong justifications for the policy, it does not agree with the current goal of economic diversification. It is interesting to observe that, like the unemployed Omani graduates, Mahdi also mentioned the government's strategic objectives, and his reference to social media may also have been influenced by the media's recent focus on the Omani government's preoccupation with diversifying the economy.

The same nuances arise when considering the perspective set forth by Hind, a female Omani female tourism expert at a government ministry. In her interview, she set forth her position that Omanisation limited access to diverse labour attributes and failed to consider Oman's economic realities:

*We need migrants to support the economy. Let us not forget that we have traditionally been a labour importing country. Still, we both know that Oman needs both skilled and unskilled migrant workers in present and future. By the way, Omanisation is more applicable in the private sector, as it is dominated by migrant workers. (Hind)*

Given her position within a government authority, it is unsurprising that Hind reinforced the government's interests. She observed that the implementation of Omanisation might be more

---

<sup>69</sup> As I mentioned earlier, I have considered ethical risks for exposing my participants' identities, especially when making comments critical of government policy in Oman. In the case of particularly controversial comments, I have suppressed such information as the name of the government ministry concerned.

useful if lead by the private sector; it could reduce the pressure on government revenues as private firms, including those in the T&H sector, would generate more job opportunities for citizens instead of Omanis relying mainly on the government to generate employment opportunities.

Like Hind, Mahdi shared the opinion that Omanisation has lost its value and did not fit into the current economic state of affairs, where economic diversification should be at the centre of economic development policy. He declared that such policies have failed to take into account particular stakeholder perspectives, leading to resistance by employers in the industry that has derailed their full implementation:

*There are significant challenges faced by the policy. There is a clear indication of opposition to the policy by both local and international investors who want to operate in a highly diversified economy. Picture this: stakeholders in the tourism industry are primarily opposed to the policy. Many hotels are not cooperating with the government in supporting Omanisation. In fact, during a Council of Ministers late last year, one of the discussions entailed coming up with strategies on how to ensure that the private sector supports Omanisation. (Mahdi)*

Mahdi's comment reflected the concerns of the government as well as the ongoing debates about Omanisation policies and their implementation. This subject was central to the government economic agenda circulating in local newspapers and social media in Oman, with an emphasis on ways the private sector, through T&H development could contribute to such efforts.

Some of the hotel managers I interviewed appeared to be dissatisfied with the relevance of these policies to economic realities, limiting their access to diverse talents and skills in the labour market. The perception that some hotels were not cooperating and were indeed opposing Omanisation was particularly interesting, as it suggested that businesses, concerned with their

productivity and profitability goals, were likely to view these policies as obstacles. For instance, the idea that some employers might view migrant workers to be less costly yet more productive could explain this aspect. This was highlighted by my interview with Thuriya, a female Omani manager working at the tourism company:

*When it comes to the point of view of an employer, I think, that is where it gets complicated. In my place of work, for instance, there seems to be a general feeling of discontent with the policy because it restricts our freedom to recruit as many migrant workers as we want. This limits the access and transfer of skills. (Thuriya)*

Thuriya thus asserted that Omanisation disrupts access to expertise, skills and competencies that are essential for employers to strengthen the tourism economy, raising productivity in hotels and other tourism companies and thereby raising profits. Thus she felt that Omanisation might have a negative impact on the demand side of the labour market.

Gamal, a male migrant manager of North African origin working at a city hotel, was also concerned that Omanisation was irrelevant to current economic concerns. Such policies would tend to limit the competition among migrant and Omani employees, competition seen as necessary to improve the quality of skills available in the job market:

*I have some concerns regarding the enforcement of the Omanisation policies, as it will affect the dynamics of work and transfer of knowledge and expertise to Omanis. Omanisation cannot be the solution to youth unemployment [...]. The solution should be public education to necessitate a change of attitudes, and more formal training to build up the amount of a competent labour force. So, while Omanisation is realistically an attempt to increase the ratio of Omani workers in the labour market, it should be revised to increase competition in all economic sectors whereby the local workforce can compete freely with migrants. (Gamal)*

Gamal's assertions that Omanisation was not a solution to the problem of youth unemployment in Oman echoed the earlier discussion of unemployed Omani participants. The latter pointed to the unintended implications of these policies in terms of discouraging international investment, which would reduce employment opportunities generally in Oman. Gamal strengthened this argument by pointing out the likelihood that Omanisation policy could limit employability and suggesting that young Omanis' negative attitudes towards working in specific sectors were a serious problem. Put differently, Omanisation could not change attitudes on the supply side of the labour force, but education and training could.

Sushma, a female migrant manager discussed in the previous section, also argued that the issue of the suitability of Omanisation could be viewed from the perspectives of different stakeholders, particularly the government and investors:

*From the point of view of the government, I think it is still an appropriate policy today since the government's fundamental role is to provide jobs for Omanis. Of course, it also needs to sustain businesses. When we have some investors go away because they disagree with the policy, then we can also say that the policy is not suitable for the government. (Sushma)*

Sushma's assertions could be interpreted as calling attention to the possibility that policymakers might be using too narrow an approach in implementing Omanisation. In her view, one factor contributing to this was the Omani government's assumed preoccupation with reducing the number of migrant workers to open up opportunities for Omani job-seekers. Sushma felt that a broader and more realistic approach would only be possible when the perspectives of all stakeholders were taken into account to ensure that the resulting initiatives would balance the concerns of all stakeholders, including those put forward by migrant workers, foreign investors and employers.

Some Omani employees also emphasised the need to ensure that Omanisation policies meet Oman's goals of diversifying the economy away from overdependence on the oil and gas sector, which could be attained through consultation with concerned stakeholders. It was on this basis that Ali, an Omani hotel employee, observed that the government should include the perspectives of differing stakeholders, including employers and Omani women, when considering how Omanisation should be amended and implemented. In his view, these policies would be more practical if policymakers first recognise the role that variety in skill and talent plays in the Omani labour market. Jayaram, a female migrant manager of Asian origin working at a city hotel, also argued that all stakeholder perspectives should be taken into consideration:

*I mean, there has to be constant consultation with the players in all economic sectors to determine the practicality of the policy, and if it is established that it has become irrelevant, then it should be done away with. (Jayaram)*

Jayaram has pointed out a missing link in the implementation of Omanisation and explained that this policy was not appropriate in relation to current economic trends.

At this point, Omani graduates in this study seem more critical of Omanisation than migrant participants. Attention to reflexivity and positionality of standpoints and dynamic power relationships within the study suggest that, as the most vulnerable category of subjects in my research, migrant participants may be afraid to criticise Omani policies in front of an Omani researcher employed by the Omani government. (I have explained this point in detail in the methodology chapter – Chapter Four – and in relation to the conclusion in Chapter Eight).

Indeed, one objective of Omanisation is to encourage the employment of Omanis (Ennis and Walton-Roberts, 2018). Salma, a female Omani working at a city hotel, expressed her disapproval of the policy and its potential to discourage workers:

*I am more concerned about Omanisation. I think it kills the morale of workers. Many of my migrant colleagues in the hotel are very worried about Omanisation and what*

*people think about it. They believe it is supposed to victimise them or punish them unjustly. While there are other good things about the policy that I like, I think that many Omanis and migrant workers lack an idea of what Omanisation is really about. (Salma)*

In this interview, Salma revealed that some migrant and Omani graduates had superficial information about Omanisation policies. They may have expressed a lack of interest in the details of such policies because of the sensitivity of the topic and because they might be busy with other life priorities, such as their studies or their careers.

However, not all employed Omanis criticised Omanisation. Kuthar, a female Omani hotel employee, thought these policies would enable the government to attain its employment targets and in the process assist in the restructuring of the labour market to fit its diversification goals. She argued that the media should be blamed for creating a negative image of the policy:

*My only problem is that the media has given the policy a bad image. In fact, I have always taken pains to explain to some of my migrant workmates that the media is making it seem like Omanisation is a policy intended to get rid of migrants. That is a bad image because that is not the way it is. I would have been happy if the media had said that the policy is supposed to encourage Omanis to participate in the private sector. I believe that once you finish college, you should focus all your energy on getting employed in any sector of interest. (Kuthar)*

Also, differences in perception of the relevance of such policies between employees with greater work experience and those with less or none suggest that individual experiences in the sector influenced participants' perceptions of their readiness to work under the policy. Indeed, this offered a clear indicator that a higher level of employee engagement at work was linked to a greater accumulation of work experience that in turn increased employees' knowledge of how they were directly or indirectly affected by labour force policies, as has been discussed by

scholarship regarding international migration in advanced countries (Tani, 2019; Redbird and Escamilla-García, 2020).

In the next subsection, I explore the relevance of Omanisation to social concerns based on the perspectives prevalent within each category of participants.

### **6.3.2 Relevance to current social concerns**

In this subsection, I argue that certain issues are fundamental to the analysis of the relevance of Omanisation to current social concerns, in light of the patterns of entry of Omani and migrant graduates into the T&H labour market. Some participants felt that perceived disparities in the levels of entry of Omani and migrant graduates in the sectoral labour market might contribute to social tensions. It appears that the patterns of employment of Omanis and migrants could either contribute to tensions between the two categories or, conversely, could help dispel them.

While offering their perspectives on government initiatives to ensure employment and employability in the T&H sector, the two tourism experts I interviewed explained that, because of the relatively high number of migrant workers, the government is focussing on addressing social tensions between Omani and migrant workers. This idea was evident in the explanation provided by Hind, the female Omani tourism expert at a government ministry discussed in the previous section, who stated:

*I believe the target (of the government) is to have migrant workers make up, at most, 33% of the population. In 2013, the Shura Council came up with a new law that put a cap on foreign workers at 33% of the population. Setting such a ratio may have the effect of minimising tensions, as Omani workers would understand that all their migrant colleagues are in the workforce subject to government regulations. (Hind)*

This statement by Hind drew my attention to the Omani government's awareness of the likelihood that tensions could arise if Omanis came to interpret migrants as taking away their

jobs. From this perspective, Omanisation policies regulate the composition of Oman's labour market to address the potential tensions between Omani and migrant workers.

This account suggests that the government might have foreseen the possibilities of xenophobic attacks and averted them through Omanisation. Similar concerns have led to tensions in other locales, such as South Africa where since the early 2000s, the national migration policy has been widely criticised for being racialised<sup>70</sup> in relation to specific categories of people, ascribing ethnic or racial identities and deploying them to affect services provided by both the public and private sectors, including employment, education and housing. For instance, in August and September of 2019, South African extremists engaged in xenophobic violence against migrants to South Africa, whom they accused of taking away jobs. During the attacks, Nigerian-owned businesses were destroyed and burned down. Several migrants of Nigerian origin were also lynched in public; in the end, 12 deaths were officially reported. The case of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa reflects the reality that migrants are not the cause of economic problems, but that national governments can be blamed when their policies are not seen to control the complex interdependence between migrants and locals in the economy (Beetar, 2019; Kerr et al., 2019; Solomon, 2019; Constant, 2014; BBC News, 2019b; Holmes, 2019; Khumalo, 2019).

While regulating migrant labour may communicate that the government is in control of the labour market, promoting the view that the ratio of migrants in the market has been carefully calculated to allow for the participation of local Omanis in the labour market, restrictive

---

<sup>70</sup> The terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' have been used almost interchangeably in a wide range of sociological research; both terms have been used to describe the diverse identities present in societies and the characteristics or stereotypes pertaining to specific groups of people (Semyonov and Glikman, 2009; Loveman, 1999; Bonilla-Silva, 1999).

Racialisation: in a literature review covering sociology related to race and ethnicity, racialisation is the process of defining people based on ethnic or racial identifiers and attributing characteristics to relationships, social practices or categories of people in relation to such social structures within a particular society (Barot and Bird, 2001; Hochman, 2019; Balogun, 2019).

policies may also encourage hostility towards migrants because it reinforces the view that it is migrants who are the problem (Rzepnikowska, 2019; Das and Gokhale, 2010; De Bel-Air, 2015; Winckler, 2010). Cases of xenophobia<sup>71</sup> have also been witnessed by Polish migrants to the UK before and after the referendum on leaving the UK (the ‘Brexit’ vote) in June 2016. Months before the vote, hate crimes were reported by the police in the UK as 41% higher than a year before. Posters were left in public places in parts of the UK, such as in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, asking the Polish people to leave the country. In one instance, a 40-year-old factory worker from Poland named Arkadiusz Jóźwik was killed on the streets of Harlow by a group of troublemakers when he was found to speak Polish (Rzepnikowska, 2019). Research has established that xenophobia exists to some extent in all societies, including Arabian Gulf states such as Oman, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia and also in developed countries such the UK and EU countries (Jureidini, 2003; Rzepnikowska, 2019; Das and Gokhale, 2010; De Bel-Air, 2015; Winckler, 2010). Fundamentally, xenophobia has resulted in policies across the GCC that give preferential treatment to locals over migrant workers, including by ensuring that contract workers are only in the country for a limited time. Governments in the region may be understood as developing such policies to avert xenophobia, which could otherwise lead to tensions between migrant and local workers (Rzepnikowska, 2019; Das and Gokhale, 2010; De Bel-Air, 2015). However, there is no research to date demonstrating that such tensions have occurred in Oman.

However, this issue is rather multifaceted and nuanced and requires cautious treatment. Indeed, some research has shown that policies to restrict migration can fuel or reinforce anti-migrant attitudes rather than abating them (Card et al., 2005; Feinstein and Bonikowski, 2019; Hainmueller and Hopkins, 2014; Wei et al., 2019).

---

<sup>71</sup> Xenophobia consists of hate or dislike directed towards a particular class or category of people, generally those perceived as outsiders (Bessudnov, 2016; Bekhuis et al., 2013; Marfouk, 2019).

While interviewing tourism experts, another idea emerged about the potential for social tensions to result from a large number of migrant workers in Oman. The idea was expressed by Mahdi, the other Omani tourism expert working at a government ministry discussed in the previous section. However, unlike Hind, one tourism expert at a government ministry was more concerned with the idea that the government is not doing enough to restrain the exploitation of migrant workers:

*I don't think the government through Omanisation has dedicated significant resources to the formation of monitoring mechanisms to realistically identify the real work experiences of migrant workers. Of course, if I stray a bit from the tourism sector, there have been cases of domestic worker exploitation and the inability of the migrant worker to suitably access the criminal justice system to make their cases against errant employers. ( a tourism expert at a government ministry<sup>72</sup>)*

On the whole, these responses by tourism experts point to the interpretation that the government has not sought to address the exploitation of migrant workers in the private sector.

Ensuring flexible applications and interpretations of Omanisation may encourage Omani workers to see themselves as playing a fundamental role in the development of their economy.

The tensions that could otherwise result were described by Khan, a male migrant employee of Asian origin at a city hotel, who said:

*Unlike their senior colleagues, young Omani workers feel threatened by the labour market situation, as they have this conception that so long as migrants exist, they will forever be exposed to the risk of unemployment. So, Omanisation should address such a concern. Just last year, one of my colleagues who was considered to be generally unfriendly toward many migrants tried to engage me in a private conversation. I did*

---

<sup>72</sup> Due to the ethical risks of exposing the identity of the informant who made this critical observation I refer to them only as 'a tourism expert at a government ministry' in this instance.

*not feel comfortable conversing with him. In fact, I had to tell him that I always found it hard conversing with him because he was not very friendly. (Khan)*

In this interview, Khan has pointed to some social tensions that may arise between Omani and migrant graduates based on attitudes that occur in the workplace due to the pressures of work. Omanisation policies themselves cannot address these workplace tensions. Policies may benefit Omanis while negatively affecting migrants, because the latter are one of the most vulnerable categories in Omani society.

To understand the state of affairs in the workplace in greater depth, and discern whether or not such issues currently exist, I asked some of the hotel employees whether they were aware of tensions between migrant and Omani workers. From their responses, I discerned that a disproportionate ratio of migrant workers to Omanis could contribute to an implicit conflict between Omani and migrant workers if the variation of the labour market and the speed of entry of graduates were not controlled. However, I also observed that none of these participants mentioned witnessing any such tensions in the last three months at the workplace.

Local Omani hotel workers refused to comment about the existence of such tensions and only noted that Omani and migrant workers had conflicting expectations in terms of pay and work hours. For instance Maryam, a female Omani employee at a city hotel, opined that such divergent interests might lead employers to prefer hiring migrants, which could be a source of tension as it leads to the perception of bias in hiring:

*I wouldn't say there is no bias. I have had cases where it was said that our management tends to prefer migrants because they have attitudes that allow them to work on all kinds of jobs or work for longer hours. If that is the case, then they are justified to have such bias because the hotel wants to make profits. Such bias is what sometimes leads to tensions. But, the T&H sector is not like the government. Profit is the incentive for*

*organisations in the T&H sector. Maybe, that's the reason we the Omanis prefer working in the public sector. (Maryam)*

By the way, Maryam disclosed a likely motivation why she would prefer to work in the public sector: she would be motivated by working for the good of her country, rather than for the profit of a private firm. From her statement, it seems that tensions between Omani and migrant workers triggered by T&H sector employers' preferences for migrant workers might also have dissuaded her efforts to pursue work in the T&H sector.

When asked what he thought about the existence of tensions between Omanis and migrants and the role of Omanisation Khan, a male migrant employee discussed earlier in this section, stated:

*There are deep divisions in public opinion across Oman regarding the importance of migrant workers and that of local workers. However, they need to understand that what is happening is a natural result of globalisation and that nothing can stop it, not even the most focussed policy. Most Omanis I have met are upbeat and pleasantly optimistic about transforming their country into the next major economic power in the Middle East, and that is why you will see many of them being very welcoming to migrants. However, we cannot hide from the truth that some Omanis are also resistant to the idea of having many migrants around. This is a concern that Omanisation should try to address (Khan)*

Khan's statement could be construed as encouraging the Omani government and policymakers to focus on managing the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector in light of Omanisation policies.<sup>73</sup> It is possible that the government could communicate more effectively that it has considered the requirements of the Omani economy in relation to its dependence on migrant workers. Indeed, a body of

---

<sup>73</sup> Policy recommendations will be debated further in the conclusion chapter of this thesis (Chapter Eight).

international sociological research suggests that when individuals perceive government institutions to be fair, social tensions are substantially reduced (Weber, 2019; Andrejuk, 2019; Carter et al., 1996; Rajendran et al., 2020). In other words, trust and fairness in government institutions and policies should be mutually self-reinforcing.

The idea that Omanisation should not be blamed for the tensions that could arise because of the speedy entry of migrant workers and the relatively slow entry of local graduates was also supported by migrant hotel workers, as well as those of Omani origin. Indeed, some migrant hotel workers viewed the government as making a positive contribution towards reducing possible tensions between Omani and migrant workers. Because of recent government legislative efforts to bring balance, a number of migrant and Omani participants reported that the government's social policy roles seemed to focus on ensuring the employment of Omanis. For instance Anna, a female migrant manager of Asian origin working at a city hotel, stated that the government was trying to ensure that local Omanis were educated to compete for jobs with migrants. She found that the ratio of migrant workers was reasonable enough to avoid a perception that migrants were taking all the competitive positions:

*In the tourism sector, for instance, we have a college that has been established to ensure that there is a constant supply of Omani labour. But, as I did mention to you, the problem is getting Omanis to apply for jobs in the tourism sector. If we look at the policies, we have Omanisation. Yes, I think the government has tried to make it work by suggesting ratios by which local Omanis and migrants can be employed. The rate is in itself imbalanced, as it seeks to ensure that more Omanis enter the labour market.*

**(Anna)**

Anna's claims showed that not every participant felt that the government's efforts to implement Omanisation were counterproductive. Rather, the government's strategy of suggesting a ratio of employable Omanis to employers could produce the intended results if internalised by

employers in their practices. However, my earlier discussion has suggested that this goal could not necessarily be attained, as some hotels were unwilling to implement such measures and preferred to pursue unrestricted access to migrant workers.

Anna's statement also revealed that despite government efforts to boost the educational attainment of Omanis to ensure that they can compete against migrant workers for jobs in this sector, the problem was to induce Omanis to join the supply of labour for the labour market. (This argument discussed in detail in Chapter Five). This finding seems to contradict previous research, which had emphasised the need for policymakers to strengthen workers' investment in human capital through education to attain such goals as greater social cohesion, higher employment rates and improved earning capacity (Gërxhani and Van De Werfhorst, 2013; Blagg and Blom, 2018; Hjalmarsson and Lochner, 2012). It is clear from my participants' responses that Omani society is benefitting from an increase in the level of educational attainment to the intended degree, because of graduates' poor attitudes towards some sectors, leaving such positions to be filled by migrant workers.

I also asked other categories of participants about the relationship between Omanisation and likely or existing tensions between Omani and migrant workers. Most of the students chose not to talk about this tension, except for Amira, a female migrant student of North African origin studying at college 'A'. Amira seemed to acknowledge that if such tensions existed in the T&H sector, Omanisation should not be held accountable:

*The T&H sector seems to have more migrant workers than Omani workers, but there is no tension, and I don't think Omanisation policies should be blamed for any tension.*

**(Amira)**

Amira expressed a different viewpoint and a more positive attitude towards Omanisation compared to Kumar, perhaps because, as a student, she does not have much experience

concerning the T&H work environment. In her college, she may not yet have encountered any emerging social tensions whether or not they are present in the workplace.

Likewise Alexander, a male of migrant origin from Northern Europe working as a member of academic staff at college 'A', also acknowledged the role of the government in addressing future tensions:

*It is evident that the government is doing much to ensure that local people get into good careers, including by sponsoring their education or ensuring that they get better chances to get in jobs and avoid such tensions in future. (Alexander)*

As an academic, Alexander's view that higher education has a significant role in educating Omani and migrant graduates should not be surprising; he has assumed that this could prevent the emergence of social tensions related to the implementation of the Omanisation policies. Accordingly, such social difficulties should not occur in the medium and long term.

Maria, a female of migrant origin from North Africa working as a member of academic staff at college 'A', refused to comment on the existence of tensions and only articulated what she thinks should be the ideal situation in a globalised setting like Oman:

*Well, that's a tricky question. From my layman's point of view, I think it is time we had a policy that is designed to encourage social integration of Omanis and migrant workers because of Omanisation. (Maria)*

Through this statement, Maria has asserted that the Omanisation policies must be reformulated continuously, updated and revised to match the policies of the outside world and local changes. From her perspective, Omanisation policies in their current form did not seem suitable for the current generation of graduates and policy actors, and thus could create social tensions between the two categories.

In my interviews with unemployed Omani graduates, I asked about their perceptions of the role of Omanisation in either encouraging or averting social tensions between Omani and migrant workers. These participants reported no knowledge of the existence of such tensions and generally asserted that, if such tensions did exist, then the lack of effective social policies was responsible, rather than migrants workers:

*I wouldn't blame migrant workers if such tensions existed. But, I would blame social policies. There is only one policy that I know of, and that is Omanisation. The government knows that there is a social cost if Omanis are not employed, as this could lead to tensions. This is particularly relevant when we have widespread poverty and social injustice in the country. The government has taken into account the policy of social justice for job seekers. Is the policy of Omanisation taking care of this aspect? Yes [...] there will be a sizeable social cost if the government does not intervene and adjust its labour market policies because of the accumulation and increase in the number of job seekers every year. (Omar)*

As an unemployed graduate, Omar reflected the views of many job seekers who have invested in education as a form of HC. He proposed that government policies be amended to improve the conditions of the unemployed, taking into account the social aspirations of graduates – like finding jobs and getting married – and avoiding the problems caused for Omani society by the difficulties encountered by graduates.

Norah, an unemployed female Omani graduate, also felt that Omanisation has been useful but blamed poor workplace policies that lead to discrimination as potentially fuelling tensions:

*Lack of transparency and integrity in the workplace could be blamed if such tensions existed, but not Omanisation. I think this is an essential condition. Providing a fair working environment among women, men, Omanis and migrants and respecting the duties and rights of stakeholders are the most important things. Injustice, bias and*

*relative favouritism, or what we call 'Wasta' or nepotism – where the employer recruits, pays higher and promotes his friends and family – may lead to such tensions.*

**(Norah)**

Norah's statement indicated that ineffective workplace policies that leave loopholes for nepotism have contributed to workplace tensions by engendering a feeling of unfairness and dissatisfaction, and a resulting decline in morale. Her account also revealed the existence of unfair labour market entry patterns, in the form of nepotism. However, as I discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.2.2), other participants felt that bias and favouritism were not a prevalent feature of hiring in the T&H sector.

As unemployed Omani graduates were concerned about the likelihood that workplace policies could contribute to tensions about the composition of the T&H workforce, I found it relevant to ask hotel managers and employers whether this is their perception. A vast collection of research on international migration has shown that earnings inequalities and other forms of discrimination among racial and national groups can contribute to tensions in the workplace, including among highly educated workers. It can also lead to poor integration of migrant workers (Johnson et al., 1997; Diamond, 1998; Barrett and Duffy, 2008; Nee et al., 1994; Knight, 2015).

Some managers and employees, both migrants and Omanis, seemed to be well-informed about the issues surrounding the policies of employees. One policy that I found to be both controversial and interesting concerned accommodation. My attention was drawn to this policy by Khan, a male manager of migrant origin discussed earlier in this section:

*We have a policy that makes accommodation or housing only available to migrant workers, both male and female. We provide housing facilities to some of our migrant workers depending on the specifications of the work contract. Unfortunately, we do not*

*offer our Omani workers such a facility, and this has led to some disquiet among some workers who are locals. (Khan)*

Khan's statement implies that claims by unemployed Omani graduates that tensions should be attributed to workplace policies, rather than Omanisation policies, are indeed compelling. He acknowledged that the accommodation policy led to uneasiness among Omani workers. As an expert in the field of employee recruitment and retention at a city hotel, his remarks might suggest that the accommodation policy is intended to counteract negative perceptions of Omanisation by showing constructive efforts by employers to support the welfare of their migrant workers. While the general message from participants depicted T&H-sector employers as doing little to ensure the smooth implementation of the Omanisation policies, it is plausible that some hotels, like the one where Khan works, have resolved to ensure greater inclusion of migrants into the Omani workforce. From my interview with him, I learned that the motive for providing accommodation is to enable them to settle comfortably in Oman and more generally to promote their welfare. I also observed that such accommodation arrangements represent individual workplace policies and are subject to the provisions of the *Kafala* (visa-sponsorship) policies, which provides 'the legal foundation for [migrant] employment and residency' in Oman (Khan and Harroff-Tavel, 2011, p. 295; Balasubramanian, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2016a; Indrelid, 2018). As argued in Chapter Two (the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies), the legal status of migrant workers is primarily guided by provisions of the *kafala* system, requiring that a migrant worker's status be subject to the approval of the employer to legally live and work in the country. Indeed, employers are required to assume control over migrant workers as exemplified by Article 40 of the Labour Law, which provides employers with the right to dismiss migrant workers without prior notice. Migrant workers are also not permitted to work for a new employer without the express approval of their current employer (Balasubramanian, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2016a; Indrelid, 2018).

Therefore, migrant workers receiving accommodation from their employers may not change jobs without seeking the express permission of their employers. While the accommodation may be provided free of charge to eligible workers, subsidised or deducted from their salaries, depending on their employment contract, it is also possible that providing accommodation can represent a form of control over migrant workers. For instance, if workers change jobs, they may also lose their accommodation. Therefore, this may be a way of reducing the autonomy of migrants by making it more difficult for them to change employers. At the same time, accommodation policies could also lead to tensions between Omani and migrant workers by fuelling the perception that migrant workers are being provided with preferential treatment at the detriment of Omanis, within their own country. Khan underscored this idea:

*We try to be very professional and follow our work policies that proscribe discrimination based on gender or race. Some people may say they don't hire locals, or that we don't hire migrants and things like that. Everybody has a different view on this. That is why we have to be guided by our work policies and ethical codes of conduct to make sure that no discrimination happens. (Khan)*

Accommodation policies may seem unfair in the eyes of locals who may not be provided with the accommodation they desire, especially those who live outside Muscat and far away from their workplaces. As participants in this study also mentioned that hotels could comfortably implement aspects of Omanisation where such policies with their corporate strategies, this suggests that hotels could reconsider their accommodation policy with respect to Omanis who cannot live at home with their families.

While workplace policies have been blamed by several of those I interviewed for having gaps, which could lead to tensions between migrant and Omani workers, the perspectives of some hotel managers showed that they face legislative barriers that may be responsible for such gaps.

For instance, Marcelo, a male manager of migrant origin from southern Europe working at a city hotel, said:

*We are struggling a little bit with paid leave and other workplace policies, as they are not clarified in Oman's labour standards. For instance, in the labour law, while leave days should be in our workplace calendar days, the real problem is how to calculate this during our calendar days. I think it would be better if the leave days were more specific in labour law. (Marcelo)*

Marcelo's statement could be interpreted to mean that he is concerned about the lack of clarity in Omani law, and its potential to lead to different expectations in Oman about the amount of annual leave received by employees.

Overall, marked differences distinguished Omani and migrant workers in the labour market in terms of their employability, the quality of the jobs in which they are employed and their pay structures. Indeed, some participants in this study felt that Omanisation policies have not had much effect. National employment protection legislation was seen by participants to promote the transition of Omanis from school to work, stabilise the labour market entry process and regulate the proportion of Omani and migrant workers in the T&H work force. This data indicated that Omanisation policy can indeed affect the labour market participation of Omani and migrant workers. However, the effects of entry patterns vary significantly by level of education, which may undermine the objectives of Omanisation by facilitating the employment of more qualified migrant workers.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

Regarding the effects of Omanisation policies generally on the employment of Omani and migrant workers, there was a common understanding across categories of participants in this study that, to a considerable extent, these policies have allowed for the inflow of migrant workers while ensuring that Omani graduates are also employable. Some participants also felt

that the policy has limited the employability of migrants, but that such effects could, in turn, limit the availability of skills required for the sector to expand. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the implementation of Omanisation could restrict employers' access to both skilled and inexpensive labour as a result of migration.

The effects of Omanisation on migrant and Omani workers' employment and employability, in the context of Oman's current economic diversification goals, was also adequately addressed across categories of participants. One commonly shared perception was that Omanisation has outlived its usefulness, as it has failed to embrace a spirit of diversity consistent with Oman's current economic goals. Accordingly, the significance of migrants in bringing new skills and competitiveness to the labour market should be reflected in any agenda to modify Omanisation policies.

The question of how Omanisation affects the patterns of employment of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector was also addressed. Omanisation is seen as promoting the labour market entry of local Omanis and restricting that of migrants, with the primary objective of averting possible social tensions among these two categories. Indeed, some participants felt that Omanisation policies have been effective in terms of regulating the variation in labour market integration of Omanis, enabling their transition from school to work and supporting the predictability of access to the labour market. How Omanisation policies should be modified to increase the participation of Omani graduates in the T&H sector is discussed at length in Chapter Eight, as part of the policy recommendations in the conclusion of this thesis.

In this chapter, I have addressed the research questions concerning migrant and Omani labour force participants in this thesis, to explain their different patterns of employment and employability in the T&H sector. In addition, I investigated how Omanisation policies affect the employment of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector and how these policies

could be modified to increase the participation of Omani graduates. This investigation will help me attain my research aims concerning evidence-based conclusions about Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the T&H sector, and to understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates.

In addition, I have tried to identify potential modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, which might increase Omanis' participation in the T&H sector for both male and female graduates. For instance, research participants saw Omanisation as poorly aligned with the current impacts of changing migratory patterns and the demands of labour market liberalisation. In terms of the demand side, some managers affirmed that they felt frustrated by Omanisation policies as they carried out their daily work; like the graduates I interviewed, employers also saw government restrictions as inappropriate as a response to global migration trends and employment patterns in the T&H sector. Some emphasised that Omanisation could only be a positive factor if it did not limit their access to cheap migrant workers and suggested that these policies should be adapted to current requirements of employment patterns. All categories of research participants seemed to agree that all Oman and migrant graduates deserve employment and empowerment, because the labour market should be open to everyone. Some research participants hinted that Omanisation had lost its value and did not fit into current economic conditions. For instance, Omanisation initiatives could discourage international investment by limiting access to diverse aspects of HC, including talents and skills in the labour market. For example, some employers suggested that Omanisation was not a solution to the problem of youth unemployment and employment patterns in the Omani T&H sector, because of unintended implications of these policies in terms of discouraging international investment, which would reduce employment opportunities generally in Oman. HC theory has helped me along the way, guiding my research trajectory and helping me to articulate policy insights from the data offered by various research

participants. In particular, this chapter allowed me to develop insights about Omanisation policies that inform the recommendations to be offered in my conclusion (see Chapter Eight).

Meanwhile, the next chapter (Chapter Seven) presents data concerning the factors shaping the attitudes of migrants towards work in the T&H sector.

## **CHAPTER 7: FACTORS AFFECTING MIGRANTS' ATTITUDES, EMPLOYABILITY AND PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE OMANI T&H SECTOR**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals primarily with different aspects of how the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman is perceived by different categories of migrant students and graduates (including migrant workers, managers and academic staff). In view of the research questions and objectives of my study, this chapter aims to discuss the interview data in relation to factors affecting migrants' attitudes, employability and patterns of employment in the Omani T&H sector. In the first section, I discuss some of the factors conditioning migrant workers' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. The first subsection focuses on the effects of the characteristics of the T&H sector on migrants' attitudes, before discussing the expectations of the Omani T&H sector that migrants held before their arrival in Oman, and how these perceptions affected their attitudes. In the second section, I discuss how interview subjects described the types of human capital (HC) investments they made while in Oman and how these have affected their employability and employment patterns. In the subsequent section I discuss the effects of their HC investment on length of stay in Oman, while in the last section, I discuss data on factors influencing employers' attitudes towards hiring migrant workers.

### **7.2 Factors shaping migrant workers' attitudes towards working in the T&H sector**

#### **7.2.1 Effects of characteristics of the T&H sector on migrants' attitudes**

In an attempt to understand what factors affect the patterns of employment of migrant workers in the T&H sector, I asked migrant participants in the study to discuss the characteristics of the sector related to the demand and supply of labour and how these shaped their attitudes. Several themes emerged.

Some participants felt an attraction to the T&H sector because of the variety of jobs it offers. As seen in the previous data chapter (Chapter Five), Omani graduates shared the same viewpoint expressed by migrant graduates here, that there are a ‘variety of jobs’ in the T&H sector. Omani graduates described this variety as encompassing jobs at different levels of responsibility, with different functions, allowing the development of various skills as a part of HC investment. Also, in some cases it allows geographical mobility, for instance from Muscat (the capital of Oman) to the city nearest to their families: some Omani graduates prefer to be close to their family, rather than renting flats and living alone in Muscat, the capital.

On the other hand, migrant graduates emphasised the large number of jobs available in the sector. They showed positive attitudes towards T&H due to the opportunities it is perceived to offer. For instance Pavlo, a male migrant of Eastern European<sup>74</sup> origin who worked as a manager at a city hotel, said:

*Every month I'm receiving invitation emails about the opening ceremonies of new hotels in Muscat. Many opportunities are available for graduates in hotels and I believe graduates have positive attitudes because of this. Can you imagine Fahad that we announced job opportunities in the hotel through 'Mujeed and Target'<sup>75</sup>, and nobody applied to these jobs? (Pavlo)*

In the same context Rudina, a female migrant employee of Asian origin working at a city hotel, supported Pavlo's idea:

---

<sup>74</sup> I have taken into consideration the General Data Protection Regulation, the university's Code of Ethics (CoE) and the Data Protection Act by assigning pseudonyms and changing the names of the workplace locations and other practices of the participants in my study, especially with vulnerable participants like migrants (The University of Sheffield, 2021).

<sup>75</sup> Mujeed and Target are two platforms on social media in Oman for job opportunities announcements. These platforms function similarly to the LinkedIn platform (Oman Observer, 2017).

*Undoubtedly, migrant graduates have positive attitudes to work in the sector, this applied on Omani graduates, and they are aware of several opportunities in the industry due to the government's official announcements in the media about pumping billions of OMR to the sector. (Rudina)*

I was also wondering about how the growing numbers of jobs in the T&H sector affect the relationships between Omani and migrant graduates in terms of competition on jobs or promotions in work, and how the relationships between Omani and migrant graduates might structure the T&H labour force. I proceeded to answer this question from the migrant employer perspective. Jayaram, a female migrant manager of Asian origin working at a city hotel, stated:

*I have heard that there are cases of job competition between citizens and migrants in other countries that relatively have a huge population. However, this does not apply to Oman, which has a small population. I do not think that there is job competition due to a large number of jobs available in the Omani T&H sector. In my opinion, the relationship that the Omanis and migrants [have] goes beyond the working relationship (colleagues at work only), but instead, it is a family relationship. We love each other and visit each other's families at the weekend. Last week, I attended a wedding of Omani worker in Matrah city. (Jayaram)*

Pavlo's, Rudina's and Jayarman's comments suggest that some migrant and Omani graduates have positive attitudes towards the sector because they feel the sector is large and growing and there will be high demand for graduates. For instance, from the perspectives of employers like Pavlo and Jayarman, opportunities are widely available in T&H and graduates have to grab them when they see them, also, they added that migrant and Omani graduates have positive social connections in the workplace, which will contribute to shaping their attitudes positively towards working in the T&H sector. Studies in the context of Oman support Pavlo's and

Rudina's arguments and suggest that there will be more than 45,000 jobs available in the T&H industry by 2020. Furthermore, the Omani government plans to invest over \$50 billion in the T&H (Times of Oman, 2018; Prabhu, 2018).

Participants also observed several ways in which gendered occupational roles shape migrants' attitudes towards work in the sector. I made several observations from my interview with Alexander, a male migrant of Northern European origin who worked as a member of the academic staff at college 'A'. Alexander said:

*Migrant female workers, just like Omani women, feel a sense of ownership for the sector. It is different from having to do real engineering jobs in other sectors, like construction. This is the same thing as saying that men feel a sense of ownership for the construction sector. Therefore, men would have a negative attitude towards the hospitality sector. Perhaps, it has a lot to do with the fact that people associate the T&H sector with women, because the work requires people who can show visitors compassion. Maybe, women also think they can work part-time. (Alexander)*

Alexander's statement indicates that whenever gender stereotypes are associated with specific jobs, they can trigger preconceptions towards individuals who happen to work in those positions depending on their gender. He expects migrant women to feel comfortable in the T&H sector because the sector is typically associated with women workers. He feels that migrant male workers may hold negative attitudes towards the sector, as they are less likely to identify with it. It is apparent from Alexander's account that gendered occupational roles shape attitudes towards a job or sector.

Still, Alexander's perspective is not unique. In fact, his observations are confirmed by his female colleague at college 'A': Maria, a female migrant of North African origin. Maria

believes that female migrants are likely to demonstrate positive attitudes towards working in the T&H sector, compared to their male counterparts:

*I think that we women are more motivated than men to work in the sector. Therefore, we are more likely to have a positive attitude towards it. However, in my honest opinion, I believe that we receive a lot of support from the government to work in the sector. In my view, all women and girls must be given support and training as well as social protections, to overcome gender inequality. (Maria)*

Clearly, Maria is corroborating Alexander's interpretation of the situation. She also believes strongly that women demonstrate greater interest in the T&H sector, with an explanation that links to that provided by Alexander. Maria agrees with Alexander's claims about the effects of gendered occupational roles in shaping attitudes towards the sector, although she takes different aspects into account. She points out that women are motivated to work in the sector because of government encouragement; this again shows how women are strongly associated with the sector in the minds of participants. In my interviews with migrant students at college 'A', I found their statements to reflect those of Maria and Alexander – their lecturers.

For example, I observed that Kumar, a male, migrant student from Asia studying at college 'A', shows the same perspective regarding migrant workers' attitudes towards the T&H sector. Kumar feels that women are more likely to have a positive attitudes towards the sector because of gendered perspectives, perceiving the sector as intended for women. He said:

*You see, there is something about working in this industry that seems to attract females. I mean it's mostly light work that may not require using too much energy or mental power because of such variations in energy between men and women. It's much about building a relationship with others and being hospitable. I don't think men are naturally good at that. Of course, many men also have an inclination towards the industry,*

*perhaps because they like travelling and getting a feel for other cultures. I guess I did. Now, thanks for that good question. Working in the sector appeals to women because it does not demand much of their time now that we know that they also have to work at home as wives and mothers. I am sure that up to 70% of women would say this.*

**(Kumar)**

Kumar's observations are reminiscent of Alexander's and Maria's statements. He provides a strong explanation for why women are more likely to prefer working in T&H. In his view, women are assumed to pursue jobs that allow them to put their (stereotyped) 'natural' characteristics into use, such as caregiving and being hospitable. It can also be discerned in his account that women believe that the sector will provide crucial flexibility, allowing them to engage themselves in the workplace and the home, while what attracts men is engaging with new people and exploring new cultures abroad.

These accounts agree with the views of Omani graduates, discussed in the previous data chapter (Chapter Five), asserting that women choose employment in the hospitality sector because it provides them with an environment where they can put their social attributes into effective use. For this reason, I was not surprised to find that Aliyah, a female, migrant student of North African origin studying at college 'A', confirmed the perspective I had heard from her lecturers:

*I know that many of us, females, like the idea of working in the hospitality sector. It provides employment that is suitable for women. I say this because working in the hospitality sector is suitable for women because it needs people who are caring, like women, instead of people who could be seen as too pushy or too domineering like men. And tourism, I can say, should reserve more jobs for women. I believe that we, as women, are naturally friendly and caring people. (Aliyah)*

Interestingly, Aliyah seems convinced that, since the sector is generally associated with such attributes as caring or hospitality, women prefer to work in this sector so they can put their socially constructed skills in these areas to use.

Another student who strongly supports this perspective is Amira who, like her colleague Aliyah, comes from North Africa. In addition to affirming that women tend to have positive attitudes towards the T&H sector, she believes that strongly gendered perspectives have contributed to this:

*I think it is natural that women go for female-dominated industries like the T&H sector. I feel this is because the industry is service-oriented. I mean, much of what I know about the sector is that people who work in the sector mostly provide some type of hospitality service to customers. For instance, things that we learn in class are basically concerned with how to provide satisfactory services to customers, whether you work as a waiter or in the kitchen. (Amira)*

Amira seems convinced that the tourism sector's fundamental feature, providing hospitality services, is what makes it attractive for female migrant workers: the same thought process I observed while interviewing Aliyah. The confluence of Aliyah's and Amira's ideas about the gender dynamics of the sector led me to understand how some migrant women's attitudes towards the sector are shaped by these perceptions.

Several participants raised concerns about the need to encourage gender equity, to ensure that male and female migrant workers in the sector are not treated differently because of gendered occupational roles. In my interview with Alexander, a male member of the academic staff, I established that he was not comfortable with the way gendered expectations shape attitudes

towards the sector. He feels that students should be able to find work in T&H regardless of gender. When asked to clarify, he emphasised the value of gender diversity<sup>76</sup> in the workplace:

*You see, despite negative attitudes towards the sector, boys should be encouraged to train in the hospitality sector to bring about [gender] diversity in the sector. More girls are also encouraged to take up jobs that they feel they can do, rather than what the society tells them not to do. (Alexander)*

Alexander feels that undermining gender stereotypes would provide both male and female students with an opportunity to realise their full potential by working in a sector of their choice. Indeed, from his statement I discerned that gendered perspectives could be significant, limiting factors inhibiting students from fulfilling careers chosen based on their talents or personal interests. Alexander's perspective is understandable. I observed that Alexander illuminates the makeup of the mixed student body at college 'A', which includes a mix of Omani and migrant students. As a lecturer, he has had the privilege of meeting a number of Omani and migrant students, some who exhibit strong drives to work in the sector, yet are less enthusiastic about joining it because of gender stereotypes. Alexander appears to support gender, cultural and ethnic diversity in the workplace and to believe that education can undermine the stereotypes that prevent diversity.

I wanted to explore whether Alexander's perspective directly reflected those of students at the same college. I asked Kumar, a male, migrant student of Asian origin studying at college 'A', how his family had reacted to his decision to pursue a course of studies that would lead to a career in the T&H sector. His perspective confirms Alexander's fears:

---

<sup>76</sup> Equitable representation of individuals of different genders (Herring, 2009; Stojmenovska et al., 2017; Herring, 2017).

*They [family members] supported my studies because it [T&H] was what I wanted, and since it offers many opportunities in Oman. I consistently received support from my family members. However, my mother was not comfortable with the idea of me training to be a chef, but I was determined to pursue my dream. While working in the kitchen, I would come home with minor injuries, burns and so on. My mother used to say, 'You have injuries, you need a job where you don't have injuries'. I told her, 'I won't learn more. Even if I have injuries, it helped me to learn and that is good for experience'.*

**(Kumar)**

From Kumar's statement, I understood his determination to work in the sector, in spite of the strong diversity of perceptions of gender roles in certain areas (e.g. kitchen work). This suggests that gender stereotypes may not necessarily determine the choices of those male participants who carry strong aspirations to work in the sector. Kumar's mother seemed to oppose her son's idea of working as a chef, perhaps out of concern for his health and safety. However, Kumar feels the opposite, and as a member of the current generation he may be more strongly influenced by European norms. This may be reinforced by his studies at college 'A', which had an academic affiliation with European universities. In European societies, to be a chef is predominantly a male role: according to the BBC report, women make up only 17% of chefs in the UK, while men dominate the field (Morgan, 2018).

Kumar's family also live in Oman; I had initially assumed that the migrant students participating in the study were international students. After analysing the demographic questionnaires data, however, I found that all of them were students of migrant origin whose families have been living and working in Oman for decades (see Chapter Four, section 4.3.2, for more detail and Appendix 10). Therefore, the migration pattern of Kumar and other migrant students in my research suggests that there are students of migrant parents and therefore, not Omani citizens.

Additionally, I wanted to hear what diverse female students would contribute to this discussion. When I interviewed Rudina, a female employee of Asian origin working at a city hotel, she passed on her view that men could find it difficult working in the sector – even when they have a strong interest in it – because of certain stereotypes:

*I had wondered about it and later read somewhere that female-dominated industries tend to be vulnerable to feminine stereotypes. I have witnessed such stereotypes unfold. It is common for men to feel out of place, particularly when every woman you meet in the workplace considers you to be an outsider in the sector. It is common even in social media. Any advert you see in the industry will always feature a female worker. That says it all. So, it's not about your interest, it's about what people say about the type of work you do. (Rudina)*

Rudina confirms, from her own perspective, the same fears expressed by men interested in T&H, like Kumar, regarding the deeply ingrained social perceptions of the sector as associated with women. Yet, like Kumar, Rudina seems concerned about such stereotypes. Therefore, it appears that the problem affecting male workers' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector comes from perceived social expectations, rather than individual beliefs: they may be rooted in the general perception by a community that the T&H sector is fitting for women in particular, rather than for both male and female workers. International sociological research has shown that enhancing education levels and income-earning capacity for women changes how the meaning of work across genders is socially constructed (Blossfeld and Huinink, 1991; Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007; Kreyenfeld, 2010; Badkar et al., 2007; De Jon and Steinmetz, 2004; Čeněk, 2013). This is interesting in that some migrant male students that I interviewed did not necessarily admit that they hold negative attitudes towards the sector.

In fact, some migrant students that I interviewed, both male and female expressed positive attitudes towards T&H. For instance, Arjun, a male, migrant student from Asia studying at college ‘A’ asserted that he has a positive attitude towards the sector:

*I would describe my attitude towards the sector as positive. I like the sector and want to work in it. But people should be encouraged to view the sector as appropriate for anyone to find a job and make a living, whether a man or a woman. (Arjun)*

Arjun’s assertion is not exceptional for a male student; both male students like Kumar and female students like Amira reported that they have positive attitudes towards the T&H sector and they have chosen to study T&H, so they prefer to work there. At the same time they advocated that social stereotypes of the sector as designed for women, performing ‘feminine’ work, should be discarded.

Evidently, some participants felt that gendered occupational roles shape attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. Others proposed that women prefer working in the sector because it is typically associated with women workers. Still, others were also strongly convinced that the T&H sector can accommodate all men and women, representing all genders equitably.

In the next section, I discuss data on what other categories of migrant graduates had expected from the Omani T&H sector and how these expectations affected their attitudes.

### **7.2.2 Migrants’ expectations of the Omani labour market and resulting effects on their attitudes**

In the interviews I conducted, some migrant workers and managers explained their attraction to the T&H sector in Oman based on the nature of the jobs available to them. I found this surprising, as I expected them to focus more heavily on the rewards associated with migration, such as salary and benefits. To determine how investments in HC affected migrant workers and students’ employment patterns, I asked my migrant participants what had encouraged them to

come to Oman, and whether the result (reward), measured against their expectations, affected their attitudes.

It was vital to establish what made these participants consider migrating to Oman. When I asked them to share their perspectives on what motivated their migration, several of them mentioned the prospects of better salaries and employment opportunities, suggesting that economic factors are among the most crucial pull factors for migrating to Oman. For instance Anna, a female manager of Asian origin working as senior manager at a city hotel, revealed that she was mainly motivated by prospects of better pay in Oman:

*I think that money is the primary motivation. When the pay is better, then employees will be motivated to work in the sector. One major reason why I came to Oman is that I was reliably informed that the tourism sector is growing so fast that it will continue to be prominent even into the future. So, I was hoping to get a fairer salary than back at home. I think I have found what I want. So, I would agree that, yes, I have a positive attitude towards working in the T&H sector. (Anna)*

Anna's statement suggests that money could be a strong motivation for migrating to Oman to work in the T&H sector. Having a positive impression of the economic prospects of Oman, especially in the T&H sector, encourages her to expect that her investment in HC through migration and education will not be wasted, in joining this sector in Oman. Anna made a salient point about the link between HC and migration, emphasising how her decision to migrate to Oman allowed access to wider employment opportunities in the Omani T&H sector, compared to her home country. In the theoretical framework chapter (Chapter Three, section 3.4.2), I have discussed this issue at greater length. In addition, in the next section (7.3), I will discuss the effects of migrant workers' investments in HC on their employability and employment patterns in the Omani T&H sector, in greater detail.

The pursuit of better employment opportunities also emerged in some of the conversations I had with migrant workers. Sushma, a female migrant of Asian origin working at a city hotel, seemed to support Anna's point of view:

*I studied tourism management in my home country (name of Asian nationality suppressed) before coming to Oman. While I have relatives who wanted me to return to Asia I wanted to just stay in Oman and settle comfortably in the tourism sector. The truth is, I was put off by the fact that there is higher competition for jobs in Asia than Oman. Therefore, I opted to remain in Oman. (Sushma)*

Sushma's statement suggests that, unlike her home country, Oman provides better job prospects as it has a less competitive job market. This influenced her decision to migrate to and remain in Oman. In the same way as Anna, Sushma feels that the labour market in her country of origin is a significant push factor (As I have discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3.1), and the Omani labour market's promise of better employment opportunities is a pull factor.

A related perspective was provided by Julie, a female migrant worker of Asian origin working at a city hotel:

*Working and earning some money to send to my family back home motivates me, as it is what influenced me to come to Oman. I didn't mind any job as long as I made a stable income. (Julie)*

Julie revealed that she also came to Oman in search of better employment prospects, which was the main pull factor. However, she experienced a different push factor – poverty in her home country.

While interviewing Gamal, a male, migrant manager from North Africa working at a city hotel, it became clear that, like Julie and Sushma, he had been motivated by the same pull factors in Oman – better employment prospects:

*I had some friends who had assured me that I could land a better chance in the sector, mainly because many tourists speak English as a first or second language. (Gamal)*

Gamal, Julie and Sushma all suggest that migrant workers in the T&H sector may be driven to migrate to Oman primarily in the expectation of better pay, and I therefore expected that their salary experiences might influence how they feel about working in the T&H sector. In each case, they successfully made use of their social connections as a key source of information about labour and skill requirements to enhance their access to employment to the Omani T&H sector.

At the same time, the views of Gamal, Julie and Sushma do not represent those of all migrant workers who participated in my research. In fact, the pull factors vary for different participants. For example, in my interview with Karla, a female migrant employee of Asian origin working at a city hotel, I observed that some migrant workers came to Oman because their friends' experiences influenced them to join the T&H sector. Despite this, the need to get a better job remains a major determining factor for coming to Oman:

*Actually, the thing is, I'm an immigrant. I heard a lot about Oman and how it is a beautiful country. Some of my friends in my home country work in Oman as nurses and as domestic workers. This motivated me to come to Oman. Indeed, I decided to travel here when the X hotel opened a new branch in Muscat. It's one of the reasons why I transferred to Oman: I wanted a better job. (Karla)*

Karla's disclosure indicates that, while migrant workers may be driven by pull factors like the need to the aspirations to get a better job and earn a better income seem to play more consistent roles in shaping their attitudes towards the sector.

Male workers of migrant origin support this perspective; Khan, a hotel employee from Asia working at a city hotel, said:

*A good salary motivates me here. I earn more than I could have earned in Asia. It makes me feel that my decision to come to Oman was not a mistake [...]. If the pay had not been as good, then I would have considered going back. Of course, it would be absurd to come to invest in coming to a foreign country for work and get no return. I think that many migrants you are going to meet or have met would agree with me. So, money is definitely the biggest motivation. (Khan)*

Khan's statement points to the significance of external rewards, like money, in shaping migrants' decisions to come to Oman. Indeed, it is reasonable to conclude that Khan found it easier to view the sector positively because his expectations for better pay were met; without this, he would have considered returning to his country of origin.

Khan's argument is supported in part by Julie, a female migrant from Asia working at a city hotel. Like Khan, she suggests that better employment prospects could be playing a significant role in motivating migrants to come to Oman, more than political factors (e.g., political persecution or war) or social factors (such as a need to unite with friends and family members). Like Karla, the potential of earning a higher income is motivating to Julie beyond any other factor:

*There was a considerable level of political instability in my hometown, but that did not truly matter as I could have considered migrating to safer parts of Asia. I hoped to earn higher salaries before coming to Oman. Right now, I think that I earn a tolerably fair income, so provided that income will keep coming at the end of the month, I don't think my preference for the sector will change. (Julie)*

From Julie's statement, pull factors based on migrants' expectations of earning higher salaries in the Omani T&H sector appear to be a stronger motivator for coming to Oman than push factors arising from issues of insecurity in the home country. Julie may consider Oman to be a

safer economic haven than a destination selected for (political) exile. This would explain why she asserts that, if the fear of political instability at home had been the only factor, she would not have considered coming to Oman.

In any case, these remarks from Julie and Khan indicate that factors motivating migrant workers to seek employment in the T&H sector include some of the same factors motivating locals, such as higher pay and job security (as discussed previously in Chapter Five, sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.6).

In my interview with Karla, a female hotel employee from Asia mentioned earlier, I learned that she was very focused on settling on one job, and had no problem working in the hotel despite a fairly low salary according to Omani standards:

*Of course, I may be getting less salary than my Omani colleagues in the same job group. However, I haven't found that to bother me much, as it is much more than what I would earn at home. I think the perception of the Omani community towards working in the hotels should be changed. I heard [that] for devout Muslims, it is not allowed for women and men to work together in one place. I understand that Omani society is Islamic and conservative. I think the Omani family needs more time to accept some liberal ideas.*

**(Karla)**

Here, Karla demonstrates that migrant workers may remain focused on the expected reward from their HC investment, through migration, to the extent that the cultural complexities arising in the labour market become immaterial. From Karla's statement, it also appears that some migrant workers understand the complexity of Omani cultural values and how they are intricately intertwined with Islamic values. She also understands how Omani cultural values shape Omani attitudes towards work in the T&H sector. Indeed, while Karla does not hold these values entirely responsible for negative attitudes towards the T&H sector, she thinks that

they contribute to a tendency for Omanis to be less willing to work in the sector than migrant workers. Karla's view agrees with one of the varied views expressed by Omani participants discussed in the previous data chapter (Chapter Five, section 5.3), emphasising the tension between the globalised culture typical of the hotel industry and Islamic values.

From Anna's, Karla's and Julie's statements I came to understand that their resilience is contingent on their capacity to attain their strategic goals, earning higher income by realising their investment in HC through their migration to Oman: earning better income. This in turn is contingent on their capacity to take advantage of opportunities that go beyond their original pull factors. Karla also mentioned the importance of understanding employers' 'preferences' for migrant workers and how these affect employers' attitudes towards hiring (as discussed previously in Chapter six). However, not all those who migrate will work at low salaries.

Within the context of my research, and in line with my participants' perspectives, I interpreted pull factors as elements that attract migrant workers to Oman, such as better employment opportunities and higher wages. However, while various social factors may also motivate migrants to move to a foreign country, they do not seem to play as vital a role as the economic factors that have been emphasised in previous international migration studies (Cook et al., 2011; Elrick, 2016; D'Angelo et al., 2020).

In the next section, I discuss my migrant participants' contributions that address the types of HC investments they have made while in Oman, outlining how these investments have affected their employability and employment patterns.

### **7.3 Effects of migrant workers' investments in HC in Oman on their employability and employment patterns**

#### **7.3.1 How various investments in HC affect migrant workers' employability and employment patterns**

To explore how their investments in HC affect their employability, I asked the migrant workers and managers participating in my study about the factors that contributed to their integration into the Omani labour market, inquiring how these factors affected their subsequent work and life experiences. According to previous international sociological studies informed by HC theory, migrants scoring more highly in skills, talents and levels of proficiency in local languages and cultures tend to be more employable in labour markets than those with lower scores (Polachek, 1995; Csedö, 2008; Ochsenfeld, 2014; Rich, 1995; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Mata, 2019; Grönlund, 2012). Correspondingly, migrants with greater investment in such capacities are likely to experience faster integration into the labour market. Anna, a female hotel manager from Asia, whom I have mentioned in the earlier section, identified the capacity to acculturate in Oman as a key factor influencing migrants' patterns of employment in the sector:

*Since I joined the hotel, I have seen many migrant workers who have no problem working in the T&H sector. I had previously worked in Dubai. When I came here, I found that Omanis are genuinely friendly and helpful, even in other departments. This encouraged me to settle and work in the sector. There is a difference in the language. Language determines how one can quickly interact or even be successful at a job. This has been a problem when I go to some government offices. (Anna)*

From Anna's statement, I discerned that attitudes towards acculturation<sup>77</sup> on the part of Omani locals have the potential to shape migrants' attitudes towards working in the T&H sector in Oman. She has stayed in Oman for close to 30 years and currently lives with her children in Oman. From her long-term stay in Oman, I conclude that her greater investment in proficiency in local cultures and languages makes her more employable. This interview may also reflect

---

<sup>77</sup> Acculturation refers to the process of learning, adapting cultural values and beliefs of immigrants in the host country (Walters et al., 2007; Gans, 2007; Sakamoto, 2007).

the social dynamics or power differentials between myself as an Omani researcher and Anna as a participant; it is possible that my positionality influenced Anna's description of the characteristics of her Omani hosts, as she maintains a positive portrayal for me and avoids criticism of Omani culture and the country in general (Ryan, 2015; Ganga and Scott, 2006; Ryan et al., 2016; Britton, 2019). I am aware that migrants and women participants may be made vulnerable by their social and economic situation; positionality and reflexivity play critical roles during my research cycle. In the methodology (Chapter Four, section 4.4), I explained that such issues of reflexivity and positionality would rise owing to my position as a male Omani researcher working in a government department. In addition, I intend to discuss my own biases, as well as certain biases arising from participants' awareness of my own identities, in the section addressing the limitations of my research, in the concluding chapter (Chapter Eight).

Therefore, I was interested in knowing about Anna's previous lived experiences in Dubai. She had worked in that country on behalf of her previous employer. Her exposure to different social environments could provide comparative perspective, on the understanding that experiences in different societies can only be effectively grasped when compared with each other (Van Tubergen et al., 2004; Lugosi et al., 2016). I discovered that she believes that a warm reception by Omanis has facilitated the integration of some workers of migrant origin and that this may often contribute to investments in certain proficiencies, like language.

Anna's statement emphasised that she had differing opportunities for integration and acculturation in Oman and Dubai. For instance, during my field research I observed that some of my participants (managers and workers of migrant origin) had migrated from Dubai to work in Oman and reported that they had an easier time integrating into Omani society. This is to be expected because Dubai is a global centre where the work force represents more than 200 nationalities. Hence, migrant workers find it challenging to interact with Emirati citizens, who

represent only 13% of the Emirates' population, while more than 87% are immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2019). This makes it more difficult for migrant workers to invest in their HC through learning, for example, the host language, an Emirati accent or local culture, which might help them with their career progression and employability. Accordingly, the process of integration and acculturation in the society and labour market of the Emirates is very complicated. Already, a body of international sociological studies focused on migration have confirmed Anna's idea, exploring the relationship between learning the language of the host country and HC, how this dynamic plays a critical role in the integration of new immigrants into the host country and how improving their social and economic status rises as they become more employable (Mesch, 2003; Van Tubergen and Kalmijn, 2005; Zwysen, 2019).

This insight arising from my interview with Anna is also confirmed by Gamal, a male migrant of North African origin working as a front office manager at a city hotel (also mentioned previously). Gamal feels that factors facilitating his integration have mainly been linked to his work experiences:

*Perhaps, if Omanis were not as friendly, things would have been different. Therefore, I feel that there must always be integration and harmony between migrant workers and locals in the sector. We [the migrants] must be willing to dedicate time to learn about new people and the skills they appreciate to be really employable. Otherwise, life in Oman may not be as easy as you expect. Likewise, Omanis must work with migrants because of the wealth of experience and transfer of knowledge to Omanis that is important for the sector. Without this, it would be easy for migrant workers to say that they regret working in the sector. (Gamal)*

Certainly, there appears to be a degree of correspondence between Anna's and Gamal's statements about the need for migrant workers to compound their investments in work, culture

and language competencies to be employable in Oman. This confirms that migrant employees' attitudes affect their HC investment and therefore their success on the Omani labour market.

According to Anna and Gamal, the capacity migrant workers develop to interact effectively with local people shapes their willingness to work in Oman, while the warmth and receptiveness of their Omani hosts facilitates the integration of migrant workers, in turn. Gamal gives a clear account of the warm welcome he received and describes how this show of affection in a foreign country affected his own attitudes towards working in the Omani T&H sector. Accordingly, it appears that whenever the local population demonstrates negative prejudices against migrants, their interaction with migrant workers will become negative in turn. These dynamics have been confirmed in previous research on migration internationally, with studies finding that such prejudices could lead the host countries to establish hostile immigration policies, which have punitive and exclusionary qualities and trigger negative attitudes among migrant workers (Alba et al., 2005; Choi and Thomas, 2009; Fussell, 2014; Massey and Sánchez, 2010). Given the migration status of these voluntary informants, a power dynamic may emerge in the social interaction between myself as an Omani researcher (as insider) and my migrant graduate participants (as outsiders), cultural, ethnic, linguistic, national and religious differences play critical roles in my qualitative data, and the positionality issues within the interview demand that, as a researcher, I employ critical reflexivity. While carrying out the research interviews I tried to provide a suitable atmosphere by conducting the interviews away from the participants' workplaces, such as parks and cafés, and I avoided 'official protocol' in interviews by making casual conversation before I began asking questions (Ganga and Scott, 2006; Ryan, 2015; Britton, 2019 – More discussion about this point is available in Chapter Four, on methodology). However, research subjects may still have had a tendency to confirm the expectations they perceived that I, as an Omani researcher, might have.

Anna's and Gamal's remarks, therefore, indicate that local attitudes towards immigrants and immigration generate and regenerate the tone of inter-group relations, which in turn shape the capacity of migrants to acculturate and to choose to work and to remain in a host country (Kremer, 2016; Lindsay and McQuaid, 2004; Davidov and Semyonov, 2017; McDowell et al., 2009). In fact, when I asked Anna to clarify her views, she drew my attention to this idea in the following statement:

*I'm really happy with the ways Omanis show their hospitality because it makes it easy to spend time with Omani employees and to learn about their cultures. In turn, it has become easier to communicate effectively with local employees and foreign guests and to enjoy working in Oman. (Anna)*

This statement points out the extent to which migrant workers may look forward to interacting with locals to learn their cultures as a form of HC investment, and how a positive response from locals is likely to contribute to self-fulfilment and positive attitudes on the part of migrant workers.

In this context, Karla raised an important point earlier concerning the realisation by some migrant workers that Oman is an Islamic society with conservative, religious values. Theoretically, as migrant graduates invest in HC they learn about the Omani culture (including its basis in Islamic ideas) and the personal characteristics of local Omanis by dynamic interaction with, and adaptation to the norms of, Omani society. Accordingly, what they learn will make them more employable in the T&H sector; consequently, they stay longer in Oman with their families. However, this does not mean that migrant graduates need to change their religion to match with Oman's Islamic culture. The idea is, rather, that learning about Islamic culture is a form of HC that facilitates dynamic adaption by migrant workers in the workplace in particular and in society in general.

Julie, a female hotel employee of Asian origin (referred to in a previous section) also attributed her positive attitude towards working in the Omani T&H sector to rapid acculturation. She felt that her attitudes were strongly shaped by her capacity to learn about Omani values quickly and adopt certain behaviour patterns:

*I didn't experience any problems because I could easily get along in a very friendly way [with] people. Already, I had a small network of friends who were working here when I came. I stayed with them for around three months before renting my own place. So, my process of transition was not that difficult. They introduced me to the locals, who were nice and helpful. Somehow, I found it easy to learn about Omanis and their cultures, and love working in a hotel with such friendly people. (Julie)*

Julie's statement suggests that the integration and employability of some workers of migrant origin depends on how effectively these individual workers have invested in social networks. Theoretically, Julie has emphasised the importance of friendship and social contact, and also learning about Omani culture, as forms of HC investment enabling her to be more employable in the T&H sector. Julie is a divorced mother; she had been living in Muscat with her son and brothers for nearly ten years. She also demonstrates that the employability of migrants does not depend solely on the hospitality of the local population, as Anna had implied. Rather, it can also depend on the capacity to locate a network of friends from the migrant's home country. For instance, a body of international migration literature on chain migration and diaspora communities has emphasised the importance of transnational migration networks<sup>78</sup>. These relationships, including extended family (cousins, etc.) and friendship connections, have been important features of migration over time, crossing borders between the countries sending and

---

<sup>78</sup> 'Transnational migration networks' is a term representing the process whereby migrants build multiple networks, ties and connections across international borders, either before leaving their home country or while working in the host country (Levitt et al., 2003; Roberts et al., 1999).

receiving migrants. These networks influence the decisions migrants make about moving and staying abroad and attract more migrants to find employment in host countries where their networks are strongest (White and Ryan, 2008; Kalter and Kogan, 2014; Ryan et al., 2009; this topic was previously discussed in the theoretical framework chapter – Chapter Three).

Both Anna's and Julie's experiences indicate that migrant workers' attitudes depend on the degree of culture shock they are exposed to in Oman, suggesting that those with greater HC investment are better positioned to overcome these shocks. Apparently, since locals (in one case) and networks of friends (in the other) helped mitigate the culture shock they experienced, Julie and Anna found it easier to relate to their new environment in Oman.

As previously mentioned, Kumar's family have been living and working in Oman for decades, illustrating that some children of migrants residing in Oman may have opportunities to make relevant HC investments, for example, learning the Omani language and culture even before joining the workforce or deciding to enter the T&H industry. However, this scenario does not apply to all migrant graduates in Oman. Other migrant graduates had made investments 'back home' in their countries of origin, like learning Arabic before migrating to seek work. In addition, some of them made HC investments in Oman, in response to the opportunities and challenges found there (more discussion about the HC is available in the Chapter Three, which set out the theoretical framework for the study).

From my interviews with Julie, Gamal and Anna, I determined that the level of positive interaction between migrant workers and local people could also affect the degree of bias that either group has towards each other. Negative interactions could therefore undermine the capacity for migrants to attain greater cultural and language competencies and ultimately enhance their employability. For instance, Julie noted these contrasting possibilities:

*I had expected some form of racial discrimination. Of course, you cannot blame me, as this is a feeling everyone expects when he or she moves to work in a foreign country with unfamiliar faces and cultures. But, to tell you the truth, I met very positive thinking people. With time, I eliminated this built-in fear. I was in a situation where I could easily interact with locals and feel very positive about working in the country to make a difference for them. (Julie)*

Julie's explanation implies that since racial prejudice can be learned through socialisation, it could also be unlearned through positive interaction between local people and migrant workers. Meanwhile, other migrant workers did acknowledge that they face social inclusion challenges in Oman. Again, the issue of positionality arose in the research interview setting, with Julie. Realising that I am an Omani researcher and work in the public sector in Oman, she might be reluctant to offer criticisms relating to racial and social biases present among Omani and migrant graduates in the workplace. She could have restricted herself to positive statements to avoid raising any legal issues in relation to migrant graduates. As discussed earlier, migrant graduates and women represent the most vulnerable categories in my research population.

While Karla, a migrant hotel employee discussed earlier, explained certain challenges she had faced integrating into Islamic traditions in Oman, this did not seem to have bothered her so long as her Omani colleagues and friends remained generally friendly:

*I have had some challenges integrating into the Omani society, but when I finally did, I started to truly appreciate my work and stay in Oman. I may have had a negative attitude towards the sector, but I won't talk about it now. We (name of Asian nationality suppressed) are reputed to be the only Christian country in Asia. I'm a Catholic, and so are many other (name of Asian nationality suppressed). And given that Oman is a Muslim country, I do find it difficult integrating into a predominantly Muslim society,*

*as many of the Omani cultures seem to be based on Islam. So, sometimes we have to ask our Omani workmates what to wear when we want to get into some parts of the city or even to attend a festival. (Karla)*

Although Karla hinted at the possibility that negative interaction with Omani society could have triggered negative attitudes towards working in Oman's T&H sector, she claimed that this pattern only applied to her to a limited extent. During the interview, I observed that she treated the subject of religion as a sensitive or confidential issue. Knowing that my reaction to her comments on religion could either facilitate or inhibit her cooperation, I decided not to probe her views on this topic further. Ryan and colleagues (2016) theorise that in approaching an interview situation, researchers should use the Goffmanian perspective to understand the events that characterise the actions of the participants, including how the participants control information and display certain decipherable emotions. This allows a researcher to respond in a way that facilitates interaction. This Goffmanian perspective argues that an interaction between a researcher and a participant is reciprocal, depending on their dramaturgical actions as well as their physical presence.

Patterns of employment among migrant workers were also discussed by participants as reflecting their investment in multicultural competence. Some of the migrant participants treat competencies as an important form of HC that makes them highly mobile in the T&H sector (See Chapter Three for more information about the HC – Theoretical framework). I discerned that participants with greater investment in multicultural competencies, including social relations with the local Omanis, job skills and positive cross-cultural attitudes, tend to think of themselves adaptable – or more capable of taking on new tasks when given an opportunity. For instance Karla said:

*What I'm honestly proud of is that I'm working in Oman with an Omani team that is extremely responsive and supportive. I have managed to learn some Arabic words in just seven months. That has played a big role in shaping how I feel about working here. My colleague Muneer (name changed) is an Omani who is trying to teach me the Arabic language during breaks. I think my Arabic language is better than other migrant workers in the hotel [...] it gives me a bigger advantage in terms of being assigned jobs that require interaction with Omanis. (Karla)*

In the same context, Marcelo, a male migrant of southern European origin holding an executive position managing a city hotel, said:

*Of course, I have some migrant workers working in the front office section, who are fluent in the local language and Omani culture and thus have experiences interacting with the Omanis and foreign guests from GCC. For example, I have some Asian employees of migrant origin who have worked for more than ten years in this hotel, and they are fluent in the local language and have understanding for Omani way of thinking. I rely on them and send them to carry out and sign some paperwork with Omani officials in government ministries in Muscat related to the hotel. I rewarded them last year as the best of my employees in the hotel. (Marcelo)*

Karla and Marcelo both acknowledge the significance of investment in multicultural competencies and believe that migrant workers who make such investments are likely to be preferred in job allocation. They are considered to be more adaptable and may then gain benefits like a job promotion and higher pay. Previous studies of international migration have shown many advantages to migrants as they invest in HC and multicultural competence, linking these investments to an improved migrant worker experience in several host countries (Barrett and Duffy, 2008; Favell, 2008; Feischmidt and Zakariás, 2020).

International researchers studying the sociology of migration have shown that migrant workers tend to experience significant labour market disadvantages in comparison to local workers. This tends to happen in the initial stages of their arrival, when they lack location-specific HC including knowledge of local cultures, labour markets and languages (Demireva, 2011; Reitz, 2007; Beaverstock, 2005; Sakamoto, 2007). These barriers ensure that they hold low-level jobs and earn less income until they acquire location-specific HC advantages (Beaverstock, 2005; Chowdhury, 2014). For example, the findings of a study in Ireland by Barrett and Duffy (2008) illuminate my own observations in Oman. From my participants' accounts, I observed a pattern whereby migrant workers who had stayed longer in Oman, and who had acculturated and learned Omani cultures and values, found it much easier to integrate into the labour market than migrant workers who had not. Seemingly, migrants with greater investment in multicultural competencies experienced greater employability. In effect, I established that investment in multicultural competence gives migrant workers an advantage, enabling them to establish friendly relations with employers, interaction with foreign guests and locals in general and allowing them to move to more attractive jobs, higher paid jobs and more job security.

Indeed, I asked Julie, a migrant hotel worker discussed in two previous sections, whether she had considered moving to a different job, to another sector or even back to her country of origin. She contentedly replied that her rapid acculturation had encouraged her to consider staying on in Oman as a migrant worker:

*Maybe in future but for now, I still want to work here [...]. Right now, I'm still enjoying [it] and don't have plans on moving. I like my workplace, and my workmates have become a part of my family. So, when you want to move out to another company, you just feel like you are betraying them. Having a small network of friends may actually expose you to other potential firms inside and outside Oman. Now, when you think of*

*going to another company and starting all over again, well you would rather not move.*

**(Julie)**

Julie's statement implies that, besides a welcoming social environment supported by local people, migrant workers' access to a supportive social network of friends from their native countries could provide them with greater flexibility to move to other jobs, if they are not fully committed to their employers. Of course, one of the primary reasons Julie has not moved is that she is committed to remaining loyal to her employer and co-workers. Julie's statement shows the advantages for employers and co-workers of providing a supportive work environment that facilitates investment in multicultural competence.

Nambiar, a male migrant employee of Asian origin working at a city hotel, also endorses the importance of a supportive social environment:

*I think that employers, too, do have a responsibility in ensuring that we [migrant workers] can adjust to the requirements of Oman, its people and its cultures. Otherwise, we may find it difficult to learn certain skills on the job and getting a promotion.*

**(Nambiar)**

Nambiar feels that, without the support of their employers, it is challenging for migrant workers to invest in multicultural competencies. It is apparent from his comments that migrants can only adjust to the requirements of the Omani labour market when their employers support their learning needs.

While this indicates that migrant workers are empowered to learn on the job when they find a supportive work environment, it also suggests that they are more likely to succeed in their HC investment when they can expect certain rewards, like promotions. From Julie's and Nambiar's statements, employers' attitudes and the expectation of rewards influence migrant workers' social adjustment potential within a foreign labour market.

Other migrant participants shared this view, emphasising the effects of a supportive work environment in shaping their employment patterns. The most compelling perspective on this issue was articulated by Khan, a migrant employee of Asian origin (discussed in a previous section). He explained how he found it easy to settle in Oman because of the friendlier social environment, compared to other states in the Gulf Region:

*If I can be very honest, the Omanis are generally very friendly and generous people. The Omani community is very welcoming to immigrants. In my short experience working in Oman, I observed that your people would readily welcome me, support me and even invite me to their homes for lunch or dinner – as a Bedouin<sup>79</sup> or traditional Arabic culture – in their homes. Omani people have very high morals compared to other natives in the Gulf States. When I was working in Saudi Arabia, native Saudis would treat me with contempt and ridicule, just because my race and ethnicity shows I am a pure (name of Asian nationality suppressed) citizen. So, one of my friends advised me to look for work in Oman. (Khan)*

Like Karla's comments discussed earlier, Khan's explanation reveals positive attitudes towards Omani society; both of these participants stress the value of Omani hospitality and consider successful acculturation to be a success factor in their career aspirations in the host country and their capacity to build social networks there. Migrant workers who come to understand Omani values and norms quickly are employable sooner and gain an inside track towards successful integration in Oman. In fact, when I probed Karla further to confirm what shaped her attitude towards work in the Omani T&H sector, she clarified that successful acculturation and the potential to achieve quality employment are the primary motivating factors:

---

<sup>79</sup> A category of people from an Arabian ethnic origin, typically existing/living in a desert, in particular, in the Arab Gulf states. Their traditional social characteristics include showing respect, generosity and hospitality towards immigrants and international visitors (Cole, 2003; Hawker, 2002).

*Okay, from my own experience and that of some other (name of Asian nationality suppressed) workmates, I think we expect for the hotel to provide us with an opportunity to earn a good income and good accommodation. In particular, I always hope to earn a higher income, so that I will be able to afford a good life and save some money to send back home. I also expect to be accepted by the locals and to, at least, build some friendships. But, it is encouraging because Omani people are very friendly and have no problem welcoming us into their homes. It is encouraging. (Karla)*

Therefore, the accounts of Khan, Nambiar and Karla all tend to validate the role of acculturation in shaping migrant workers' attitudes towards the Omani T&H sector supported by Julie, Gamal and Anna. In other words, these migrant graduates generally report positive experiences interacting with, learning about and becoming accepting towards the norms and values of Omani society and its dominant Islamic culture. Therefore, they will be more likely to succeed in their career pathways, earning a higher income and benefiting from their investment in HC expressed by mastery of the Omani language and culture.

In addition, Khan proposed that a supportive and responsive interaction with migrant workers could facilitate their faster acculturation and positive attitudes to their host country and their employers. He elaborated on this idea, saying:

*Migrant workers' positive attitudes depend substantially on the work environment that they are provided with locally [...]. I know I'm being rather general here. What I mean is that, when migrants find the policies to be accommodating and their colleagues from Oman to be friendly and supportive, they are likely to develop positive attitudes. (Khan)*

Khan seems to be offering a broader perspective about the factors affecting migrant workers' employability in T&H, mentioning the importance of supportive local policies. Fundamentally, for migrant workers to have a positive attitude towards the Omani T&H sector, they have to be

able to feel wanted both by locals (through positive interaction) and the state (through supportive policies).

In the next subsection, I discuss my participants' comments about the effect of HC investment by migrant workers on their length of stay in Oman.

### **7.3.2 The effect of HC investment on length of stay in Oman**

To explore further the relationship between migrant graduates' investment in HC and their employment patterns and length of stay in Oman, I asked my migrant participants to discuss these interrelationships. Some workers of migrant origin suggested that, because they do not truly feel part of Omani society, they are not encouraged to remain in Oman in the long term.

Sharma, a male, migrant hotel worker of Asian origin, said:

*I think that working in the sector in itself contributes to migrants' social inclusion [...]. Once you start working in the sector, you become mentally prepared to be tolerant of all other new cultures you get to encounter. However, I don't think I have become like other (specific Asian nationality suppressed) who find themselves mingling with Omanis, in spite of having worked in this hotel establishment since 2009. You may have a good job and earn a relatively high salary. But, when your employment restricts your social mobility or requires that you stay in one place from Sunday to Thursday and even encourages the formation of ethnic enclaves – where individuals from the same country or culture want to hang around each other without regard for others – then it makes it difficult to assimilate or even to live in Oman as part of your long-term plans.*

**(Sharma)**

Sharma's statement shows that, even when migrants invest time and energy to cultivate a career that provides them with promotion and good pay, they may still find it difficult to integrate into Omani society or to remain in the country for an extended period when the nature of the job

restricts their level of interaction. Some migrant graduates sign annual contracts with their employers – their residency in Oman depends on their employers' decision to retain them by renewing these contracts or to force them to leave the sector and Oman. This point is also related to my earlier discussion about the *Kafala* (sponsorship) system defining the relationship between employers and migrant workers (for more details, see Chapter Two, section 2.3.3).

Additionally, I observed that some migrant workers live in what they call perpetual fear because of the unpredictable nature of Oman's labour market and labour policies, which seems to encourage them to work in Oman only for a short time. I discerned this phenomenon particularly among migrant workers who had stayed and worked much longer in Oman, such as Rudina, a female, migrant employee of Asian origin working at a city hotel:

*It is mainly because of the fatal fear that your job may end at any time. There is always that feeling of insecurity, mainly because of the unpredictable nature of policymaking. Besides, when we come to Oman with our families, we always have this feeling that no matter how much money you make, we will always have to go back home. So, we come with a plan in our minds that after two or so years, we may need to go back. Therefore, a permanent job may be appealing to us, but it is not as appealing as a well-paying one that allows us to earn plenty of money rapidly. (Rudina)*

At the time of the interview, Rudina had been in Oman for close to 25 years; her employer had been renewing her employment contract within the terms of the *kafala* system (as discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3.3). She is reporting a pattern whereby the migrant workers who occupy lower rungs in the occupational hierarchy work in Oman for shorter periods.

Indeed, she points to the possibility that migrant workers in lower-paid positions are troubled by the uncertain nature of their jobs and migration status and of Omani policies. This may explain why they do not aspire to work or stay in Oman in the long term. Her long-term lived

experience in Oman implies that she understands the short-term nature of these migrants' stay in the country. While this does not present a concern for hotels, which often prefer to employ seasonal workers on a short-term basis, it may explain why migrant workers' attitudes are not primarily shaped by the working conditions in these hotels or the levels of their earnings. However, it should be noted that all migrant participants in this research project are graduates of T&H programmes.

Rudina's attitude contrasted with that of Nambiar, a migrant hotel worker of Asian origin discussed previously, who feels encouraged to stay in Oman and work in the T&H sector for a prolonged period because of his knowledge of local cultures, the local language and the Omani labour market:

*I love Oman a lot, and I want to settle [here] with my family<sup>80</sup>. I have some friends in Dubai but they suffer from high prices, rents and inflation. Dubai has excellent business opportunities, but life there is complicated and expensive at the same time. I think I will continue in Oman and Muscat precisely because I have adjusted to Omani society. I have many Omani friends, I love them, they love me, and I do not think I will leave them to work in any other country. (Nambiar)*

Across categories of migrant graduates, I came to recognise the significance of the relationship between HC accumulation and work opportunities in the T&H sector, the role of acculturation in terms of adjustment or adopting the culture of the host country and the dual roles of the welcome offered by the host society (Oman) and social networks in the outcomes of migration.

To establish further the effect of investments in HC on migrant workers' employment patterns, I asked my migrant participants to comment on the effects of different levels of skills,

---

<sup>80</sup> Migrant workers may be allowed to bring their family to Oman after obtaining approval from their employer and within the terms of their visa, under the *kafala* system as discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3.3.

qualifications and competencies in relation to migrants' long-term ambitions in Oman. Some participants feel that those migrant workers who have made less HC investment are more likely to accept low-paying jobs and to consider short-term residency in Oman. Evidence of such a perspective is provided by Khan, a male employee discussed previously, who said:

*I have seen some cases where some migrants in relatively low-level jobs show a lack of long-term ambition to work and stay in Oman. (Khan)*

Clearly, Khan believes that some migrant workers in low-level positions are less likely to consider staying in Oman for as long as their more senior colleagues, because their uncertain labour market situation.

Khan's point of view was supported by the contrasting experience of Marcelo, a male migrant of southern European origin holding an executive position managing a city hotel. He said:

*I like working in the tourism sector. I feel that sometimes I want to return to the rainy atmosphere in my country (name of European nationality suppressed), but I love Oman so much. I have invested much effort trying to live and bring my family to this country, found a good job, earned promotions and even been integrated into the Omani society for many years. (Marcelo)*

Marcelo's statement, as a manager, suggests that migrant workers in high-status jobs who invest in skills that earn them greater rewards like promotions and who integrate successfully may consider staying in Oman longer and even bringing their families to Oman. Based on the accounts from Marcelo and Khan, it seems that migrant workers' long-term ambitions may be polarised between long-term stay and short-term stay in Oman, with those who have invested more in social and HC being encouraged to stay longer than those who have made less investment.

From the statements of Sharma, Rudina, Nambiar, Khan and Marcelo, the message emerges that a greater investment in cultural competence to ensure successful acculturation determines the migrant workers' inclination to extend their sojourns in Oman, as well as shaping their attitudes towards their work.

In the next section, I discuss the factors that some of the managers that I interviewed reported as affecting employers' attitudes towards hiring migrant workers.

#### **7.4 Factors influencing employers' attitudes towards hiring migrant workers**

I discussed the effects of their investments in HC with migrant workers in Oman on their employability and employment patterns (as discussed in detail in section 7.3). As mentioned in the previous section (7.3.2), migrant graduates alluded to HC as a descriptive concept, and even as an analytical or explanatory concept, to understand the employment patterns in the T&H sector. For instance, migrant graduates belonging to varied demographic groups recognised the significance of the relationship between HC accumulation and work opportunities in the T&H sector, as well as the role of acculturation (learning Omani Arabic language, culture, etc.) in adopting the culture of the host country and the welcoming role offered by the host society (Oman). For example, some research participants stated that knowledge of local culture, the local language and the Omani labour market were improving their employment patterns in the T&H sector and encouraging them to stay in Oman for a prolonged period.

I asked some of the managers to explain what factors they would emphasise as influencing their attitudes towards migrant graduates. Anna, a female migrant hotel manager of Asian origin (discussed previously), claimed that the hotels primarily consider migrants' skills and competencies in hiring processes:

*I don't hire; I oversee the hiring. Our hiring is guided by gaps in our current skill set rather than our attitudes towards an employee's origin. So, when we hire an Omani or*

*migrant jobseeker, the first thing we look at is whether they are really qualified for the job, and have the right skills and attitudes. As I had explained to you when you asked about what I look at when hiring Omanis, we look at how our new employees would contribute to our overall organisational performance. (Anna)*

From Anna's statement, employers in Oman seem to be more focused on how their new employees would contribute to productivity, while their personal attitudes towards a prospective employee's citizenship status or ethnicity do not matter. Again, my positionality as an Omani researcher, conducting face-to-face interviews with migrant graduates of diverse backgrounds, is crucial: I must be aware of the rhythms of multi-positional power dynamics and understand how boundary issues have the potential to shape or even impede communication with participants. Anna might be cautious to reveal something negative about employers' policies in terms of biases toward employment patterns of migrant and Omani graduates (Ryan, 2015; Ganga and Scott, 2006). Overall, Anna suggests that the desire to attain corporate goals may limit the influence of employers' social prejudices or biases when it comes to choosing between migrant and local workers.

To further understand whether Anna's assumptions reflect a predominant trend in the T&H sector, I examined statements provided by other hotel employers. Seerjith, a male, migrant manager of Asian origin working at a city hotel, informed me that hiring based on skills could actually be the trend:

*Just like I told you when you asked about why I would hire a migrant, we look at whether our worker would do all the assignments with satisfaction. When you work as a manager, you realise that all employees, no matter where they come from, are the same. The difference is their efficiency. I would fail my company if I hired an Omani*

*because I want to please the Omanis. So, as I said before, I wouldn't expect our attitudes to affect recruitment decisions. (Seerjith)*

Seerjith's statement was substantially similar to that of Anna. They both reported that employer stereotypes were not a significant factor in selecting between migrant and local workers. However, some managers of migrant origin like Seerjith and Anna did not acknowledge the role of stereotypes or potential biases in their hiring processes, at least not when facing an interviewer who is an insider and works for the Omani government. Additionally, employee respondents themselves cannot know the reasons behind hiring decisions; as indicated in many research studies, employers are often unaware of their own biases or wrongly believe that stereotypes do not influence them (Bielby, 2000; McGinnity and Lunn, 2011; Gaddis, 2015). When employers are influenced by their own gendered or ethnocentric biases, this can undermine the effectiveness of incentives for HC accumulation in labour markets (Midtbøen, 2015 and see Chapter Three, section 3.4.3). In Chapter Six, I addressed the impact of Omanisation policies on employment patterns and how employers' attitudes may relate more to corporate interests rather than personal biases. Seerjith and Anna also disclosed that one of the main reasons employers tend to overlook their personal attitudes or biases in scenarios where they have to choose between Omani and migrant workers is because they are under pressure to improve organisational productivity and performance. From their statements, only employers who are not focused on attaining organisational goals would allow social attitudes towards migrant and local workers to shape their hiring decisions. However, employers' actual labour requirements, labour costs and labour quality play a critical role in the discussion of HC and employment patterns of local and migrant graduates. In the same context, not all migrant graduates are less costly to employers than are local graduates. Higher employee costs, like higher wages and benefits, reflect the value of workers who invest in HC and therefore are more productive in achieving the goals of their employers. However, other factors besides

direct labour costs are also relevant. Based on interviews with certain migrant participants, such as Seerjith and Anna (mentioned above), it appeared that HC theory does not attend to the differentiated structural position of migrants versus non-migrants, and this gap might explain why employers prefer the former. For example, migrant workers may be more disposable: they cannot have permanent jobs, as Omani citizens can, and their employment contracts are subject to their employers' discretion (under the kafala system discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.3.3). Migrants can therefore be fired or laid off more easily than Omani citizens. This line of thinking could be elaborated further, to conclude that it is migrants' level of investment in HC in the form of skills and competencies that shapes employers' attitudes towards hiring them. In this case, migrants or Omanis who have made less investment in HC are less likely to be engaged by employers.

This idea seemed to resonate with other employer representatives. For instance Karla, who has been referred to frequently, described the situation in this way:

*I have participated in many hiring and recruitment processes. I would like to restate that we prefer stronger candidates with better qualifications than their citizenship status. So, provided that a migrant can be legitimately employed in our company the same as an Omani graduate, why not hire him? Then again, as I clarified while commenting on how we hire Omani graduates, cases of cronyism<sup>81</sup> do exist (Karla)*

Karla's perspective about cronyism, and how it might affect employers' recruitment and selection decisions, merited further analysis. Some migrant graduates might be hesitant to talk directly about this cronyism or favouritism, as it is a sensitive topic. One employer from a

---

<sup>81</sup> Refers to cronyism or favouritism in the process of hiring, as shown to relatives or friends (Cotton, 1988; Brüß, 2005).

European background endorsed liberal values of openness and transparency. Pavlo, a male migrant of Eastern European origin who worked as a manager at a city hotel, said:

*I have heard Omani and migrant workers discussions in our rest breaks at the kitchen always trying to convince me that (Wasta<sup>82</sup>) is more powerful than a degree and work experiences. For me, I can't accept this idea. (Pavlo)*

While Karla corroborates Seerjith's, Anna's and Pavlo's statements, she also makes another important observation. In her view, while she expects personal or social attitudes towards Omani or migrant workers to have an insignificant effect on the hiring process, in most cases, this cannot always be guaranteed because of favouritism. However, I have discussed and presented evidence from participants in a previous chapter (Chapter Six, section 6.3.2) that favouritism is not a prevalent feature of hiring in the T&H sector.

This demonstrates that rather than hiring based on qualifications, some employers may discriminate between Omani and migrant workers depending on their level of familiarity or their social networks (favouritism or *Wasta*). Interview subjects did not report doing this themselves (possibly in part because they were aware that such behaviour conflicts with legal norms in Oman). However, their awareness of the possibility suggests that, at least in some cases, discrimination in the hiring process could undermine the influence of migrants' HC investment on hiring outcomes. In this context, a body of international sociological studies is relevant, delineating the active role of migrant social networks in forming migrant labour market niches or ethnic enclaves: links with 'home' that connect people with and shape the patterns of employment and settlement. The social networks to which migrants belong are a

---

<sup>82</sup> Wasta is an Arabic term, used widely in Oman and the GCC; it represents a kind of nepotism or corruption based on reliance on a referral network or powerful officials to be hired or get something done. For instance, wasta might affect employers' decisions during the recruitment and selection process to hire one specific person instead of another; wasta might also complete government transactions more quickly (Sapsford et al., 2019; Barnett et al., 2013; Mann, 2014).

crucial component in facilitating their access to employment and labour markets and influence the employers' decisions to employ migrant graduates (Ryan et al., 2008; Midtbøen and Nadim, 2019; Bloch and McKay, 2015).

## **7.5 Conclusion**

From a review of the data provided by my participants, it appears that migrant workers in the Omani T&H sector are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes towards work in the sector when they are attaining what motivated them to migrate to Oman. Therefore, pull factors could also be interpreted as defining the positive attitudes that migrants perceive, encouraging them to migrate to a certain destination.

It appears that gendered occupational roles also shape attitudes towards work in the sector, as women are likely to demonstrate greater interest in it. A closely related observation is that some migrant participants are reluctant to admit to holding these attitudes themselves, even though they attribute them to others. These were the main factors accounting for the hesitation of some migrant graduates to discuss certain issues, while preferring to share positive stories about Oman to the researcher. These issues demand strict awareness to positionality and reflexivity, as I will discuss in Chapter Eight (the conclusion chapter) as a part of the limitations of the study.

Another emerging idea is that migrants with higher levels of skills, talents and proficiency in local languages and cultures are likely to be more employable in the host labour market than those with lower levels of ability. Correspondingly, multicultural competence is also observed to be an important form of HC that makes some migrants highly mobile in the T&H sector. From the demand side, employers feel that their decision to hire migrant workers is based on prospective employees' qualifications (reflecting their HC investment) rather than personal attitudes based on national origin. However, in certain cases, discrimination in the process of

hiring may undermine the impact of migrants' HC investment in the hiring process. In addition, the capacity for migrant workers to interact effectively with locals shapes their willingness to work in Oman, while the warmth and hospitality of Omanis, in turn, facilitates the integration of migrant workers. In the concluding chapter (Chapter Eight), I will present some further insights and policy recommendations concerning migrant and Omani graduates in particular.

In this chapter, I have addressed each of my research questions, describing the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector, identifying the factors shaping Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the sector and comparing their perspectives compare to those of migrant graduates. I have also delineated some of the factors that influence employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates, and discussed how investments in human capital affect the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. These findings help me in attaining my research aim to reach evidence-based conclusions about Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the T&H sector, and to understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates.

One clear message from participants in this study was the understanding that some migrant and Omani graduates have positive attitudes towards the sector because they feel the sector is large and growing and that there will be high demand for graduates. However, gender stereotypes are associated with specific jobs and can trigger preconceptions from labour market participants. For instance, some migrant women feel comfortable in and have positive attitudes towards the T&H sector because the sector is typically associated with such gendered characteristics as caregiving and being hospitable and caring for tourists. Thus, migrant women shared patterns and perspectives towards work in the T&H sector with Omani women in this study (see Chapter Five). In terms of migrant men, gender stereotypes may not determine the

choices of those male participants who aspire to work in the sector. These are related to pull factors based on migrants' expectations of earning higher salaries in the Omani T&H sector, which appear to be a stronger motivator for coming to Oman than push factors arising from insecurity issues in their home countries.

On the demand side, the level of migrants' investment in HC in the form of skills shapes employers' attitudes towards hiring decisions. As a result, migrants or Omanis who have invested less in HC are less likely to be selected by employers for employment in the T&H sector. Employers in Oman report a focus on how their new employees could contribute to productivity, which reflects core concepts of HC theory. By contrast, their personal attitudes towards a prospective employee's citizenship status or ethnicity would not matter.

In terms of my theoretical framework and the effect of investments in HC on migrant workers' employment patterns, most migrant participants affirmed that those who have made less HC investment tend to accept low-paying jobs and accept short-term residency in Oman, while those with more HC investment express higher expectations.

In addition, some migrant graduates affirmed that interacting with locals to learn their cultures represents a form of HC investment, mentioning how a positive response from locals can contribute to self-fulfilment and positive attitudes on the part of migrant workers. Some migrant graduates also hinted about the importance of friendship and social contact, and learning about Omani culture, as forms of HC investment enabling them to become more employable in the T&H sector. Some migrant graduates had made investments 'back home' in their countries of origin, like learning Arabic before migrating to seek work. In addition, some of them made HC investments in Oman, in response to the opportunities and challenges found there (more discussion about the HC is available in the Chapter Three). In addition, male and female migrant graduates emphasised the relationship between HC accumulation and work

opportunities in the T&H sector, the role of acculturation in terms of adjustment or adopting the culture of the host country and the dual roles of the welcome offered by the host society (Oman) and social networks in the outcomes of migration.

Some of the migrants interviewed in this thesis also demonstrated positive attitudes towards Omani society, recognising the value of Omani hospitality and identifying successful acculturation as a factor contributing to success in their career aspirations in the host country.

As I mentioned in previous data chapters and in Chapter Three, such other theoretical and conceptual perspectives as labour market segmentation, occupational niches and gender-based analysis compensate for the analytical weaknesses of HC theory and offer explanations for the range of phenomena where the assumptions of market rationality (both rational choice and meritocracy) are not met in practice. For instance, in chapter three I mentioned how the concept of cultural capital could be used to help address the issues of migrants. Some of these workers encounter obstacles in transferring their cultural capital and having it recognised and accepted, and this may be particularly true of cultural capital. As an example, participants in this study informed me that they invested in HC in their home country, and subsequently invested further in proficiency in local Omani culture and language, to make themselves more employable. I therefore became curious whether they may encounter challenges deploying their cultural capital in Oman, or having it recognised. Also, I wondered how social capital theory, including social networks that provide the social basis for ethnic enclaves and niches linked to the country of origin, might complement HC theory and address its weakness in identifying patterns of employment and settlement in the Omani T&H sector (I will identify some of these topics as suggestions for future studies in the next chapter).

Meanwhile, in the final chapter, I will summarise the research findings and discuss how the study has contributed to both theoretical and empirical knowledge in its field of research. In

addition, I will present policy recommendations, the study's limitations, and recommendations or suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

### 8.1 Introduction

In this study, I began by examining evidence from Omani and migrant graduates, with the overarching goal being to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of these graduates in the T&H sector. To achieve this goal, I needed to answer one primary research question: how can we explain the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector? To shed light on this overall research goal, I followed two additional research objectives. First, it was important to understand why so few Omani graduates were employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates. To achieve this objective, three secondary questions arose: first, to investigate the factors shaping Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector and how these attitudes compare to those of migrant graduates; second, to determine what factors influence employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates and third, to examine how investments in HC affect the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in this sector.

In the same context, it was also essential to examine critically one area of social policy in Oman with regards to employment and employability, namely Omanisation policies. The second additional research objective was therefore designed based on policy considerations: to identify modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omani male and female graduates in the T&H sector. In order to achieve this objective, it was again necessary to answer two secondary questions: first, how do Omanisation policies affect the employment of male and female Omani graduates and second, how could Omanisation policies be modified to increase the participation of Omani graduates in the T&H sector.

All of the primary and secondary research questions were addressed by collecting a wide variety of insights from various key actors and stakeholders in the T&H sector, including government experts, employers, academic staff, students, unemployed graduates and employees. A large body of primary data was collected from these various perspectives, through one-on-one interviews with voluntary participants (as discussed in Chapter Four, on methodology). The three data chapters have included various opinions, perspectives and insights offered by Omani and migrant graduates, focused both on Omanisation policies and on factors shaping the attitudes of Omani and migrant graduates towards work in the T&H sector. The views of employers were also integrated into the data chapters; for instance, Chapter Five discussed the factors that influence employers' attitudes towards hiring from the domestic labour force. The project's theoretical framework was also incorporated: gender perspectives in relation to HC theory and labour market segmentation<sup>83</sup> plays a significant role, for instance, again in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven.

In the next section, I briefly provide an overview of the key findings of my thesis and highlight its empirical and theoretical contributions.

## **8.2 Key findings and theoretical contributions**

My research project was designed and conducted on the basis of HC as a theoretical framework (as discussed in Chapter Three). HC theory helped me to achieve the objectives<sup>84</sup> of this thesis: first, to understand why so few Omani graduates were employed in the T&H sector compared to migrant graduates and, second, to identify what modifications to Omanisation policy, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omani male and female graduates in the T&H sector. At this point, I will summarise how the

---

<sup>83</sup> I mean here differences in the working conditions and attitudes of graduates towards working in the T&H sector.

<sup>84</sup> See the research objectives in the methodology chapter (Chapter Four).

empirical data and findings chapters have addressed the research questions I raised in the methodology chapter, using HC as the theoretical framework<sup>85</sup> to guide the interpretation of the research data.

***What factors explain the different patterns of employment and employability among Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?***

In Chapter Five and Chapter Seven, I found that many participants of diverse backgrounds and situations shared a similar perspective: that many and varied work opportunities are available in T&H, which makes this work attractive for job seekers with differing characteristics, including Omani and migrant graduates. However, certain characteristics of T&H sector employment, such as the prevalence of low-paid jobs, job insecurity, shift work, long working hours and fixed-term or temporary contracts, are the main aspects giving rise to negative perceptions of the sector among Omani and migrant graduates.

In addition, I found that the Omani and migrant graduates who volunteered for the study – both male and female – seemed determined to find employment in the T&H sector. In spite of this observation, the T&H sector in Oman is dominated by migrant graduates. As discussed in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven, Omani graduates have many opportunities to work alongside their migrant colleagues in the T&H sector. The primary data collected for this study show that the T&H sector has the potential to mitigate the social and economic problems in Oman arising from uneven development and oil price fluctuations, such as youth unemployment. Omanisation may become more relevant in the current context of global migration and economic and social change (as discussed in Chapter Six). In addition, changing the conditions of employment in the sector is one of the main demands of both Omani and migrant graduates.

---

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Three (on the theoretical framework of this study); section 3.4 and its subsections offer a detailed explanation for my adoption of HC as the main theoretical framework for this study.

*What factors shape Omani graduates' attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, and how do their perspectives compare to those of migrant graduates?*

This crucial question has been answered in detail in two data chapters, Chapter Five and Chapter Seven. Chapter Five showed that participants painted a nuanced picture of the sector, emphasising a number of positive and negative perceptions at the same time. Some Omani participants reported that their attitudes towards the T&H sector had changed over time, due to the influence of conventional and social media and government efforts to change the sector's negative image and to promote acceptance of work in the sector. However, perceptions of low pay and poor job security, and the potential for cultural conflict between Islamic doctrines and industry practices in T&H, contributed significantly to negative attitudes among male and female Omani graduates.

In addition, I found gender roles and dynamics and gender pay differentials to play critical roles in shaping the attitudes of Omani graduates towards the T&H sector. For instance, the influence of the concepts of masculinity and femininity on the career orientations of men and women was evident. Omani men were sometimes less comfortable with the idea of working in T&H, as they understood work in this sector to be gendered as feminine. The male Omani participants in this study were reluctant to undertake jobs involving roles, such as housekeeping, that are associated with women, and the only exception they mentioned was for positions of authority and status, such as management positions. Meanwhile, some Omani women in this study reported complimentary attitudes, feeling that the sector is suitable for women due to such gendered responsibilities as caring for others and hospitality.

In terms of migrant graduates, in Chapter Seven I determined that their perceptions about the market for labour in the sector encouraged positive attitudes and strong aspirations towards work in the sector, actually motivating them to migrate to Oman. The growing number of jobs

available in the Omani T&H sector have encouraged migrant graduates: they feel confident in the sector's growth due to Omani government policy and investment. Also, they seldom perceive any competition for jobs between Omani and migrant graduates, because the demand for both Omani and migrant graduates as workers remains high due to the sector's sustained growth. Some migrant workers and managers explained their attraction to the T&H sector in Oman based on the characteristics of the jobs available to them; migrant graduates also tended to focus more heavily on rewards associated with migration, such as salary and benefits.

Second, I found that gendered occupational roles, gender expectations, gendered stereotypes and gender equity issues shaped the attitudes of migrant graduates towards work in the T&H sector. For instance, female graduates of migrant origin were likely to demonstrate positive attitudes towards working in the sector compared to their male counterparts, based in part on gender stereotypes that assign hospitality work to women. In general, migrant participants in this study shared the same ideas about men's and women's employment preferences as the Omani participants discussed in Chapter Five, associating the T&H sector with women. This raises questions about why migrant men are willing to work in the T&H sector, if they associated the sector with women through a gendered lens, which could be a topic for further research. Some migrants suggested that men carrying strong aspirations to work in the sector are not deterred by gender stereotypes. While some felt that gendered occupational roles shape attitudes towards work in the T&H sector, others were strongly convinced that the T&H sector can accommodate all genders equitably. This area needs further examination in future studies.

More generally, as discussed in Chapter Seven, pull factors based on the expectation of higher salaries appear to be a stronger motivator for coming to Oman than push factors arising from issues of insecurity in the home country.

***What factors influence employers' attitudes towards hiring Omani and migrant graduates?***

My participants informed me that the decisions of employers about hiring Omani and migrant graduates depended more on the characteristics of prospective employees that would add value to the T&H sector, rather than personal attitudes and biases towards Omani or migrant graduates. For instance, some employers said that their companies or hotels would fail if they (the employers) hired Omanis simply to please the Omani authorities (as discussed in Chapter Seven). The choice between an Omani and a migrant graduate would depend on their qualifications, experiences, training and pool of skills. At least in some cases, however, discrimination in the hiring process, like *wasta* or nepotism, had the potential to undermine the influence of migrants' HC investment in hiring outcomes. However, as I discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.2.2, and Chapter Six, section 6.3.2, my overall conclusion based on interviews with various participants was that bias and favouritism were not a prevalent feature of hiring in the T&H sector.

According to participants interviewed in this research project, employers take the skills and competencies of Omani and migrant graduates into account when hiring. In Chapter Five (section 5.2.2) I conveyed my participants' report that value to the organisation was the major factor for employers in their hiring decisions. For instance, employers would have no reason to hire either an Omani or migrant graduate preferentially, provided that he or she has the requisite skills needed to improve their productivity. However, employers may have an overall preference towards migrant graduates, in particular because the migrant graduates selected may be more qualified than many Omanis. While the unemployed Omanis interviewed for this study are all qualified in that they have a relevant university degree, they do not have significant work experience. Through my interviews with academic staff and students at college 'A', verified by reviewing its educational and training programs on the college's website, I observed that the college provided three months of on-the-job training opportunities. By contrast, employers

may prefer to recruit migrants who have years of practical experience at local and international hotels. Thus, migrants hold a competitive advantage, in terms of practical experience, compared to Omani graduates. The Omani government should therefore consider addressing the problem of practical experience for young Omanis by providing full practical training grants or on the job training for at least two years for all graduates, to gain experience in T&H inside and outside Oman. In addition, the data presented in Chapter Seven<sup>86</sup> show that employers pay the most attention to migrants' skills and competencies in hiring processes. Those with higher levels of skill, and who are more proficient in local languages and cultures, are likely to be more employable in a host labour market like that of Oman than those with lower levels of ability. Employers feel that their selection of migrant workers is based on their qualifications (reflecting their HC investment), rather than on personal attitudes based on national origin.

Also, the labour of some migrant graduates is significantly less costly than local Omani labour. However, this cannot be generalised to all cases. In addition, while some employers admitted their perception that certain Omani graduates might be lazy, generally employers focused more on how each Omani or migrant graduate could fill skills gaps in the T&H sector and improve the performance and productivity of their hotels or other firms. I found a pattern of inconsistencies or even contradictions among the participants' observations; for instance, they reported that employers might be influenced by beauty and age as well as job qualifications, suggesting that Omani graduates who are younger and considered attractive<sup>87</sup> might benefit from greater prospects of employment. For instance, in Chapter Five (Section 5.2.2), participants suggested that some employers might be influenced by the age and attractiveness of Omani female graduates and that they might benefit from greater prospects of employment.

---

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter Seven for a more detailed discussion of hiring practices.

<sup>87</sup> See Chapter Five (Section 5.2.2) for further elaboration of this point.

These factors are not legally permitted considerations in hiring in Oman, but they are known to feature into the filling of specific roles, such as front office and receptionist jobs in hotels around the world (Caterer.com, 2019; Chiang and Saw, 2018; ILO, 2003). In general, employers focused more on the potential of employees' HC investment to increase their organisation's productivity (as discussed in Chapters Five and Six). Such aspects of HC as education, knowledge, training, migration and skills will enable graduates to be more employable in the T&H sector; these capacities enable graduates to gain stable employment, income, benefits and other life advantages, as discussed in Chapter Three.

***How do investments in Human Capital (HC) affect the differing employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?***

In applying HC theory to T&H sector employment in Oman, the present study makes a contribution to theoretical knowledge within the existing body of social research on labour and migration. I observed in Chapter Seven that those migrant graduates who make less HC investment by acquiring fewer qualifications, less experience or less acquisition of Arabic and Omani language and culture are more likely to accept low-paying jobs. By contrast, migrant graduates who invest in HC tend to obtain high-status jobs, promotions, a more satisfying social life and more successful integration into Omani society, and therefore settle for a longer stay in Oman. However, as I discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.3), research to date has confirmed that employers are not always guided by academic qualifications and job experience in their hiring decisions, contrary to the assumptions of HC theory. Other theoretical perspectives, such as labour market segmentation, occupational niches and gender-based analysis, compensate for the analytical weaknesses of HC theory and offer explanations for the range of phenomena where the assumptions of market rationality (both rational choice and meritocracy) are not met in practice.

HC theory suggests, from a supply-side perspective, that individuals with more accumulated HC have more realistic opportunities to acquire workplace authority: HC is used as a predictor for future products to meet employers' needs. In my study, the migrant graduates I interviewed informed me that they invested in HC in two ways: first in their home countries and second within Oman, through cultural acquisition and learning the Omani cultural norms and the Arabic language. Understanding the relationship between HC theory, acculturation<sup>88</sup> and migrant employability in the T&H sector in Oman is a key aspect of the current study (see next page for more detail).

In addition, taking a demand-side perspective, employers try to select the applicants with the highest expected productivity, according to my participants (Chapter Five, section 5.2.2). For instance, employers would have no reason to hire either an Omani or migrant graduate preferentially, provided that he or she has the requisite skills needed to improve their productivity as discussed above.

The migrant graduates in my study include some who accumulated HC before their arrival in Oman to work as migrant managers and workers, as well as migrant students studying at college 'A' in Muscat (or who have graduated from this programme). In addition, some migrants in the workforce in Oman have learned the local language and gained cultural competence while working with Omanis in hotels (see Chapter Seven, section 7.3 and associated subsections, concerning the effect of HC investment on length of stay in Oman).

Multicultural competence is therefore observed to be an essential form of HC that makes some migrants highly mobile in the T&H sector (see Chapter Seven). I observed that those migrant graduates who invest in HC through cultural acquisition and learning the Omani cultural norms

---

<sup>88</sup> As I discussed in Chapter Seven, acculturation refers to the process by which immigrants acquire cultural values and beliefs in the host country (Walters et al., 2007; Gans, 2007; Sakamoto, 2007).

and the Arabic language<sup>89</sup> are more employable and attain better income and promotions in the T&H sector. My research has explored the role of acculturation among migrant graduates in terms of their adjustment to or adopting the culture of the host country, as well as HC acquisition and the role of migrant networks<sup>90</sup> in placing people with employers (see Chapter Seven).

In addition, I found that the migrant graduates participating in my study used various strategies of HC accumulation that enabled them to enter the labour market more successfully in Oman, encouraging them to stay for a more extended period (see Chapter Seven, section 7.3). For example, after analysing the demographic questionnaires distributed in my fieldwork, I observed that some migrant hotel workers had carried out more than one strategy of HC accumulation during their careers; for instance, they acquired HC (language, work experience or credentials) before coming to Oman and continued to invest in HC while in Oman (additional cultural capital or professional experience). Similarly, some migrant graduates had acquired HC in Oman before joining the labour force (e.g., as migrant students in college ‘A’, whether they moved to Oman with migrant parents or arrived on their own at college age), and planned to acquire further HC within the workforce in Oman (e.g., picking up additional linguistic or work experience or additional credentials).

In terms of Omani graduates, in Chapter Five, many participants in the study informed me that qualifications are the most critical influence in employment decisions in the T&H sector. Meanwhile, unemployed Omanis expected higher pay and job security in T&H jobs that would match their investment in HC through educational attainment. In addition, my participants made the significant observation that there is a mismatch between curriculum and training, student expectations and the reality of work in the T&H sector for Omani graduates. This

---

<sup>89</sup> See Chapter Seven (section 7.3) for a detailed discussion of this topic.

<sup>90</sup> See Chapter Seven (section 7.3) for a discussion of the role of migration networks.

observation has implications for HC theory; for instance, when they invest in HC through education and training, graduates will expect higher earnings in the T&H sector as a reward. However, the reality of work in T&H tends to disappoint the expectations of Omani graduates. For instance, I observed that Omani graduates developed high expectations of the sector as a result of the campaigns run by the government of Oman on conventional and social media to convince them to find employment in the private T&H sector rather than waiting for public service jobs to become available. In Chapter Five (section 5.2.4), my data showed that Omani graduates are very ambitious but have expectations that are disconnected from the real opportunities available. They expect to reach a high level quickly, and prefer managerial positions. Meanwhile, they seem reluctant to start in lower-level jobs and work their way up over time, through promotions. This unrealistic expectation is part of the problem graduates face: perhaps the opportunities for promotion from one role to a higher position need to be made more transparent for graduates, as discussed in Chapter Five. Meanwhile, informants shared the concern that some hotels and other firms in the T&H sector could only offer low-wage, insecure and temporary jobs, making T&H less attractive in the Omani labour market from the perspective of these participants.

Based on the empirical data presented in Chapter Five, I also observed that Omani women invest in HC through education to improve their employment opportunities in the T&H sector, to improve their own lifestyle and to provide better lives for their children (this was discussed further in relation to the theoretical framework, in Chapter Three). As noted in Chapter Five, Omani women reported that they invested in training and education and expected prospective employers to offer them rewards proportionate to their investments. Also, in light of the prior theoretical discussion (in Chapter Three), Chapter Five employed a sociological perspective to interpret the participants' observations, incorporating the value of HC. For instance, female Omani graduates were engaged in HC acquisition through the education system. They pursued

educational qualifications at college 'A' to obtain both employment and higher incomes in the T&H sector, and their success in this was expected to enhance their status in Omani society. During fieldwork at college 'A', I observed the students to be generally enthusiastic about working in T&H, especially women who made up the majority of students. This again related to my discussion in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven about the role of gendered perspectives and suitability for work in the T&H sector. Meanwhile, societal expectations affect Omani graduates in strictly gendered ways: Omani cultural traditions expect men to act as breadwinners and to take charge of the family's financial obligations, such as the cost of marriage, housing costs and the expenses of their wives and children. At the same time, Omani women who have graduated with degrees in T&H experience pressure to take the role of housewife by taking care of their children and husband, rather than working in the T&H sector. I also found that Omani societal expectations towards Omani female graduates could undermine the impact of Omani women's HC investment in hiring outcomes if they feel pressure to work at home rather than being employed in the T&H sector alongside their male colleagues. Prolonged investment in HC through education tends to delay marriage, which seems to be a concern in Omani society given the social and cultural norms discussed in relation to interviews in Chapter Five. At the same time, unemployment was created by men's unwillingness to take entry-level jobs and their preference for managerial positions rather than accepting jobs in the T&H sector gendered as feminine (as discussed in Chapter Five). Participants in the study provided me with further insights concerning gender as a mediating variable, influencing the impact of income on attitudes and challenging the HC theoretical framework. For instance, Omani men expect higher management positions and higher material returns – based on their HC investments in education– that would enhance their position and social status. Omani cultural traditions expect men to act as breadwinners and to assume the financial obligations of their entire family, including their wives, as I discussed previously. In

response, theories relating cultural capital to gender dynamics could compliment HC theory, shedding light on societal and cultural challenges that may affect the participation of men and women in any sector (see Chapter Three, in particular section 3.3, for more detail).

Meanwhile, some Omani women in my study are inclined to accept any job offer regardless of status considerations. These female Omani graduates informed me that they were more enthusiastic about working in the T&H sector, given their expectations shaped by conceptions of femininity; at the same time, they believed that their formal qualifications (HC investments) were the most important factors in T&H sector hiring. In the same context, female Omani graduates with such HC are therefore a valuable source of quality labour in the sector to fill the gap and to address Oman's policy objectives by encouraging more Omani women to work in the private sector in general and in the T&H sector specifically, because women, given the expectations and assumptions they carry as part of their 'femininity',<sup>91</sup> carry more enthusiastic attitudes about work in the T&H sector than do Omani men. According to certain interview subjects, such gendered characteristics as beauty interact with the elements emphasised by HC theory, like university credentials and work experience, as resources to find employment in the tourism sector. Meanwhile, men typically do not wish to work in roles gendered as feminine (see Chapter Five, sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3, for further analysis of both of these aspects). As discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.3), one of the limitations of HC theory is that it ignores the structural inequalities that create and foster gender inequality, particularly due to family relationships (Olson, 2013; Redden, 2020).

In addition, culture plays a critical role in the undervaluation of specified jobs, which is the basis of another criticism of HC theory (Ochsenfeld, 2014; Abendroth et al., 2013; Tam, 1997; Bukodi and Dex, 2010). Theories relating cultural capital to gender dynamics have the potential

---

<sup>91</sup> See Chapter Five (section 5.2.3) for a more detailed discussion of this.

to account for this, complimenting HC theory and shedding light on societal and cultural challenges that may affect the participation of women in any sector. For example, the roles of patriarchy, masculinity and femininity in Omani society constrain women's decisions about joining the labour market because of the expectation that an Omani woman receive the permission of her father or older brother before seeking work in any sector. At the same time, perhaps adopting cultural theory along with HC theory could help address the influence of cultural and Islamic doctrines and practices towards the hospitality sector that contribute to negative attitudes towards the sector and affect Oman graduates' employment patterns in T&H (see Chapter Five, section 5.3). As previously discussed, I have chosen HC theory as a starting point to explore why Omani graduates continue to be unemployed despite their HC accumulation within the T&H sector. The Omani government perceives that investing more money in education will help to reduce the social problems arising from unemployment among graduates. Additionally, the government of Oman has repeatedly proclaimed that Omanis must assume leadership roles in T&H and other economic sectors instead of continuing to rely on migrant workers to fill the skill gaps arising from economic diversification.

Given the competing expectation that Omani women devote themselves to their families, a larger societal conversation is needed about how to encourage and support women to continue to work in that sector (see Chapter Five, section 5.3, for further discussion). In parallel with this, a larger societal conversation is also needed about how to encourage Omani men to work in the T&H sector, challenging their assumption that most work in the T&H sector is feminine in nature (as discussed in Chapter Five). Men's apparent preference for unemployment over low-level entry jobs in the T&H sector exemplifies this issue. Moreover, these aspects interact: if women are able to increase their labour market participation in Oman, what does this mean for men's apparent attachment to the male breadwinner model? What family model would be appropriate for Oman in the contemporary world is an issue to be discussed in Oman, where

societal expectations for marriage and breadwinning need to be challenged to respond to international social, economic and globalisation trends.

As I discussed in the theoretical framework chapter, Chapter Three, and in Chapter Five, HC theory argues that as people become more educated, they gain opportunities to spend less time in pursuit of employment, to obtain jobs that pay more highly, to climb the social ladder, to gain more autonomy and control over their work, to strengthen their social standing and generally to obtain faster transitions towards stronger career prospects and better income.

In addition, Chapter Five also presented the theme of gendered perspectives of income and level of HC investments, comparing Omani men's and women's income expectations based on their investment in HC and their perceptions of gender roles and dynamics (See Chapter Five, section 5.2.3 and 5.2.4, for further discussion).

Therefore, my theoretical contribution to knowledge is summarised into the following three points:

First, this study reveals and explores the relationship between gender, the career perceptions and other attitudes expressed by participants in this study and HC theory, in the context of the Omani labour market and the T&H sector in particular. This exploration contributes to a body of sociological studies carried out internationally, exploring the relationship between gender<sup>92</sup> and various occupations, as well as perceptions of various careers as masculine<sup>93</sup> or feminine (Huppatz and Goodwin, 2013:297; White and White, 2006; Glick et al., 1995). The present study indicates that Omani and migrant women are more enthusiastic and have more positive

---

<sup>92</sup> Gender roles – in terms of feminine and masculine characteristics attributed to occupations and industries – represent an interesting opportunity for future research, especially concerning stigmatisation and dignity in relation to employment and attitudes (Lorence, 1987 p. 122; Feldberg and Glenn, 1979; Weisgram et al., 2011; see Chapter Five).

<sup>93</sup> Masculinity is a term used to designate the characteristics, roles and attributes of men in society (Weisgram et al., 2011; Hardie, 2015; Forsman and Barth, 2017; see Chapter Five).

attitudes towards work in T&H and that they see such gendered characteristics as caring and hospitality and their status as new graduates as potential resources to help them find work in the tourism sector due to the role of gender stereotypes (as discussed in Chapter Five, section 5.2.3, and Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.1). The construction of ‘femininity’ in Omani culture makes work in this sector seem suitable for Omani women, while Omani men tend to avoid ‘feminine’ work and to prefer working in respected offices and managerial positions (see Chapter Five, Section 5.2.3, for more discussion of this contrast). Therefore, this raises a question for future research about perceptions of migrant men working in jobs constructed as feminine, or jobs socially gendered as female in the T&H sector and their experiences working in such occupations as housekeeping.

Therefore, individuals who invest in HC through education, in the expectation of material and symbolic returns, might not succeed in doing so, particularly given the role of gender and the perceptions of certain careers as feminine in individual and social attitudes. Omanisation policies will therefore not be successful without understanding the relationship among these factors and the significance of HC. An appreciation of gendered attitudes and perceptions regarding work in the T&H sector informed by HC theory can potentially lead to the successful integration of Omanis into the sector.

Second, my study contributes to HC theory, by understanding migrants’ integration into the Omani T&H sector through employment patterns and length of stay in Oman. My study explored the relationship between the migrants who possess a high level of HC through education, skills, talents and levels of proficiency in local languages (Arabic) and Omani cultures and how they are more employable in the Omani labour market and stay longer in Oman than those with lower HC (See Chapter Seven - Section 7.2 and associated subsections for more details). My findings affirm previous international sociological studies informed by HC theory: migrants scoring more highly in skills, talents and levels of proficiency in local

languages and cultures tended to be more employable in labour markets than those with lower scores (Polachek, 1995; Csedö, 2008; Ochsenfeld, 2014; Rich, 1995; Sanders and Nee, 1996; Mata, 2019; Grönlund, 2012).

Third, my study contributes to theoretical knowledge on the effects of HC in relation to gendered perspectives on the influence of income on attitudes, as well as how HC investment can undermine the mechanisms of gender discrimination. This relates to international sociological research on the effects of HC in relation to gender roles, discrimination and income gaps, as well as how HC investment can undermine the mechanisms of gender discrimination (Ochsenfeld, 2014; Shih, 2002; Zamudio and Lichter, 2008; Yavorsky et al., 2019; Qing, 2020; Rich, 1995). The current study has revealed that some Omani males expect higher salaries than their female counterparts with the same level of HC investment. Some of the male Omani participants in the study believed that women should earn lower salaries and should not complain about it while, in reality, women expect higher salaries in the workplace just as their male colleagues do. Some women in Oman face gender-based inequalities linked to a 'patriarchal gender system' – I observed that Omani society has been neglecting the productive potential of women while allowing men's expectations to decide how women in the sector should be paid (see Chapter Five, section 5.2.4, and associated subsections for more details). However, as I discussed in Chapter Three, HC theory has encountered criticisms, such as not addressing gender discrimination. Scholars like Perales (2013) have deployed devaluation theory in a UK context as a supplement to HC theory to explain occupational sex segregation and gender pay differentials. Devaluation theory indicates that male-dominated occupations tend to be more highly compensated than female-dominated occupations, because 'women's work' is devalued due to social structures.

As I discussed in Chapter Three (sections 3.3 and 3.6), the application of HC theory to studies of racial discrimination in employment is a complicated topic. If bias is present in labour

markets, employers might make different hiring decisions concerning similarly qualified majority and minority applicants (Omanis vs. migrants). Controlling for differences in worker quality, scholars would expect minority (migrant) job seekers to experience more extended periods of job search than similarly situated majority (Omani) candidates if there is discrimination in hiring in the labour market. If this were the case, minorities, on average, would accumulate general labour market experience more slowly throughout their careers than majority workers. After hiring, racial or ethnic discrimination might manifest itself in shorter periods of employment, less access to on-the-job training or complex work or lower cumulative promotion probabilities for disadvantaged workers.

It is also clear from previous research that employment gaps based on race or ethnicity tend to increase with social class. Some empirical studies have found that racial disparities in employment and income are more significant among those who are more highly educated or work in higher-status occupations, compared to those who are less educated or work in lower-status occupations (Farkas and Vicknair 1996; Mgobozi, 2004; O'Neill, 1990; Sakamoto and Chen 1991). Clearly, interactions between race and class must be considered in examining the impact of HC on employment and earnings inequality. It cannot be assumed that the influence of race or ethnicity will be uniform across social classes or careers. Throughout Chapter Three, I mentioned that criticism of sociological perspectives on HC theory often starts with the argument that the HC element of the theory is not adequately measured, and if it could be measured correctly, the well-observed social influences on gains would decrease or even disappear. (e.g., Smith, 1990; Tam, 1997). For example, in Chapter Three (section 3.3), I discussed how international research to date has confirmed that employers are not always guided by academic qualifications and job experience in their hiring decisions, contrary to the assumptions of HC theory.

Meanwhile, such other theoretical and conceptual perspectives as labour market segmentation, occupational niches and gender-based analysis compensate for the analytical weaknesses of HC theory and explain the range of phenomena where the assumptions of market rationality (both rational choice and meritocracy) are not met in practice. For instance, in Chapter Seven (section 7.3), I pointed to instances where discrimination in the process of hiring may undermine the impact of migrants' HC investment on hiring. In addition, I found that the capacity for migrant workers to interact effectively with locals shapes their willingness to work in Oman, while the warmth and hospitality of Omanis, in turn, facilitates the integration of migrant workers (section 7.3). As another example, in Chapter Three I mentioned how the concept of cultural capital could be used to help address the issues of migrants. Some migrant workers encounter obstacles in transferring their human capital and having it recognised and accepted, which may be particularly true of cultural capital. For example, participants in this study informed me that they invested in HC in their home country and subsequently invested further in proficiency in local Omani culture and language to make themselves more employable (section 7.3). I therefore became curious whether they encountered challenges deploying their cultural capital in Oman or having it recognised. Also, I wondered how SC theory, including social networks that provide the social basis for ethnic enclaves and niches linked to the country of origin, might complement HC theory and address its weakness in identifying patterns of employment and settlement in the Omani T&H sector (I will identify some of these topics as suggestions for future studies in Chapter Eight).

***How do Omanisation policies affect the employment of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector?***

For more than three decades, the Omani government has sought to make Omanis more employable in all economic sectors through Omanisation policies; these initiatives have

influenced the employment patterns of both Omani and migrant graduates. I have discussed this policy initiative critically in the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies, Chapter Two, and in relation to the data in Chapter Six. Although these policies were designed to favour Omanis, I found that they do not successfully address the ongoing changes in socioeconomic issues, and migratory and globalisation trends, facing Oman in a global context.

This research question has been addressed at length in Chapter Six. The perception that Omanisation has outlived its usefulness and has failed to embrace a spirit of diversity in harmony with Oman's current economic goals is widely shared by the participants in this study; Omanisation is not seen as relevant to contemporary economic and social trends. However, across the categories of participants it was reported that current policies have allowed for the inflow of migrant workers while still making sure that Omani graduates are employable. In addition, Omanisation initiatives may have limited the employment of migrant graduates in certain cases, which might constrain the ability of T&H firms to fill skill gaps. Policy choices that do not facilitate the integration of diverse skills in the sector appear to be inconsistent with current social and economic trends regarding migration and globalisation. For instance, Omanisation initiatives could discourage international investment by limiting access to diverse aspects of HC, including talents and skills in the labour market.

In Chapter Six, I observed that Omanisation is seen by demand side representatives (Omani and migrant employers and managers) as promoting the labour market entry of local Omanis while restricting that of migrants, with the primary objective of averting social tensions among these two categories that might negatively affect their employment patterns. Omanisation policies limit both the employment potential of migrants and the T&H sector's access to specific job skills that are associated with migrant workers.

Prior studies have indicated that Oman relies on migrants to achieve its economic<sup>94</sup> development and economic diversification goals, as the country has become one of the leading destinations for migrants arriving in the Gulf Cooperation Council over the last five decades (Pew Research Center, 2016; European Commission, 2010; Hvidt, 2019; Walsh, 2014). In the Omani labour market in general and the T&H sector in particular, skill gaps have required and still demand migrant graduates to fulfil emerging skill and competitiveness requirements.

***How could Omanisation policies be modified to increase the participation of Omani graduates in the T&H sector?***

Omanisation initiatives could be appropriately modified by taking into consideration all demand- and supply-side perspectives in the T&H sector. The data collected for this study shows that the attitudes of Omani graduates towards the T&H sector have begun to change, and more Omanis have become interested in working in the sector. In coordination with T&H sector employers, the government could modify its policies by being more transparent about the mismatch between Omani graduates' expectations and the real characteristics of the T&H sector. By addressing unrealistic expectations among Omani graduates, Omani graduates could be encouraged to gain additional skills, qualifications and experience to ensure promotion over time, which could increase their participation in the T&H sector. The government, in cooperation with employers in the T&H sector, could emphasise job security in the T&H sector, in social media campaigns, to increase the participation of Omani graduates in the sector. For instance, participants informed me that job security was an essential factor shaping their attitudes towards the sector. Due to fluctuations in the labour market and the economy

---

<sup>94</sup> See the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies (Chapter Two, especially section 2.3.2) about the role of migrants in the economies of Oman and other GCC countries.

that might affect careers in the T&H sector, job security seems to be a significant concern for Omani graduates (see Chapter Five, section 5.2.6).

In Chapter Six I determined that, to fill the pool of skills the T&H sector demands, Omanisation should allow for an inflow of migrant workers while still ensuring that Omani graduates are also employable in the sector. International investment in T&H in Oman could be negatively affected if the government of Oman were to force employers to hire Omani graduates just to satisfy policy requirements. Some of the interviews with employers reported in Chapter Six support this concern. Nevertheless, a balanced and phased approach to Omanisation might better mitigate the economic risks associated with skill deficiencies, as the potential of Omanisation initiatives to fulfil such expectations has not been supported by a body of research as discussed in Chapter Two. In Chapter Six (section 6.3), I present my participants' perceptions about the relevance of Omanisation to current economic and social changes to address this research gap.

As discussed in the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies (Chapter Two), Omanisation policies have failed to achieve their objectives over the last three decades (Burns, 1997; Khan and Krishnamurthy, 2016; Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020; Winckler, 2007). I found this policy direction ill-suited to the current situation, in which globalisation has shaped migration trends. I also determined that the policy environment should afford fairer treatment to migrants when it comes to access to employment. I observed that Oman's economic development strategy could more appropriately pursue a balance in the employment of Omanis and migrant workers as the T&H sector grows, although until now it has primarily been promoted and understood as replacing migrants with Omanis.

The failure of Omanisation policies may have come about when policymakers failed to incorporate the concerns of diverse stakeholders within the Omani economy, leading to their

overlooking of critical issues that key actors in the Omani labour market presently face. Such policies tend to limit the employability of certain workers, limiting access to diverse work opportunities.

From a theoretical standpoint, my research has revealed that migrant graduates with high levels of HC have played a significant role in diversifying the labour force in the host country – Oman – through their accumulation of needed skills. The perspectives of some participants suggest that a new labour force development policy would be practical if policymakers were first to recognise the roles that variety of skills and talent play in the Omani labour market<sup>95</sup>.

In addition, this thesis has shown that employers (representing the demand side of the labour market) are concerned that Omanisation policies have hindered their corporate goals, limiting their ability to attract a pool of skilled and qualified migrant graduates. Employers mainly reported that Omanisation is irrelevant to their current economic concerns, as it limits competition among migrant and Omani employees: they see such competition as healthy in improving the pool of skills available on the job market.

In the following section, I stress messages for key social actors arising from the thesis, concerning suggestions and recommendation about Omanisation policies.

#### **8.4 Policy recommendations for key actors**

The Omani government has tried to address the developing social problem of unemployment among Omani graduates through Omanisation initiatives for almost three decades. Repeated government efforts to address this issue to date have failed, as discussed in the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies (Chapter Two). In the 1980s, policy makers did not take into account the perspectives of key actors in the T&H sector, including employers, Omani and migrant graduates, academic staff and other government and private sector actors.

---

<sup>95</sup> See Chapter Two.

The decision to go ahead with Omanisation was issued by the Ministry of Manpower and was initially circulated to all actors without consulting them (Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020). With hindsight, the launch of this policy direction was a mistake and has caused considerable problems. Many participants in this study expressed the view that Omanisation initiatives have failed to integrate the social and economic concerns and views of diverse stakeholders and actors in the Omani economy (see Section 6.2 and associated subsections of Chapter Six for further discussion on the subject). Also, a body of scholarship provides support to this argument about various failures of Omanisation, related to different aspects and sectors (NCSI, 2015; Al-Barwani, 2014; Burns, 1997; Khan and Krishnamurthy, 2016; Ministry of Manpower – Oman, 2020; Winckler, 2007; Fargues, 2011) as discussed in detail in the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies (Chapter Two). For example, as discussed in Chapter Six, some participants in the hotel sector argued that Omanisation policies prevented them from reaching out to a diverse pool of skilled graduates, especially migrants, which caused them financial and administrative problems in relation to their business objectives.

The implementation of any new social policy, whether in a national labour market or more generally, has negative and positive effects and is therefore a double-edged sword. As explained in Chapter Six, an evaluation of the policy is therefore required first: an effective policy in this domain must take into account all social and economic variables, especially current trends relating to migration and globalisation. Oman is part of a changing world; therefore, Omanisation policies must be flexible and change accordingly, being updated to respond to these changing dynamics.

Second, Oman's social policy makers and other government policy actors must substantially rethink the existing state and non-state social protection agenda, to respond to the concerns of graduates about job insecurity, casual work or temporary jobs and low income within the T&H sector (See Chapter Five, in particular section 5.2.6 providing graduates' perspectives on job

security in the T&H sector, for more details). This initiative should start from Muscat, the capital of Oman, as a first phase and be introduced in other provinces in subsequent phases. Building on the apparent successes attained through fair work policies, as indicated by Bornstein (2019) and Mayer and colleagues (2013) in their respective studies, I believe that Oman should consider passing similar policies to encourage job security, job autonomy and improved welfare for employees (Burgoon and Dekker, 2010; Alberti et al. 2018; Broad, 1995; Hudson-Sharp and Runge, 2017; Quinlan, 2016).

Third, I also believe that social policy makers should encourage employers in Oman to provide supportive work environments. The previous discussion (in Chapter Five) pointed out Omani graduates' concerns about the barriers to T&H sector employment that could be overcome through more supportive work environments and finding meaning in work (see Chapter Five, section 5.2.6, for more details). Previous research in the context of Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand, has shown that employees in the hospitality industry are more likely to have positive attitudes towards work in the industry when provided with a supportive work environment, which contributes to employee satisfaction (Moen et al., 2016; Marshall et al., 2015; Kantor and Weisberg, 2002). In such circumstances, international studies have shown that self-reinforcing biases may exist when the work environment is supportive, such as when employers in the sector provide employees with fair wages, work benefits and job security (Emmenegger, 2009; Saloniemi et al., 2004; Arai and Vilhelmsson, 2004; Marshall et al., 2015; Kantor and Weisberg, 2002).

Fourth, social policy makers in Oman could build on the attraction of working with people from diverse backgrounds in encouraging Omanis to join the T&H sector. A balance between Islamic principles and sectoral policies would be needed so as to project a more attractive image, capable of generating significant interest in the T&H sector among Omani students and job seekers. For instance, during my fieldwork in Oman, I had the opportunity to visit many

hotels; I observed that the majority of them – particularly in Muscat – provide alcohol and pork to guests. This state of affairs seems to differ substantially from the situation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which completely prohibits alcohol and pork consumption (Cacciottolo, 2015; Engel, 2018; Thistlethwaite, 2015). In general, Oman seems to be more liberal than the KSA.

However, the negative attitudes expressed by some of the participants in this study seem to reflect a perception rooted in Islam and the Qur'an regarding the morality of working in hotels that offer alcohol and pork. In Oman, such stereotypes primarily concern international hotels, which represent the most dynamic element of the T&H sector. Armed with this understanding, I could not help but wonder whether making Omani hotels halal-compliant could increase the number of Omanis interested in joining the T&H sector. At the same time, I also wondered whether this option would be viable, given that some of the tourists who frequent Oman come from Western countries. Such competing perspectives clearly show that the sector's future prosperity is contingent on the extent to which Islamic principles affect Omani workers' decisions about participation in the sector. For instance, Dubai is the best example of a successful global city in the Gulf region; like Malaysia in Asia, Dubai has provided Halal hotels to attract bookings from Muslim families and to increase the number of Muslim workers interested in working in such hotels but who reject working in international hotels (Stephenson et al., 2010; Olmedo, 2015). Also, International Sociology of Islam and gender scholarships argued that Muslim graduates are naturally influenced by Islamic and cultural ideology, which then shapes their attitudes to work in the T&H sector in many countries. (Alberti and Iannuzzi, 2020; Wood and Keskin, 2013; Ram et al., 2001). See Data Chapter Five - Section 5.3 for more details about my participants views.

The policy environment encouraging such supportive work environments should also facilitate women's participation in the labour market. Sociological studies undertaken in Australia,

Ireland, Iceland and the US have indicated that providing a supportive environment for both male and female employees can change attitudes towards work and encourage greater participation, particularly for women (Baxter, 2000; Kalev et al., 2006; Mennino et al., 2005; Schieman et al., 2009; Russell et al., 2009; Stainback et al., 2011). Good incomes for graduates, internal and external scholarships to allow them to study abroad, and flexible work schedules that take family and religious responsibilities into consideration would fulfil the main demands expressed by male and female Omani graduates concerning work in the T&H sector.

To ensure that more locals are encouraged to join the T&H sector, it appears to me that more motivating aspects of the work in the sector should be integrated into and encouraged; this approach could also be productively extended to migrant employees as well. Employers who make more pronounced efforts to ensure a supportive work environment for their migrant staff would thereby facilitate their investment in multicultural competencies. Migrant graduates are typically ready to familiarise themselves with Omani culture and language, as a form of HC; integration into Omani society then encourages them to stay longer in Oman and possibly to bring their families (as discussed in Chapter Seven). However, Omanisation policies and the *kafala* system counteract this potential, as both policies restrict the entry of migrant workers to Oman (and even more so their families), as discussed in Chapter Two. At the same time, in the context of Oman's growing economy, government, employers and other key actors stated that they still need migrant graduates in short- and long-term employment to fill the skills gaps and contribute to developing and building Oman<sup>96</sup> (Kamrava and Babar, 2012; Wickramasekara, 2016; European Commission, 2010; Hvidt, 2019; Walsh, 2014).

Studies, both in Oman and internationally, have found that migrant graduates have the potential to play a significant role in economic development both in Oman and other Gulf states (as

---

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter Two, section 2.3.2, concerning the role of migrant workers in the economies of Oman and other GCC countries.

discussed in the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies, Chapter Two). A policy framework encouraging supportive work environments would help realise this potential among migrant as well as Omani employees, and among men as well as women.

In the next section, I present some reflections that have arisen in carrying out this thesis, discuss the limitations of this study and make suggestions for future research based on my journey over five years of doctoral studies.

### **8.5 Limitations of this research project and suggestions for future studies**

First of all, I should admit how much I have learnt throughout the five years of my journey of doctoral research. When I began my studies in 2016, I was confused and anxious, because the direction of my research was unclear to me. After the first year, my knowledge about the research process gradually developed; I learnt how to narrow and focus my research topic after receiving extensive constructive and valuable comments from my supervisory team, from the confirmation review team panel and from another members of academic staff involved in my first year biannual review. I collected these comments and tried to address them. Through this feedback, I also realised the importance of including HC as a theoretical framework to guide my study. Ultimately this led to my serious attempt to address a number of significant gaps in the accumulated evidence on the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector, through this thesis.

I cannot argue that the present study has covered all aspects of its field of research without limitations. First of all, certain limitations arise out of the selected research methodology and data analysis strategy, essentially from the reflexivity and positionality required by the qualitative interview approach. (I have discussed reflexivity and positionality in Chapter Four, in terms of the general methodology of the thesis, and in greater detail in Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven in relation to particular issues). The quality of findings and

interpretations offered in this study depend on such reflexivity and positionality. For instance, my experience of conducting face-to-face social qualitative interviews with participants from diverse backgrounds – in terms of gender, age, ethnicity or nationality, language, religion, language, parental status and other factors – points to a number of challenges. Through my experience of sharing personal perspectives, negotiating various standpoints, beliefs and experiences and engaging with ongoing debates about such topics as Omanisation policies, employer practices, labour laws and other Omani government policies, the dynamics of power relations and the interaction between the positionality of an Omani researcher and migrant participants influenced my results dramatically. Some migrant graduates tended to tell positive stories to an Omani researcher working in the public service (an insider). Meanwhile, it was not always easy for volunteer participants like migrant graduates to share their negative perceptions towards government policies, religion or the culture of the host country. I understand that migrant graduates might be worried about their futures and afraid of saying something negative about their employers or their host society.

A second limitation arises from the research aims and design of the study. While focused on the T&H sector, other sectors under the umbrella of Omanisation policies, such as the oil and gas sector, the financial and banking sector, the logistics sector, the mining industry and other economic sectors in Oman, are excluded. Therefore, my study is unable to provide an overarching or complete picture of the labour market. This study has demonstrated a wide-open terrain for other researchers to examine and compare employment in these sectors.

Third, this study focused on a critical examination and evaluation of Omanisation policies in terms of their perceived relevance to current economic and social changes and their suitability with regard to the employment and employability patterns of Omani and migrant graduates. Consequently, the study has not included any systematic comparisons with other similar policies in the GCC, for instance, examining Omanisation in relation to other similar initiatives

in the region with regard to their effect on employment and employability of local and migrant graduates.

Fourth, my thesis has emphasised how gendered perspectives condition the attitudes of Omani graduates towards the T&H sector in relation to income and job security, as discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Seven points out how earning a better income serves as a pull factor, shaping migrant graduates attitudes towards the sector; however, this study does not explore in any depth the precarisation of work in the private sector in Oman. Once I complete my PhD studies, I aim to conduct research about this topic, as this concept seems crucial to contemporary sociological debate in contexts like that of Oman. Precarious work consists of non-standard forms of employment and is characterised by low pay, job insecurity, self-employment, lack of protection, temporary work and unpredictable income, as well as any type of work associated with poor employee welfare (Kalleberg, 2009; Shin et al., 2020; Hira-Friesen, 2018; Vosko et al., 2009).

Fifth, migrant informants have mentioned the importance of building interpersonal relationships based on a person's status within a particular society; this broader concept includes strategic alliances within and between families in pursuit of a common purpose, such as searching for employment and employability in the specific sector through social networks and personal relationships without engaging in a more formal process (McDonald, 2011; Yeung and Rauscher, 2014; Dietz and Bozeman, 2005; Bao et al., 2018). In Chapter Seven (section 7.2.2), I found only limited support for the importance of friendship and social contacts for migrant workers to enable them to become more employable in the T&H sector. Some migrant graduates did discuss the importance of their friends and social contacts as they learned about Omani culture and the Arabic language, which would encourage them to stay longer in Oman and to obtain high-paying jobs in the T&H sector as a form of social capital. Exploring the relationship between informal social capital and HC would offer an opportunity for

researchers to explore further the role of interpersonal relationships and social networks in terms of employment and employability. In addition, using other theoretical and conceptual perspectives or frames (such as occupational niches and labour market segmentation, and gender-based analysis) to supplement HC theory and to compensate for its weaknesses might be helpful to address each issue within the scope of this research project (as discussed in Chapter Three). In addition, a further potential area for future research is the longer-term experiences of migrants in Oman, including for the children of migrants. For instance, migrant students informed me, against my expectations, that they had not come to Oman to study but rather were the children of migrant workers in Oman. This group is poorly understood, and deserves further investigation if migrants are largely constructed as temporary, this obscures those who stay for decades and whose children are born or grow up in Oman.

Finally, the current study has focused on Omanisation policies, while migration policy in Oman – notably the *kafala* sponsorship system – has not been explored in depth. It was discussed only in the background of the Omani labour market and Omanisation policies, in Chapter Two, and then briefly in Chapter Six. Given the sensitivity of the topic for such vulnerable participants as migrant graduates, an investigation of *kafala* from an interpretive perspective would have required a very different research design and a longer research timeline. In addition, as the *kafala* system can be expected to have different impacts on people working in different sectors with different degrees of skill and experience, presumably a whole new set of research questions would emerge from any attempt to confront these complexities.

However, establishing the possible connections between Omanisation and the *kafala* sponsorship system, in terms of the employment patterns of graduates, would provide additional context and give rise to additional themes that could address some of the current study's limitations. Migrant workers are typically not allowed to work for a new employer without the express consent of their current employer, and this demands further research in

terms of its impact on employment patterns. At the same time, some migrant workers do not have the right to bring their families to live with them in Oman because the *kafala* and employers' contracts may not allow this. However, some migrant participants were able to bring their families to Oman, because of their own contracts with employers. The complex relationship between what migration policy proscribes and what happens on the ground because of individual decisions will be a subject for future research in future.

## **8.6 Concluding remarks**

Chapter Two and Chapter Six have described the decades of debate surrounding the implementation of Omanisation, as part of the framework of government policy to help Omanis overcome social problems and economic challenges through employment and social transfers. I would argue that Omanisation policies need to be revisited again to shape a new social policy that takes into account the shifting relationship between social needs and economic trends. For instance, the world's economic future now appears totally different than it did before the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular implications for tourism and international travel. In December 2020, the Omani government announced that the T&H sector lost half a billion Rials about (\$1.3 billion) due to the impact of COVID-19 (WAF, 2020; Al Nasseri, 2020). To date, the government has not announced how many Omani and migrant graduates lost their jobs because of this crisis and whether the government will offer subsidies to support the T&H sector. The idea that the government could sustain welfare programmes forever, such as the guarantee of employment in the public service sector and unemployment compensation, might not survive the economic and social changes going on at the moment. Discussions and evaluations of Omanisation reflect a number of intersections and paradoxes among the interests of employers, graduates, employees, government experts and academic researchers. After my a comprehensive review of the body of literature and my analysis of the primary data, I have become increasingly convinced of the importance of research on these apparent contradictions,

particularly the tensions between the government's social policies, the interests of T&H sector employers and the needs of workers (Omani and migrant graduates).

From my personal experience, HC appears as a significant theoretical element to apply in any social or public policy. As a researcher investing in higher education, training and unique skills in the UK, I expect to achieve my social needs including marriage, social stability, home ownership, better employment and a better life for my children away from poverty. Migrant graduates typically have the same dreams as I do and will invest in HC along with their migration process, learning about the host country's language and culture and earning qualifications to achieve their social needs and economic goals (part of the pull factors of migration discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Seven). Any country needs to invest in education as a part of its social policy framework to address its social problems. The integration and assimilation of migrant graduates in a host country like Oman can be achieved through flexible and fair policies towards the migrant graduates who have built Oman's economy over several decades; policymakers cannot blame migrants for their own failure to address socioeconomic issues in Oman. Oman can achieve success in its development goals if qualified labour is allowed to enter the national labour market appropriately, with more flexible Omanisation policies and a less rigid *kafala* system to take into account global migration trends and other contemporary economic and social changes (as discussed in Chapter Six). Already the private sector, and especially the T&H sector, is struggling to survive a series of economic challenges, the latest of which is the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, it will be impossible to impose strict migration and employment policies to regulate the labour market, for example, by imposing strict Omanisation directives. A solution can be developed only by understanding the attitudes and perspectives about both sides of the labour market in the T&H sector.

However, I want to signal to social policy makers that the Omani labour market can accommodate the social and economic integration of migrant graduates without harming

employment prospects for Omani graduates. Conventional and social media need to raise awareness among graduates about the reality of work in T&H and other sectors, to avoid job mismatches and employment shocks when graduates look for work in the T&H sector. The current issues may lead to resignations by Omani workers from jobs in the sector, as discussed in Chapter Five. Finally, I expect investment in HC in Oman to give Omani and migrant graduates better opportunities to work in higher quality jobs and to achieve social and economic goals for themselves and for their families.

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1: Letter Of Authorisation To Conduct Research Interviews/Request For Access**

**Date:** 1/02/2018

**Subject:** Letter of Authorisation to Conduct Research Interviews/Request for Access

#### **To Whom It May Concern:**

Mr. Fahad Al Jahwari is a registered PhD researcher in the Department of Sociology at the University of Sheffield. He is currently enrolled in a four year doctoral programme in the field of social policy, undertaking research on 'Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman'. Broadly, this research project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates.
- b) To identify what modifications to Omanisation policies, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

As part of his PhD degree requirements, Fahad is expected to complete a research project in the field. We are kindly requesting your assistance in providing access to facilities for him to conduct his research, including access to participants and data, pass cards to enable him to enter

relevant buildings and departments and support with required documentation, reports and responses to questions relevant to his research.

The methods for collecting research data will be as follows:

- a) Qualitative semi-structured interviews across a variety of categories of participants (the duration of these interviews will each be approximately one hour) at a date, time and location convenient for the participant.
- b) Qualitative elite interviews across a variety of participants with special expertise (the duration of these interviews will also each be approximately one hour) at a date, time and location convenient for the participant.

All information provided to the researcher will be treated with rigorous confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Participants' names and workplaces will be altered and thus anonymised in the thesis; in this regard, Fahad has taken into consideration the university's code of ethics as well as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Also, these research activities are voluntary in nature; participants have complete freedom either to participate or withdraw from the study, at any point. Research interviews will be recorded using a SONY sound recorder and an iPad tablet, after obtaining permission from the participant. This approach to documentation will be valuable for data collection and analysis. The data, audio, transcription files and other data will be kept securely in Fahad's desk in the research office at the University of Sheffield – Elmfield Building. Only Fahad and his joint supervisors will have access to the data. The transcriptions and all related documentation will be destroyed after the Viva (oral defence of the thesis).

However, Fahad seeks to send a number of separate research invitations and a request for access/permission to each potential respondent, belonging to government authorities, hotels, colleges and firms.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Fahad directly. His contact information is provided below.

Your permission to assist Fahad in his research will be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mrs Yusra Al Ismaily

Academic Advisor

Oman Embassy - Cultural Attaché

London

**Contact details of researcher:**

Fahad Al Jahwari

Email address: frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone in Oman: 0096895661008

**Attachments:**

- 1- A copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the University of Sheffield.
- 2- A copy of the participant's information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## Appendix 2: Letter To A Hotel Manager To Conduct Research Interviews

The University of Sheffield  
Department of Sociological Studies  
Elmfield Building  
Northumberland Road  
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

Hotel General Manager  
X hotel  
Muscat  
Date: 05/02/2018

Dear Mr/Ms XXXXXXXX,

**Study title:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Oman.

### **Subject: Request for Access/ Permission**

My name is Fahad Al Jahwari and I work for the Supreme Council for Planning in Muscat, Oman, as Head of the Councils and Committees Department in the HE Secretary General's Office; I am also a PhD student in Social Policy at the University of Sheffield, UK. I am writing to request access to your hotel and to invite you, other managers and employees specialising in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) field to take part in a research interview as part of my doctoral fieldwork in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. This research falls under the joint supervision of Professor Majella Kilkey (m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk) and Professor Louise Ryan (louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk). My supervisors may be reached by email, should any questions or concerns arise about the research.

The Omani Embassy in London, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield, has granted permission to carry out this research in your hotel (find

attached a copy of the official letter and a copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university<sup>97</sup>). However, as the study is voluntary in nature, some managers and employees may decide not to participate in the research project.

Broadly, my study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. In particular, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to Omanisation policies, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

In pursuit of these objectives:

- i. I would like to conduct an elite interview with you as a general manager. In addition, I wish to schedule in-depth, elite interviews with other Omani and managers of migrant origin who have worked in the T&H sector for more than five years (the duration of these interviews will be between 45 minutes and one hour) at the time, date and location most convenient for the participants.
- ii. I would also like to conduct research in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected Omani and employees of migrant origin, in the same format described above.

As a hotel general manager, I would appreciate it very much if you could kindly introduce me as a researcher to managers and employees at your hotel.

---

<sup>97</sup> A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Oman Embassy London with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield.

Please inform the prospective participants that they are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study, and they need not provide any justifications or reasons, should they decide to withdraw from the study at any time. The research interviews will be recorded using a SONY sound recorder and an iPad tablet after obtaining consent and permission from each participant.

All responses will be coded via NVivo Pro 12 software and anonymised so that participants' names cannot be recognised. This approach to documentation will be valuable for data collection and analysis. The audio file, transcription files and other data will be kept securely in my desk in the research office at the university. Only myself and my supervisors will be able to access the data. The transcriptions and all related documentation will be destroyed after my Viva (oral defence of the thesis). All information provided to the researcher will be treated with rigorous confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Participants' names and their workplaces will be changed and anonymised in the thesis; I have taken into consideration the university code of ethics as well as the latest updates of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). I would also like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) at the University of Sheffield.

I very much look forward to meeting with you to discuss my plan, the attached documentation and my timeline for collecting the research data. Thank you in advance for your support in this research project.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fahad Al Jahwari". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'F' and 'A'.

Fahad Al Jahwari

Email address: [frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk)

Telephone in Oman: 0096895661008

### **Attachments**

- 1- A copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university.
- 2- A copy of the participant's information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.
- 3- A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with a collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and University of Sheffield.

**Appendix 3: Letter To The Public Authority Of ‘X’  
To Conduct Research Interviews With Omani Graduates Who Are Unemployed**

The University of Sheffield  
Department of Sociological Studies  
Elmfiled Building  
Northumberland Road  
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

Government official  
The Public Authority of X  
Muscat  
Date: 05/02/2018

Dear Mr/Ms XXXXXXXX,

**Study title:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates’ employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Oman.

**Subject: Request for Access/ Permission**

My name is Fahad Al Jahwari and I work for the Supreme Council for Planning in Muscat, Oman, as Head of the Councils and Committees Department in the HE Secretary General’s Office; I am also a PhD student in Social Policy at the University of Sheffield, UK. I am writing to request access to your Authority and to consult with you about access to *Omani Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) graduates within Oman who are unemployed*; I would kindly request that you identify some of these graduates to take part in a research interview as part of my doctoral fieldwork in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. This research falls under the joint supervision of Professor Majella Kilkey (m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk) and Professor Louise Ryan (louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk). My supervisors may be reached by email, should any questions or concerns arise about the research.

The Omani Embassy in London, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield, has granted permission to carry out this research with the above-mentioned participants (find attached a copy of the official letter and a copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university<sup>98</sup>). However, as the study is voluntary in nature, prospective participants may decide not to participate in the research project.

Broadly, my study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. In particular, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to the Omanisation policies, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

In pursuit of these objectives, I would also like to conduct research in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five male and five female Omanis who are unemployed after having graduated from a T&H programme. I would prefer those who obtained first and upper-second grades in their degrees. The duration of these interviews will be between 45 minutes and one hour; they will take place at the time, date and location most convenient for the participants.

Please inform the participants that they are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study, and they need not provide any justifications or reasons, should they decide to withdraw from the study at any time. The research interviews will be recorded using a SONY sound recorder and an iPad tablet after obtaining consent and permission from each participant.

---

<sup>98</sup> A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Oman Embassy London with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield.

All responses will be coded via NVivo Pro 12 software and anonymised so that participants' names cannot be recognised. This approach to documentation will be valuable for data collection and analysis. The audio file, transcription files and other data will be kept securely in my desk in the research office at the university. Only myself and my supervisors will be able to access the data. The transcriptions and all related documentation will be destroyed after my Viva (oral defence of the thesis). All information provided to the researcher will be treated with rigorous confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Participants' names and their workplaces will be changed and anonymised in the thesis; I have taken into consideration the university code of ethics as well as the latest updates of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). I would also like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) at the University of Sheffield.

I very much look forward to meeting with you to discuss my plan, the attached documentation and my timeline for collecting the research data. Thank you in advance for your support in this research project.

Kind regards,



Fahad Al Jahwari

Email address: frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone in Oman: 0096895661008

### **Attachments**

1- A copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university.

2- A copy of the participant's information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

3- A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with a collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and University of Sheffield.

**Appendix 4: Letter To The Deputy Dean For Academic Affairs  
Of College 'A' To Conduct Research Interviews**

The University of Sheffield  
Department of Sociological Studies  
Elmfield Building  
Northumberland Road  
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

The Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs  
Muscat  
Date: 1/02/2018

Dear Professor XXXXXXXX,

**Study title:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Oman.

**Subject: Request for Access/ Permission**

My name is Fahad Al Jahwari and I work for the Supreme Council for Planning in Muscat, Oman, as Head of the Councils and Committees Department in the HE Secretary General's Office; I am also a PhD student in Social Policy at the University of Sheffield, UK. I am writing to request access to your college and to invite students and faculty members specialising in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) field to take part in a research interview as part of my doctoral fieldwork in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. This research falls under the joint supervision of Professor Majella Kilkey (m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk) and Professor Louise Ryan (louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk). My supervisors may be reached by email, should any questions or concerns arise about the research.

The Omani Embassy in London, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield, has granted permission to carry out this research in your college (find

attached a copy of the official letter and a copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university<sup>99</sup>). However, as the study is voluntary in nature, some students and faculty may decide not to participate in the research project.

Broadly, my study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. In particular, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to the Omanisation policies, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

In pursuit of these objectives:

- i. I will conduct in-depth, elite interviews with some of academic staff specialising in the T&H field (the duration of these interviews will be between 45 minutes to one hour) at the time, place and date most convenient for the participants.
- ii. I would also like to conduct research in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected Omani and migrant/international students studying in T&H programmes.

As Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, I would appreciate it if you could kindly introduce me as a researcher to the relevant members of your academic staff and student body.

Please inform the participants that they are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study, and they need not provide any justifications or reasons, should they decide to withdraw from the

---

<sup>99</sup> A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Oman Embassy London with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the Ministry of Sheffield.

study at any time. The research interviews will be recorded using a SONY sound recorder and an iPad tablet after obtaining consent and permission from each participant.

All responses will be coded via Nvivo Pro 12 software and anonymised so that participants' names cannot be recognised. This approach to documentation will be valuable for data collection and analysis. The data, audio, transcription files and other data will be kept securely in my desk in the research office at the university. Only myself and my supervisors will be able to access the data. The transcriptions and all related documentation will be destroyed after my Viva (oral defence of the thesis). All information provided to the researcher will be treated with rigorous confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Participants' names and their workplaces will be changed and anonymised in the thesis; I have taken into consideration the university code of ethics as well as the latest updates of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) from the University of Sheffield.

I very much look forward to meeting with you to discuss my plan, the attached documentation and my timeline for collecting the research data. Thank you in advance for your support in this research project.

Kind regards,



Fahad Al Jahwari

Email address: frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone in Oman: 0096895661008

**Attachments**

- 1- A copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university.
- 2- A copy of the participant's information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.
- 3- A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with a collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and University of Sheffield.

## Appendix 5: Letter To A Tourism Development Firm To Conduct Research Interviews

The University of Sheffield  
Department of Sociological Studies  
Elmfield Building  
Northumberland Road  
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

The General Manager  
Tourism development firm  
Muscat  
Date: 05/02/2018

Dear Mr/Ms XXXXXXXX,

**Study title:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Oman.

### **Subject: Request for Access/ Permission**

My name is Fahad Al Jahwari and I work for the Supreme Council for Planning in Muscat, Oman, as Head of the Councils and Committees Department in the HE Secretary General's Office; I am also a PhD student in Social Policy at the University of Sheffield, UK. I am writing to request access to your company and to invite you – as a manager in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) field – to take part in a research interview as part of my doctoral fieldwork in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. This research falls under the joint supervision of Professor Majella Kilkey (m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk) and Professor Louise Ryan (louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk). My supervisors may be reached by email, should any questions or concerns arise about the research.

The Omani Embassy in London, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield, has granted permission to carry out this research in your company

(find attached a copy of the official letter and a copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university<sup>100</sup>). However, as the study is voluntary in nature, you may decide not to participate in the research project.

Broadly, my study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. In particular, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to the Omanisation policies, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

In pursuit of these objectives, I would like to conduct an elite interview with you as a general manager (the duration of this interview will be between 45 minutes and one hour) at the time, date and location most convenient for you.

Please be aware that you are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study, and you need not provide any justifications or reasons, should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time. The research interviews would be recorded using a SONY sound recorder and an iPad tablet after obtaining your consent and permission.

All responses will subsequently be coded via NVivo Pro 12 software and anonymised so that your name cannot be recognised. This approach to documentation will be valuable for data collection and analysis. The audio file, transcription files and other data will be kept securely in my desk in the research office at the university. Only myself and my supervisors will be able to access the data. The

---

<sup>100</sup> A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield.

transcriptions and all related documentation will be destroyed after my Viva (oral defence of the thesis). All information provided to the researcher will be treated with rigorous confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Participants' names and their workplaces will be changed and anonymised in the thesis; I have taken into consideration the university code of ethics as well as the latest updates of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). I would also like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) at the University of Sheffield.

I very much look forward to meeting with you to discuss my plan, the attached documentation and my timeline for collecting the research data. Thank you in advance for your support in this research project.

Kind regards,

*Fahad Al Jahwari*

Fahad Al Jahwari

Email address: frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone in Oman: 0096895661008

### **Attachments**

- 1- A copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university.
- 2- A copy of the participant's information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

3- A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with a collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and University of Sheffield.

## Appendix 6: Letter To A Government Tourism Expert To Conduct Research Interviews

The University of Sheffield  
Department of Sociological Studies  
Elmfiled Building  
Northumberland Road  
Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

Tourism Expert  
A government ministry  
Muscat  
Date: 05/02/2018

Dear Mr/Ms XXXXXXXX,

**Study title:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Oman.

### **Subject: Request for Access/ Permission**

My name is Fahad Al Jahwari and I work for the Supreme Council for Planning in Muscat, Oman, as Head of the Councils and Committees Department in the HE Secretary General's Office; I am also a PhD student in Social Policy at the University of Sheffield, UK. I am writing to request access to your ministry and to invite you – as an expert in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) field – to take part in a research interview as part of my doctoral fieldwork in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. This research falls under the joint supervision of Professor Majella Kilkey (m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk) and Professor Louise Ryan (louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk). My supervisors may be reached by email, should any questions or concerns arise about the research.

The Omani Embassy in London, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield, has granted permission to carry out this research in your ministry (find attached a copy of the official letter from the Omani Embassy in London and a copy

of an ethics approval letter issued by the university<sup>101</sup>). However, as the study is voluntary in nature, you may decide not to participate in the research project.

Broadly, my study aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector. In particular, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the T&H sector, compared to migrant graduates.
- b. To identify what modifications to the Omanisation policies, including changes seen through the lens of gender, that might increase the participation of Omanis both male and female graduates in the T&H sector.

In pursuit of these objectives, I would like to conduct an elite interview with you as a government tourism expert (the duration of this interview will be between 45 minutes and one hour) at the time, date and location most convenient for you.

Please be aware that you are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study, and you need not provide any justifications or reasons, should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time. The research interviews would be recorded using a SONY sound recorder and an iPad tablet, after obtaining your consent and permission.

All responses will subsequently be coded via NVivo Pro 12 software and anonymised so that your name cannot be recognised. This approach to documentation will be valuable for data collection and analysis. The audio file, transcription files and other data will be kept securely in my desk in the research office at the university. Only myself and my supervisors will be able to access the data.

The transcriptions and all related documentation will be destroyed after my Viva (oral defence of

---

<sup>101</sup> A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with the collaboration of the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield.

the thesis). All information provided to the researcher will be treated with rigorous confidentiality and used only for academic purposes. Participants' names and their workplaces will be changed and anonymised in the thesis; I have taken into consideration the university code of ethics as well as the latest updates of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). I would also like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) at the University of Sheffield.

I very much look forward to meeting with you to discuss my plan, the attached documentation and my timeline for collecting the research data. Thank you in advance for your support in this research project.

Kind regards,

*Fahad Al Jahwari*

Fahad Al Jahwari

Email address: frsaljahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk

Telephone in Oman: 0096895661008

### **Attachments**

- 1- A copy of an ethics approval letter issued by the university.
- 2- A copy of the participant's information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.
- 3- A copy of the letter of authorisation to conduct research interviews/request for access issued by the Omani Embassy, London with a collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman and the University of Sheffield.

## Appendix 7: Demographic Questionnaire – Academic Staff of Migrant Origin

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**

.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What level of education or training have you completed?

.....  
.....

4. What are you teaching at your college?.....

5. How long have you worked for your employer?.....

6. Marital Status: Married  Single

7. Do you have children?

No  Yes  If yes, how old are they?.....

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 8: Demographic Questionnaire – Employees of Migrant Origin

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

### Researcher:

.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What level of education or training did you complete in your country of origin?

.....  
.....

4. Have you completed any education or specialised training in Oman?

No  Yes  If yes, please state what training you have completed.....

.....  
.....

5. What was your occupation in Oman?

.....

6. What is your position in your organisation?.....

7. How many years of experience do you have in your profession?

8. In what year did you first come to Oman?.....

9. Did you travel to Oman with a relative?

No  Yes  If yes, please specify who.....

10. Since you came to Oman, have any relatives joined you?

No  Yes  If yes, please specify who.....

11. Marital Status: Married  Single

12. Do you have children?

No  Yes  If yes, how old are they?.....

13. Where do your children live: in Oman  Elsewhere .....

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 9: Demographic Questionnaire – Managers of Migrant Origin

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**  
.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)
2. How old are you?.....years
3. What level of education or training have you completed in your country of origin?  
.....  
.....
4. Have you completed any education or specialised training in Oman?  
No  Yes  If yes, please state what training you have completed.....  
.....  
.....
5. What was your occupation in Oman?  
.....
6. What is your position in your organisation?.....
7. How many years of experience do you have in your profession?
8. In what year did you first come to Oman?.....
9. Did you travel to Oman with a relative?  
No  Yes  If yes, please specify who.....
10. Since you came to Oman, have any relatives joined you?  
No  Yes  If yes, please specify who.....
11. Marital Status: Married  Single
12. Do you have children?  
No  Yes  If yes, how old are they?.....

13. Where do your children live: in Oman  Elsewhere .....

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 10: Demographic Questionnaire – Students of Migrant Origin

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**

.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What programme are you studying at university?

.....  
.....

4. Are you currently working?

No  Yes

If yes, please identify your occupation and position.....

5. Marital Status: Married  Single

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 11: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Students

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**

.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What programme are you studying at university?

.....

.....

4. Are you currently working?

No  Yes

If yes, please identify your occupation and position.....

5. Marital Status: Married  Single

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 12: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Employees

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**  
.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What level of education or training have you completed?  
.....  
.....

4. Have you enrolled in any other job-related training in Oman?

No  Yes  If yes, please state what training you have completed.....  
.....  
.....

5. What was your occupation in Oman?.....

6. What is your position in your organisation?.....

7. How many years of experience do you have in your profession?.....

8. Marital Status: Married  Single

9. Do you have children?

No  Yes  If yes, how old are they?.....

10. Have you rented or purchased your residential property in Oman?

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

### Appendix 13: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Graduates Who Are Unemployed

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates’ employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**  
.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What level of education or training have you completed?

.....  
.....

4. Have you enrolled in any education or training in Oman?

No  Yes  If yes, please state what training you have completed.....

.....  
.....

5. Have you previously worked in any organisation in Oman?.....

If yes, then state the occupation and number of years worked.....

6. How long have you been unemployed?.....

7. Marital Status: Married  Single

8. Do you have children?

No  Yes  If yes, how old are they?.....

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 15: Demographic Questionnaire – Omani Managers

**Topic:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector in Oman.

**Researcher:**  
.....

1. Gender: Male  Female  (Please tick the appropriate box.)

2. How old are you?.....years

3. What level of education or training have you completed?  
.....  
.....

4. Have you enrolled in any specialised training in Oman?

No  Yes  If yes, please state what training you have completed.....  
.....  
.....

5. What was your occupation in Oman?.....

6. What is your position in your organisation?.....

7. How many years of experience do you have in your profession?.....

8. Marital Status: Married  Single

9. Do you have children?

No  Yes  If yes, how old are they?.....

10. Have you rented or purchased your residential property in Oman?

Contact details:

Name.....

Residential Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

E-mail address.....

## Appendix 16: Elite Interview Guide – Academic Staff of Migrant Origin

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 - 10 min)

- How long have you worked in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) department?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What do you like best about your position?  
What motivated you to pursue a career in the T&H sector?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience working with Omani graduates

- What proportion of your students are men and what proportion are women?
- What has your experience been, working with male and female Omani students? Which of the two groups demonstrates stronger motivation to work in the sector? Please explain.
- What job-related challenges do you face when teaching Omani students? Please give an example of how you handle them.
- Do you think Omani universities are providing the requisite skills for graduates to work in the T&H sector? Why or why not?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work among Omani graduates

- What proportion of those graduating from your programme goes on to work in T&H?
- What sorts of jobs do they obtain after they graduate?
- In your opinion, what factors affect graduates' attitudes towards working in the sector? Explain what you think might be the source of these attitudes.
- How would you describe the differences between male and female Omani students' attitudes towards the T&H sector?
- What do you think motivates Omani students to pursue a career in the T&H sector?
- What factors do Omani graduates primarily consider when looking for employment in the sector and outside the sector? Please explain.
- What aspects do you think Omani graduates focus on when looking for employment in the sector? Please explain.
- Do expectations differ for female and male students in your department? How are these expectations communicated?
- Do you believe that your current male and female students will be treated equally in their future workplaces, in the areas of allocation of (a) tasks, (b) scheduling, (c) salaries

and benefits and (d) promotions? How might their treatment in these areas affect their attitudes towards work?

### **3) Factors affecting employment patterns in the sector**

- Do you think that the government is doing enough to ensure the participation of local graduates in the T&H sector? Please explain.
- Please describe some changes in workplace or labour relations policies that would increase the participation of Omani graduates in the sector.
- What do you think employers look for when hiring in the T&H sector? Please explain.
- Do you view your gender to be an advantage or a disadvantage when working with Omani students? Please explain.
- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar an Omani student's advancement in their career?

### **Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 17: Elite Interview Guide – Managers of Migrant Origin

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 - 10 min)

- Please tell me about your current position.
- What did you study for your degree?
- How long have you worked in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector?
- What motivated you to work in the sector?
- Have you worked in other sectors before?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience working with Omani and migrant graduates

- What proportion of your current staff are migrants, and what proportion are Omani?
- What proportion of your current staff are male, and what proportion are female?
- Do you perceive a large skills gap in the T&H sector? Please explain.
- What kinds of experiences have you had working with Omani or migrant graduates? How do you handle those situations? Please give an example.
- Please tell me about a time when you made an intentional effort to monitor or evaluate the performance of an Omani or a migrant graduate.
- Have you ever had an Omani or a migrant subordinate whose work has fallen below your expectations? What happened? How did you deal with the individual?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work among Omani and migrant graduates

- In your opinion, what factors affect the attitudes of Omani and migrant graduates towards working in the T&H sector? Do you consider the attitudes of new workers in the sector to be positive or negative, overall?
- Have you noticed any difference in attitude towards the sector between Omani and migrant graduates? Please explain.
- Do you view your gender to be an advantage or a disadvantage for your job? Please explain.
- If you wanted to advance in your career, what factors do you feel would facilitate or bar your advancement in your career?
- Do any of the expectations differ for female or male employees at your workplace? - How are these expectations communicated?
- Do you believe that male and female employees are treated equally in the allocation of (a) tasks, (b) scheduling, (c) salaries and benefits and (d) promotions? How does their treatment in these areas affect their attitudes towards work?

- Have you ever had difficulty getting Omani or migrant graduates to accept your ideas? What approach did you use? What were the results?
- Have you ever been on a team where Omani or migrant members did not work effectively because of their attitudes towards work and the work environment? What happened?
- What factors do you consider at when hiring Omani or migrant graduates?

### **3) Employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates?**

- What factors do you perceive to motivates or de-motivates Omani and migrant graduates to work in the sector?
- Have you noticed any differences in the attitudes of Omani men and women and of migrant men and women?
- Of Omani and migrant graduates, which group do you think is more attractive to recruit into the T&H sector in Oman? Please explain.
- In general, what kinds of skills and qualifications do you think Omani and non-Omani employers look for when recruiting Omani or migrant graduates?
- Do you think Omani universities are providing the right skills for students to fit into the T&H sector? Why or why not?
- Have you ever met resistance to workplace or labour policies among your subordinates? How did you handle the situation?
- What changes do you think should be made in workplace or labour policies to attract groups that seem reluctant to join the sector?
- Do you think the government is doing enough to encourage the employability of local graduates? Please explain.

### **Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I might not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 18: Interview Guide – Employees of Migrant Origin

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 - 10 min)

- Please tell me about your current position.
- How long have you worked in Tourism and Hospitality (T&H)?
- Who is your present or most recent employer?
- How long have you worked in Oman?
- What motivated you to come to Oman?
- Where did you study for your degree?
- Did you work in hotels in other countries before you came here?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experiences working in the T&H sector?

- On average, how many hours do you work in a day?
- Please tell me briefly about your background and how you attained your current position at the workplace.
- What was your experience on your way to your current position? (e.g. Did you encounter any opportunities or barriers?) Please explain.
- What are your major responsibilities in your current job? Do you find them satisfying? Why or why not?  
What factors inspire or motivate you to participate in the T&H sector?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work

- Which accomplishments in your current position are you most proud of? Why?
- How would you describe the attitudes of your colleagues towards work? Please explain.
- What do you find inspiring or motivating about working in this sector?
- It is important always to have a positive attitude at work even when you have other things on your mind. Please give an example of when you were able to do that.
- Are you planning to leave your position? Why or why not?
- Do you view your gender to be an advantage or a disadvantage? Please explain.
- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar your advancement in your career?
- Do any of the expectations differ for female or male employees at your workplace? How are these expectations communicated?

#### 3) Patterns of employment

- Why did you decide to work in the T&H sector?
- What factors do you think hiring managers consider hiring migrant graduates?

- What have you done to become better qualified for your career?
- What proportion of your colleagues are migrants?
- Which countries do they come from?
- What proportion of your colleagues are Omanis?
- Are there differences in the jobs that Omanis do and that migrant graduates do in your workplace?
- What factors do you think influenced your employer to hire you?
- Do you believe that male and female employees are treated equally in the areas of allocation of (a) tasks, (b) scheduling, (c) salaries and benefits and (d) promotions? How does their treatment in these areas affect their attitudes towards work?
- In your organisation and in general, do you think it is easier for a female employee to achieve promotion and access senior positions than for a male employee or vice versa? Please explain.

### **Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 19: Interview Guide – Omani Employees

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 – 10 min)

- Why did you decide to work in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector?
- Who is your present or most recent employer?
- Please tell me about your current position.
- Have you ever worked in other sectors? If yes, what made that experience different from your current sector?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experiences working in the T&H sector?

- On average, how many hours do you work in a day?
- Please tell me briefly about your background and how you attained your current position at the workplace.
- What are your major responsibilities in your current job? Do you find them satisfying? Why or why not?
- What was your experience on your way to your current position? (e.g. Did you encounter any opportunities or barriers?) Explain.
- What factors inspire/motivate you to participate in the labour sector?
- What kinds of projects have you generated that required you to go beyond your job description? Were they challenging or not?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work

- Which accomplishments in your current position are you proud of? Why?
- What challenges do you face at your current job? How do you handle them?
- What do you think is so inspiring about working in the sector?
- It is important to always have a positive attitude at work even when you have other things on your mind. Please give an example of when you were able to do that.
- Are you planning to leave the position? Why or why not?

#### 3) Patterns of employment

- What proportion of your colleagues are migrants?
- What proportion of your colleagues are Omanis?
- Are there differences in the jobs that Omanis do and that migrant graduates do in your workplace?
- What do you think influenced your employer to hire you? What do you think employers look for when hiring Omani graduates?
- Do you view your gender to be an advantage or a disadvantage for your job? Explain.

- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar your advancement in your career?
- Do you believe that male and female employees are treated equally in the areas of allocation of (a) tasks, (b) scheduling, (c) salaries and benefits and (d) promotions? How does their treatment in these areas affect their attitudes towards work?
- In your organisation and in general, do you think it is easier for a female employee to achieve promotion and access senior positions than for a male employee or vice versa? Please explain.
- What have you done to become better qualified for your career?
- Are there some workplace or labour market policies you agree or disagree with? Please explain.
- If you were to recommend some changes to those policies, what changes would you suggest?

**Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 20: Interview Guide – Omani Graduates Who Are Unemployed

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 – 10 min)

- Why did you decide to study Tourism and Hospitality (T&H)?
- Where did you study for your degree?
- Are you planning to work in the sector?
- What is the highest level of education that you have completed or attained?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience working in the T&H sector

- What problems are you facing in obtaining employment in the sector?
- What are you doing to become better qualified for a career in the sector?
- Do you think Omani universities are providing the requisite skills for graduates to work in the T&H sector? Why or why not?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work in the sector

- What inspires or motivates you about working in the sector?
- Have you considered working in other sectors? Please give an example and explain why you see that sector as different from the T&H sector.
- What do you perceive Omani graduates' attitudes to be towards working in the sector? Explain what you think is the source of their attitudes.
- What do you think Omani graduates focus on when looking for employment in the T&H sector and outside it? Please explain.
- Do you believe that prospective employers treat male and female job seekers equally during recruitment processes?
- Between male and female graduates, who do you think can find work more easily in the sector? Please explain.

#### 3) Work patterns

- Do you feel that the government is doing enough to ensure employment for graduates in the T&H sector? Please explain.
- What changes would you recommend to the government to ensure rapid employment of graduates in the sector?
- What factors do you think Omani employers prioritise when recruiting Omani graduates?
- Do you think there is a large skills gap in the T&H sector? Why or why not?

- What factors determine the proportion of male to female graduates employed in the sector? Please explain.
- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar a male or female employee's advancement in his or her career?

**Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.
- Inform the respondent about how I will present my feedback to him or her.

## Appendix 21: Elite Interview Guide – Omani Managers

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 - 10 min)

- Please tell me about your current position.
- What did you study for your degree?
- How long have you worked in Tourism and Hospitality (T&H)?
- What motivated you to work in this sector?
- Have you worked in other sectors before?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience working with Omani and migrant graduates

- What proportion of your current staff are Omani and migrant graduates?
- What proportion of your current staff are men and what proportion are women?
- On average, how many hours do members of your staff work in a day? Does this vary depending on gender or nationality? Please explain.
- Do you think there is a large skills gap in the T&H sector? Please explain.
- What is your experience of working with Omani and migrant graduates?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work among Omani and migrant graduates

- In your opinion, what factors affect the attitudes of Omani and migrant graduates towards working in the sector? Do you consider their attitudes to be positive or negative?
- What is your take on the difference in attitude towards the sector between Omani and migrant graduates?
- Are there any different expectations for female and male employees at your workplace? How are these expectations communicated?
- Are there any different expectations for Omani and migrant graduates at your workplace? How are these expectations communicated?
- Have you ever had difficulty getting Omani or migrant graduates to accept your ideas? What approach did you take? Did it work?
- Have you ever been on a team where Omani or migrant members did not work effectively because of their attitudes towards work and the work environment? What happened?
- What factors do you consider when hiring Omani or migrant graduates?

#### 3) Employment patterns of Omani and migrant graduates?

- What do you think motivates or de-motivates Omani and migrant graduates to work in the T&H sector?
- Comparing Omani and migrant graduates, which group do you think is more attractive to recruit into the sector? Please explain.
- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar a male or female employee's advancement in his or her career?
- In general, what skills and qualifications do you think Omani and non-Omani employers look for when recruiting Omani or migrant graduates?
- Do you think Omani universities are providing the right skills for students to fit into the T&H sector? Why or why not?
- Have you ever met resistance to workplace or labour policies among your subordinates? How did you handle the situation?
- What changes do you think should be made in workplace or labour policies to attract groups that seem reluctant to join the sector?
- Do you think the government is doing enough to encourage the employability of local graduates? Please explain.
- Do you believe that male and female employees are treated equally in the areas of allocation of (a) tasks, (b) scheduling, (c) salaries and benefits and (d) promotions? Please elaborate. How does their treatment in these areas affect their attitudes towards work?
- In your organisation and in general, do you think it is easier for a female employee to achieve promotions and access senior positions than for a male employee and vice versa? Please explain.

#### **Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 22: Interview Guide – Omani Students

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 - 10 min)

- Why did you decide to study Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector?
- Are you planning to work in the sector once you graduate?
- What is the highest level of education that you have completed or attained?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience in the T&H sector

- What is the proportion of male to female students in your class?
- What are you doing to become better qualified for your career in future?
- Do you think Omani universities are providing the requisite skills to work in the T&H sector? Why or why not?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work

- From your own experience of gender, do you perceive T&H to be a good sector for women?
- How did your family react to you studying for a job in T&H? Did they have any concerns about your working in this sector? Please explain.
- What work-related challenges do you expect to meet in your future employment? How do you plan to address them?
- Would you describe your attitudes towards the sector as positive or negative? Please explain.
- What affects your attitudes towards working in the sector? Explain what you think is the source of these attitudes.
- What factors do you think Omani graduates focus on when considering employment in the sector? Please explain.

#### 3) Employment patterns

- What factors do you think hiring managers consider when hiring Omani and migrant graduates?
- Which skills do you hope to acquire that you believe will make you competitive for positions in the future?
- Do you think that Omani students and students of migrant origin have good prospects for working in the sector in future? Please explain.
- Do you anticipate any barriers or facilitating factors concerning work in the T&H sector? Please explain.

- Do you think the government is doing enough to encourage students to join the T&H sector? Please explain.

**Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 23: Interview Guide – Students of Migrant Origin

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 - 10 min)

- Why did you decide to study Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector?
- Are you planning to work in the sector once you graduate?
- What is the highest level of education that you have completed or attained?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience in the T&H sector

- What is the proportion of male to female students in your class?
- What are you doing to become better qualified for your career in future?
- Do you think Omani universities are providing the requisite skills to work in the T&H sector? Why or why not?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work

- From your own experience of gender, do you perceive T&H to be a good sector for women?
- How did your family react to you studying for a job in T&H? Did they have any concerns about your working in this sector? Please explain.
- What work-related challenges do you expect to meet in your future employment? How do you plan to address them?
- Would you describe your attitudes towards the sector as positive or negative? Please explain.
- What affects your attitudes towards working in the sector? Explain what you think is the source of these attitudes.
- What factors do you think Omani graduates focus on when considering employment in the sector? Please explain.

#### 3) Employment patterns

- What factors do you think hiring managers consider when hiring Omani and migrant graduates?
- Which skills do you hope to acquire that you believe will make you competitive for positions in the future?
- Do you think that Omani students and students of migrant origin have good prospects for working in the sector in future? Please explain.
- Do you anticipate any barriers or facilitating factors concerning work in the T&H sector? Please explain.

- Do you think the government is doing enough to encourage students to join the T&H sector? Please explain.

**Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## Appendix 24: Elite Interview Guide – Tourism Experts

Name of Interviewer	
Name of Interviewee	
Place of Interview	
Date of Interview	

### General (~ 5 – 10 min)

- How long have you worked in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What do you like best about your position?
- Have you worked in other sectors before? If so, what did you like about your previous sector of employment? What motivated your shift to the T&H sector?

### Questions (~30 – 40 min)

#### 1) Experience working with Omani and migrant graduates

- Please tell me briefly about your background and how you attained your current position.
- Please tell me about a time you enjoyed working with Omani and migrant graduates. What was the experience working with the two groups?
- What is your rough estimate of the proportion of male to female graduates in the T&H sector?
- What is your rough estimate of the proportion of Omani to migrant graduates in the sector?
- Can you remember any competitive job or promotion situation/ or some other kind of competition you have experienced working with Omani and migrant graduates? What was the result? What differences can you make regarding their proficiency and commitment?
- Do you have a negative work experience you can relate? Please describe the situation.
- What is your perspective about the participation of male and female graduates in the sector?
- In a recent task in your workplace, what steps have you taken to ensure you work effectively with male and female graduates?

#### 2) Attitudes towards work among Omani and migrant graduates

- What is the toughest group that you have had to obtain cooperation from? Describe how you handled the situation. What was the outcome?
- What do you think motivates Omani and migrant graduates to work in the sector?
- Which of the two groups (Omani graduates or migrant graduates) is showing greater levels of positive or negative attitudes towards working in the sector?
- Do you perceive nationality to affect the level of job satisfaction among the two groups? Why or why not?
- Which of the two groups (male or female graduates) is showing greater levels of positive or negative attitudes towards working in the sector?

What factors do you perceive to facilitate or hinder the participation of male or female graduates in the sector?

### **3) Factors affecting employment patterns in the sector**

- What do you perceive to be the impacts of Omanisation policy on the level of employment of Omani and migrant graduates?
- Please describe some changes to the policy that would increase the participation of Omani or migrant graduates in the sector.
- What factors do you think employers consider when hiring Omani or migrant graduates? Please explain.
- What factors determine the proportion of male to female employees in the sector? Please explain.
- What factors determine the proportion of Omani to migrant graduates in the sector? Please explain.
- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar an Omani or migrant graduate's advancement in their career?
- What factors do you feel would facilitate or bar a male or female employee's advancement in his or her career?

### **Ending (~3- 5 min)**

- Ask for any relevant additions or comments from the respondent.
- Make inquiries about responses where I may not fully understand the respondent's explanation.
- Conclude with a brief summary; thank the respondent for cooperating and affirm that I may contact the respondent further in case there is a need for additional clarification.

## **Appendix 25: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Employees**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as an Omani employee working at the hotel, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the (T&H) sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an Omani employee at the hotel, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote the realisation of Omanisation objectives in the T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation might be better achieved with regard to employment in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 26: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Managers**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as an Omani manager working at a tourism development firm, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the (T&H) sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an Omani manager working at a tourism development firm, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote the realisation of Omanisation objectives in the T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation might be better achieved with regard to employment in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 27: Participant Information Sheet – Employees of Migrant Origin**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as an employee of migrant origin working at the hotel, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an employee of migrant origin, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote balanced labour markets in Oman's T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation policies relate to employment outcomes in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 28: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Managers**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as an Omani manager working at the hotel, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the (T&H) sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an Omani manager at the hotel, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote the realisation of Omanisation objectives in the T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation might be better achieved with regard to employment in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 29: Participant Information Sheet – Academic Staff of Migrant Origin**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as a member of academic staff of migrant origin teaching in Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) at the college, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are a member of academic staff of migrant origin working at the college, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote balanced labour markets in Oman's T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation policies relate to employment outcomes in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 30: Participant Information Sheet – Managers of Migrant Origin**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as a manager of migrant origin working at the hotel, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the (T&H) sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are a manager of migrant origin working at the hotel, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote balanced labour markets in Oman's T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation policies relate to employment outcomes in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 31: Participant Information Sheet – Tourism Experts**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your position as an expert at a government ministry, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an expert working at a government ministry, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help explain the employability of Omani graduates, Omani women and migrant employees and promote the realisation of Omanisation objectives in the T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation might be better achieved with regard to employment in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, then you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 32: Participant Information Sheet – Unemployed Omani Graduates**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your status as an Omani Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) graduate who is unemployed, registered at the public authority of 'X', I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an Omani graduate who is currently unemployed, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote the realisation of Omanisation objectives in the T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation might be better achieved with regard to employment in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 33: Participant Information Sheet – Students of Migrant Origin**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your status as a student of migrant origin studying Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) at college, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are a student of migrant origin studying at college, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote balanced labour markets in Oman's T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation policies relate to employment outcomes in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## **Appendix 34: Participant Information Sheet – Omani Students**

### **1. Research Project Title:**

Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman.

### **2. Invitation Paragraph**

Given your status as an Omani student studying Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) at college, I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you wish to clarify, please ask me.

### **3. What is the project's purpose?**

The project aims to reach evidence-based conclusions about the employment and employability of Omani and migrant graduates in the T&H sector.

### **4. Why have I been chosen?**

As you are an Omani student studying T&H at college, I believe you are in a position to provide information that could help understand the employability of Omani graduates and migrant graduates and promote the realisation of Omanisation objectives in the T&H sector.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

### **6. What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed to collect information relevant to the goals of this study. The interview will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

While there is no direct individual benefit to participation, the research will shed light on how Omanisation might be better achieved with regard to employment in the T&H sector.

### **8. What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?**

You will have to commit time to be available for the interview (45–60 minutes). There are no known risks involved in your participation.

### **9. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are uncomfortable with any of the questions presented, you may withdraw at any time. The research has been carefully planned with the hope of mitigating all possible risks. Should you personally perceive any risk, however, you are at liberty to withhold your answer.

### **10. Will my participation in this project remain confidential?**

All the responses you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will be anonymised. The data collected will be maintained on a password-protected hard drive accessible only by the researcher.

### **11. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The findings established from the study will be published as a PhD thesis.

## **12. Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research project is entirely organised under the supervision of the University of Sheffield and is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education in Muscat – Government of Oman.

## **13. Who has performed an ethics review of the project?**

The research design has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield.

## **14. Contact for further information**

### **Supervisors:**

- Professor Majella Kilkey

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226459

m.kilkey@sheffield.ac.uk

- Professor Louise Ryan

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

Sheffield S10 2TU, UK

00441142226413

louise.ryan@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Director of Postgraduate Affairs and Research**

- Dr Lorna Warren

The University of Sheffield

Department of Sociological Studies

Elmfield Building, Northumberland Road

00441142226468

i.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

### **Researcher:**

Thank you very much for your consent to take part in the study. You will receive a copy of this information sheet, interview topic guide, demographic questionnaires and consent form.

## Appendix 35: Participant Consent Form

University of Sheffield

**Title of research project:** Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates' employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Oman.

**Name of Researcher:** Fahad Al Jahwari

**Institution:** University of Sheffield

Please fill in the boxes with your initials, if you consent to the following statements:

1) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated ..... explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2) I realise that my participation is a voluntary exercise and that I am free to withdraw at any point without having to provide a reason and without there being any negative consequences.

3) Should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to leave these questions unanswered.

4) I accept that my responses will be recorded with a digital voice recorder.

5) I understand that my responses will be kept highly confidential.

I acknowledge that the research team will have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research, upon my request.

6) I agree that the data collected from me may be used in future research.

7) I consent to take part in the above research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant  
(or legal representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lead Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

**Copies:**

Once all parties have signed this participant consent form, the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated form, the participant information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

**Note by Researcher:**

I have taken into consideration the rules, regulations and code of ethics issued by the University of Sheffield and also the latest updates on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into effect on May 25, 2018. I have been given approval by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) of the University of Sheffield to undertake this research. All data documentation and voice recordings will be kept at my desk in the Elmfield Building, Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield; these documents and recordings will be destroyed after my PhD Viva defence.



Downloaded: 23/03/2018

Approved: 30/01/2018

## Appendix 36: A Copy of An Ethics Approval Letter Issued By The University

Fahad Al Jahwari  
Registration number: 160216783  
Sociological Studies  
Programme: Sociological Studies

Dear Fahad

**PROJECT TITLE:** Exploring Evidence for Omani Graduates and Migrant Graduates Employment and Employability in the Tourism and Hospitality Sector in Oman.

**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 015960

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 30/01/2018 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

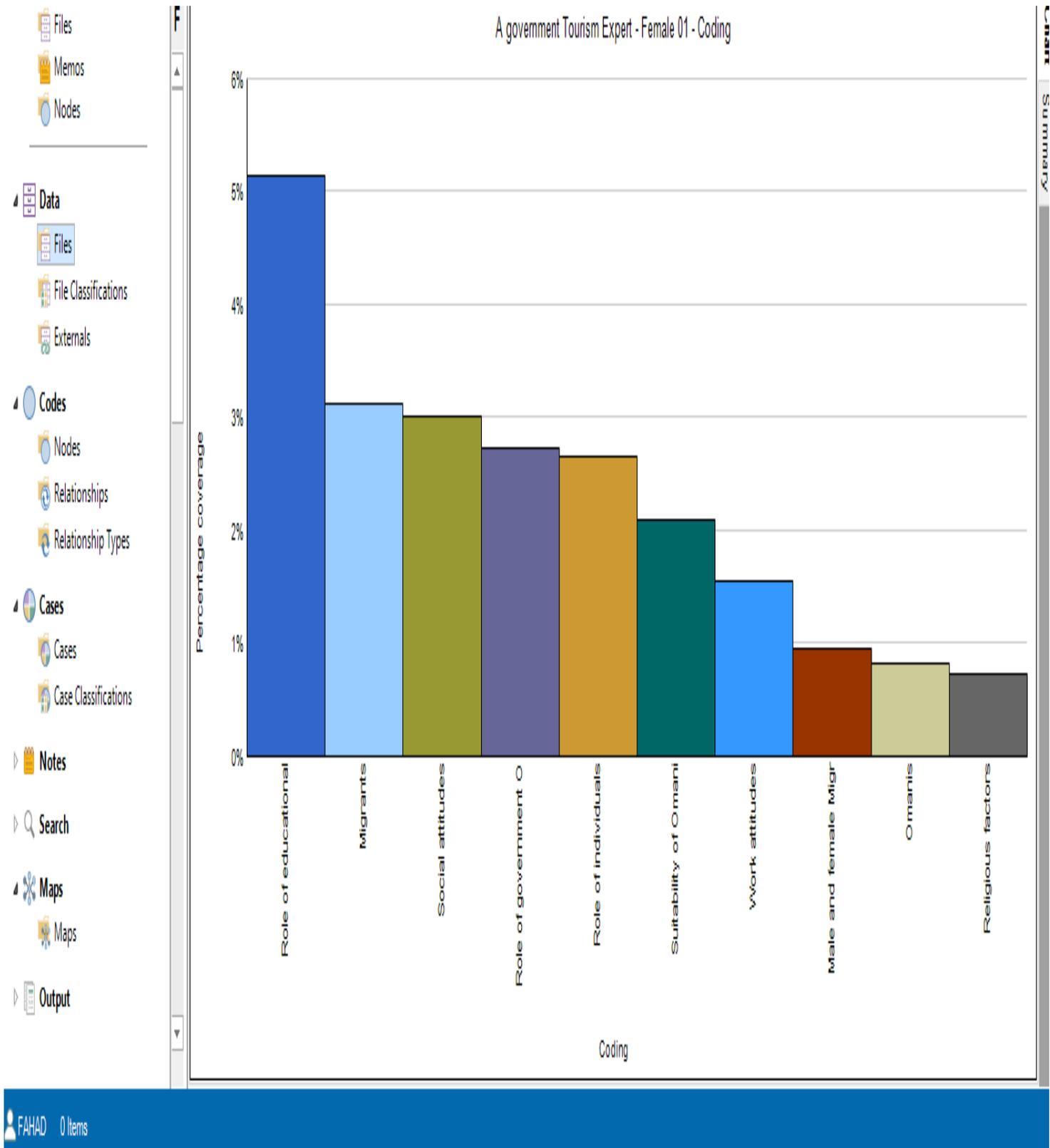
- University research ethics application form 015960 (dated 22/01/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1035105 version 30 (17/01/2018).
- Participant consent form 1035106 version 4 (17/01/2018).

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Sally Midgley  
Ethics Administrator  
Sociological Studies

## Appendix 37: Hierarchy Chart: Data Analysis Using NVivo – 1



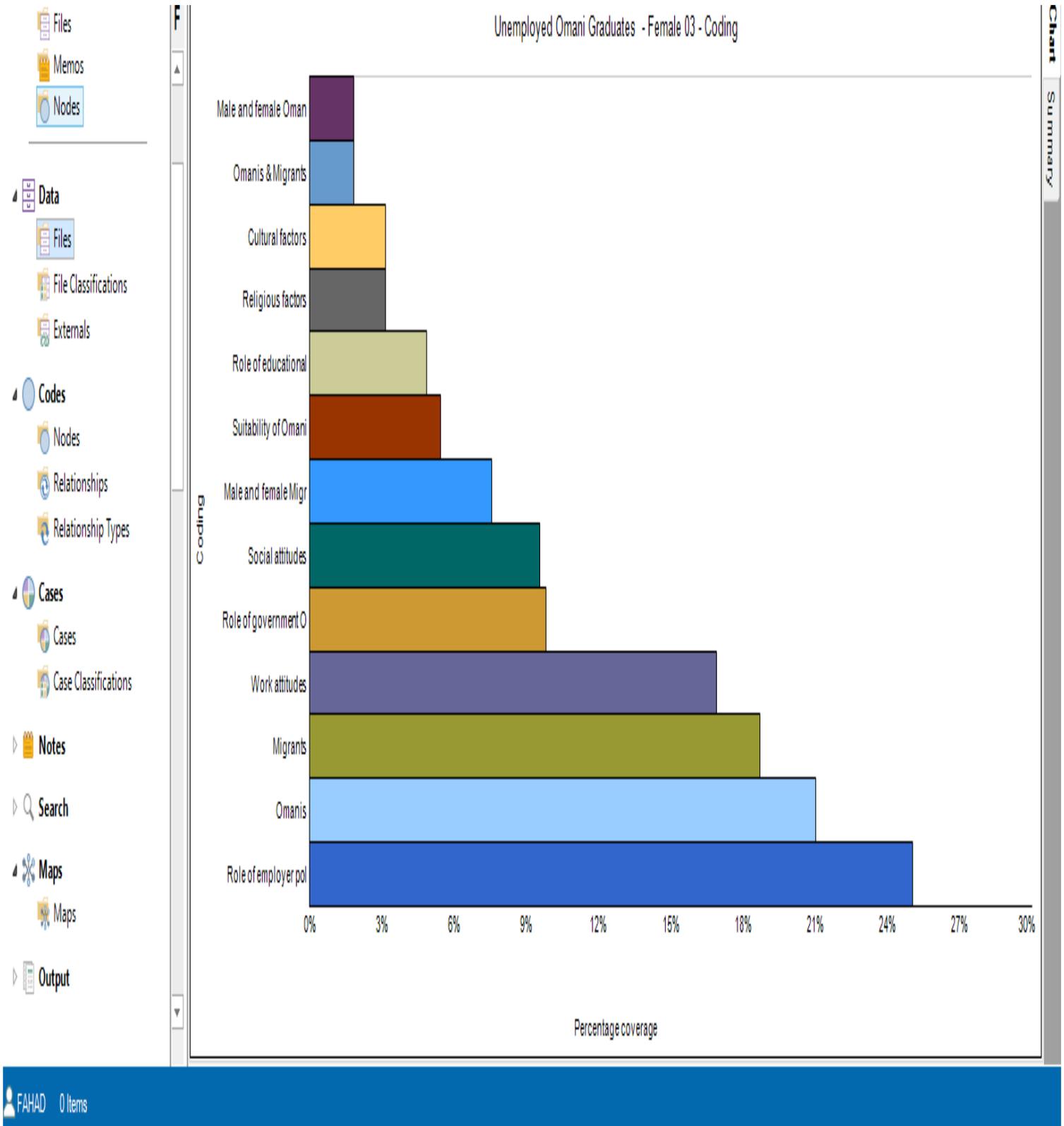
## Appendix 38: Hierarchy Chart: Data Analysis Using NVivo – 2

The screenshot shows the NVivo 12 Pro interface with the Hierarchy Chart Tools ribbon active. The ribbon includes options for Color, Color By, Size By, Type, and View Level. The main workspace displays a Hierarchy Chart titled 'Compared by number of coding r'. The chart is organized into a grid of nodes:

- 01. Migration** (Blue background)
  - 1.1 Mobility of labour
    - Migrants
    - Omanis
  - 1.2 Work distribution
    - Male and female Om...
    - Male and female Migr...
    - Omanis & Migrants
- 02. Omanisation** (Orange background)
  - 2.1 Government intervention
    - Role of government OR Policymakers
    - Suitability of Omanisation
  - 2.2 Human capital investment
    - Role of employer policies
    - Role of educational institut...
- 03. Gender** (Grey background)
  - 3.1 Attitudes
    - Work attitudes
    - Social attitudes
  - 3.2 Culture
    - Cultural factors
    - Religious factors

The left sidebar shows navigation options: Quick Access (Files, Memos, Nodes), Data (Files, File Classifications, Externals), Codes (Nodes, Relationships, Relationship Types), Cases (Cases, Case Classifications), Notes, Search, Maps, and Output. The bottom status bar shows 'FAHAD 0 Items'.

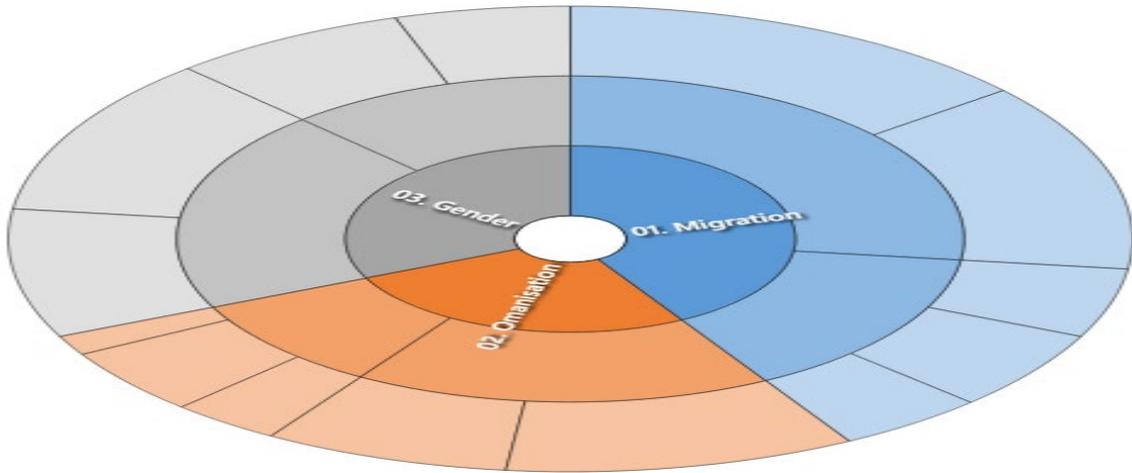
### Appendix 39: Coding Percentages: Data Analysis Using NVivo



## Appendix 40: Explore Diagram of Codes and Cluster Analysis of Themes – NVivo

The image displays two screenshots of the NVivo 12 Pro interface. The top screenshot shows the 'Explore Diagram' window, which visualizes the relationships between various codes. The central node is 'Unemployed Omanis graduates - Female', with arrows labeled 'Codes' pointing to other nodes such as 'Suitability of Omanisation', 'Religious factors', 'Work attitudes', 'Migrants', 'Omanis', 'Cultural factors', 'Social attitudes', 'Omanis & Migrants', 'Male and female Migrants', 'Male and female Omanis', 'Role of employer policies', 'Role of government OR Policymakers', and 'Role of educational institutions'. The bottom screenshot shows the 'Cluster Analysis Tools' window, displaying a dendrogram titled 'Items clustered by word similarity'. The dendrogram groups codes into hierarchical clusters. Major clusters include: '1.2 Work distribution', '2.1 Government intervention', '2.2 Human capital investment', '3.1 Attitudes', '3.2 Culture', '01. Migration', '02. Omanisation', '03. Gender', and '1.1 Mobility of labour'. The dendrogram also lists individual codes like 'Role of educational institutions', 'Role of individuals', 'Role of government OR Policymakers', 'Suitability of Omanisation', 'Role of employer policies', 'Omanis & Migrants', 'Male and female Migrants', 'Male and female Omanis', 'Migrants', 'Omanis', 'Religious factors', 'Work attitudes', 'Cultural factors', and 'Social attitudes'.

## Appendix 41: Creating a Hierarchy: Chart of Themes – NVivo



Fahad's Project NVivo 12 Pro - Part Two.nvp - NVivo 12 Pro

File Home Import Create Explore Share Hierarchy Chart

Hierarchy Chart Tools

Select Data Options

Color

Hierarchy  None

Coding References  Item Color

Items Coded

Color By

Coding References

Items Coded

Type

View Level

Quick Access

- Files
- Memos
- Nodes

Data

- Files
- File Classifications
- Externals

Codes

- Nodes
- Relationships
- Relationship Types

Cases

Notes

Search

Maps

Output

Nodes

Search Project

Name	Files	References
01. Migration	0	0
1.1 Mobility of Migrants	0	0
1.1.1 Migrants	14	61
1.1.2 Omanis	14	57
1.2 Work distri	0	0
1.2.1 Male and f	13	21
1.2.2 Male and f	13	24
1.2.3 Omanis &	10	19
02. Omanisation	0	0
2.1 Governme	0	0
2.1.1 Role of go	11	44
2.1.2 Suitability	11	31
2.2 Human ca	0	0
2.2.1 Role of ed	9	14
2.2.2 Role of em	7	20
2.2.3 Role of ind	3	6
03. Gender	0	0
3.1 Attitudes	0	0
3.1.1 Social attit	12	20

Elite interview with manager in

Compared by number of coding r

Hierarchy Chart Summary

FAHAD 0 Items

## Appendix 42: Qualitative Data Analysis: The NVivo Pro 12 Workspace

Fahad Nvivo Project.nvp - NVivo 12 Pro

File Home Import Create Explore Share

Clipboard: Cut, Copy, Paste, Merge

Item: Properties, Open, Memo Link, Add To Set, Create As Code, Create As Cases

Explore: Query, Visualize

Coding: Code, Auto Code, Range Code, Uncode

Classification: Case Classification, File Classification

Workspace: Detail View, Sort By, Undock, Navigation View, List View, Find

Quick Access: Files, Memos, Nodes

Data: Files, File Classifications, Externals

Codes: Nodes, Relationships, Relationship Types

Cases: Cases, Case Classifications

Notes

Search

Maps: Maps

Output

FAHAD 23 Items

### Nodes

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
01. Migration		0	0	20/03/2019 12:32	FAHAD	20/03/2019 12:41
1.1 Mobility of labour		0	0	20/03/2019 12:36	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:18
Migrants		14	61	20/03/2019 12:37	FAHAD	21/03/2019 01:09
Omanis		14	57	20/03/2019 12:37	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:39
1.2 Work distribution		0	0	20/03/2019 12:36	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:18
Male and female Migran		13	21	20/03/2019 12:39	FAHAD	21/03/2019 01:04
Male and female Omani		13	24	20/03/2019 12:40	FAHAD	21/03/2019 01:04
Omanis & Migrants		10	19	20/03/2019 12:40	FAHAD	21/03/2019 00:48
02. Omanisation		0	0	20/03/2019 12:41	FAHAD	20/03/2019 12:45
2.1 Government interventio		0	0	20/03/2019 12:45	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:19
2.2 Human capital investme		0	0	20/03/2019 12:45	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:19
03. Gender		0	0	20/03/2019 12:49	FAHAD	20/03/2019 12:55
3.1 Attitudes		0	0	20/03/2019 12:54	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:19
Social attitudes		12	39	20/03/2019 12:54	FAHAD	21/03/2019 01:11
Work attitudes		14	48	20/03/2019 12:54	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:17
3.2 Culture		0	0	20/03/2019 12:54	FAHAD	21/03/2019 12:31
Cultural factors		9	30	20/03/2019 12:54	FAHAD	21/03/2019 01:05
Religious factors		9	22	20/03/2019 12:54	FAHAD	21/03/2019 01:05

## Appendix 43: Opening a New Project in Nvivo and Transcribing Audio and Video

The screenshot displays the NVivo 12 Pro application window. The title bar at the top reads "NVivo 12 Pro" and includes standard window controls (help, maximize, minimize, close) on the right. The interface is divided into a left-hand navigation pane and a main content area.

**Left-hand navigation pane:**

- At the top, it says "File".
- The main heading is "NVivo 12 Pro".
- Below that is "Recent Projects".
- Two recent projects are listed:
  - Fahad's Project NVivo 12 Pro - Part Two (C:\Users\Fahad\Desktop\My Nvivo Project\Fahad Nvivo Project.nvp)
  - Fahad's Project NVivo 12 Pro - Part Two (C:\Users\Fahad\OneDrive\Documents\Fahad's Project NVivo 12 Pro - ...)
- A button labeled "Open Other Project" is visible.
- At the bottom, there are icons for "Help" and "Tutorials".

**Main content area:**

- The "New" section features two options:
  - Blank Project:** Represented by a blue icon of a star in a circle.
  - Sample Project:** Represented by a blue icon of a star in a circle.
- The "Learn and Connect" section features six options:
  - Research Ready:** Image of a document with the text "to be best in any point of view. Research search for no examine in facts or prin". Description: "Get your research ready for NVivo".
  - Getting Started:** Image of a compass with the word "START" on the dial. Description: "NVivo quick steps tutorial".
  - Customer Success Center:** Image of a row of stars. Description: "Courses, resources & support".
  - Customer Training:** Image of people working at a table. Description: "Deepen your learning with online courses & workshops".
  - NVivo Transcription:** Icon of a speech bubble and a document. Description: "Your automated transcription assistant - quick, easy, precise.".
  - Request a feature:** Image of a hand holding a glowing lightbulb. Description: "Request and vote for new NVivo features".

At the bottom right of the main content area, there is a "Connect with us" section with icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.

## Appendix 44: Creating a Hierarchy Chart: Tree Map – NVivo

- 📄 Memos
- 📁 Nodes

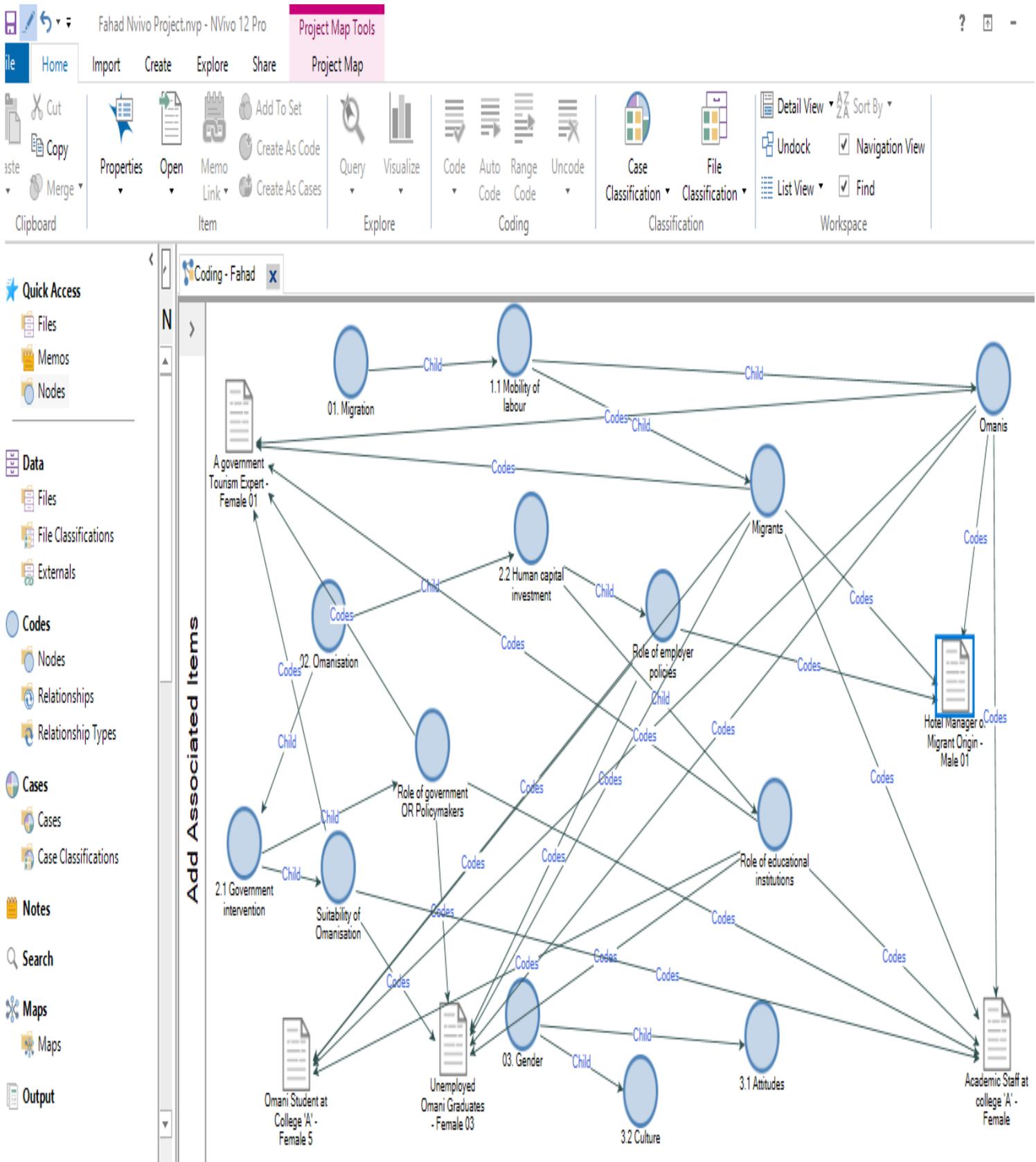
---

- 📁 Data
  - 📄 Files
  - 📁 File Classifications
  - 📄 Externals
- 📁 Codes
  - 📁 Nodes
  - 🔗 Relationships
  - 🔗 Relationship Types
- 📁 Cases
  - 📄 Cases
  - 📁 Case Classifications
- 📄 Notes
- 🔍 Search
- 🗺 Maps
  - 📄 Maps
- 📄 Output

Summary

FAHAD
0 Items

## Appendix 45: Project Map – NVivo



## Appendix 46: Concept Maps – NVivo

The screenshot displays the NVivo 12 Pro interface with a concept map titled "My thesis concepts - Thoughts of". The software's menu bar includes File, Home, Import, Create, Explore, Share, and Concept Map. The Concept Map Tools ribbon contains options for Zoom, Align, Resize, Change Connector, Fill, Border Color, Border Width, Format Text (B, I, U, A), Tools (Pointer, Connector), Add Project Items, and Edit.

The concept map itself is a network of interconnected nodes and shapes:

- Central Node:** An orange stick figure icon with the text "What about unemployment in Oman?" below it.
- Top Nodes:** Two orange triangles labeled "Demand Side" (left) and "Supply Side" (right).
- Central Question:** A yellow inverted triangle containing the text "What is going on in the T&H sector for hiring, in particular?".
- Left Column Nodes:** A vertical stack of blue circles labeled "02. Omanisation", "Migrants", "Omanis", and "03. Gender".
- Right Column Nodes:** A vertical stack of blue circles labeled "2.2 Human capital investment", "Social attitudes", "Cultural factors", "3.1 Attitudes", and "Work attitudes".
- Bottom Nodes:** A green note-shaped box labeled "What about migrant graduates?", a blue rectangle labeled "Why?", and a yellow rounded rectangle labeled "How?".
- Far Right Node:** A large pink triangle labeled "Economic Growth in Oman and T&H".

Arrows indicate relationships between these nodes, showing a complex web of connections. The interface also features a left-hand navigation pane with sections for Quick Access, Data, Codes, Cases, Notes, Search, Maps, and Output. The bottom status bar shows the user "FAHAD" with 23 items and an Editable status.

## Appendix 47: Using NVivo for the three data chapters (Chapters Five, Six and Seven) by adding links to relevant literature and theoretical concepts (Chapter Two and Three)

The screenshot shows the NVivo 12 Pro interface. The 'Nodes' list on the left is as follows:

Name	Files	References
01. Migration	0	0
1.1 Mobility of labour	0	0
1.2 Work distributio	0	0
02. Omanisation	0	0
2.1 Government inte	11	44
Role of governm	11	44
Suitability of Om	11	31
2.2 Human capital in	0	0
Role of educatio	9	14
Role of employer	7	20
Role of individua	3	6
03. Gender	0	0
3.1 Attitudes	0	0
Social attitudes	12	39
Work attitudes	14	48
3.2 Culture	0	0
Cultural factors	9	30

The main window displays the article: "Labour market regulation as global social policy: The case of nursing labour markets in Oman" by Crystal A. Ennis and Margaret Walton-Roberts. The article is from Global Social Policy, 2018, Vol. 18(2), 169-188.

The screenshot shows the NVivo 12 Pro interface with the same 'Nodes' list. The main window displays the article: "Inside and Outside of What or Where? Researching Migration Through Multi-Positionalities" by Louise Ryan. The article is from FQS Forum: Qualitative Social Research, Volume 16, No. 2, May 2015.

**Key words:** interview dynamics; ethnic lens; multi-positionalities; gender; Ireland; Poland

**Abstract:** Drawing upon my long experience of qualitative migration research, this a concept of "multiple positionalities", to challenge the fixity of positionality underpinnir constructions of "insiders" versus "outsiders" in the research process. While "insider usually associated with shared ethnicity/ nationality, migration studies have been ur beyond the ethnic lens (AMELINA & FAIST, 2012; GLICK SCHILLER & CAGLAR, 20 that migrants cannot be neatly contained within fixed "insider" ethnic categories; inst illuminating to consider how identities are re-constructed through migration. In this c use moments from a range of research studies with migrant women in London. In cc



**Appendix 48: Official Letters From The Embassy**

05/03/2021

**To Whom It May Concern**

**Subject: Authorisation to conduct a PhD research**

The purpose of this letter is to endorse *Mr. Fahad Al Jahwari*, a PhD researcher at University of Sheffield (Department of Sociology) in his current pursue of data collection in the Sultanate of Oman.

His research will be focusing on the area of *“Exploring evidence concerning Omani and migrant graduates’ employment and employability in the Tourism and Hospitality (T&H) sector in Oman”*.

Mr. Al Jahwari will assure all participants that all data will be processed on an ANONYMOUS basis and responses will be treated as STRICTLY CONFIDENT, and no details related to any individual or organization will be available to any other party

Any assisted given to him will be highly appreciated

Sincerely,

Yusra AL-Ismaily  
Senior Academic Advisor  
Cultural Attaché Office -London





**Sub: LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

Mr Fahad Rashid Saif Al Jahwari is a registered PhD researcher at the University of Sheffield in the Department of Sociology studies. He is currently enrolled in a four-year PhD program in the field of Social Policy undertaking research on the topic "Exploring evidence for Omani graduates and migrant worker's employment and employability in the tourism and hospitality sector."

The objectives of this study are:

- (A) To understand why so few Omani graduates are employed in the tourism and hospitality sector.
- (B) To identify what modifications to the Omanisation policy could increase the participation of Omani graduates in the tourism and hospitality sector.

As part of the PhD degree requirements, he is expected to complete a research project in the field. We are kindly requesting your assistance in providing all facilities for him to conduct semi-structured interviews across different categories of participants, access to data, and support with required documentation, reports, and responses to the questions contained in his research. All information provided to Fahad will be treated strictly confidentially and purely for academic purposes.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Fahad provided in the details below.

Your permission to assist Fahad in his research will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Yusra Al-Ismaily

Academic Advisor

Oman Embassy - Cultural Attaché

London

**Contact Details:**

Fahad Rashid Saif Al Jahwari email address: [frsaliahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:frsaliahwari1@sheffield.ac.uk)

Oman phone No: 0096895661008

**Attachments:**

1- A copy of an ethical clearance certificate issued by the University.

2- A copy of the participant's information sheet and consent form.



**Appendix 49: Number of employees in accommodation services, by nationality and class of hotels, relative shares (%) in the T&H sector in Oman**

<b>Items</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Five Stars	45.2	25.6	23.9
Four Stars	14.6	15.5	16.2
Three Stars	7.9	7.9	8.2
Two Stars	3.9	7.2	8.3
Other	28.4	43.8	43.4
<b>Omani</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>30.9</b>
Five Stars	61.1	8.7	7.6
Four Stars	5.0	4.7	4.8
Three Stars	2.4	2.0	2.0
Two Stars	0.8	1.4	1.6
Other	9.5	14.9	14.8
<b>Non Omani</b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>69.1</b>
Five Stars	29.0	16.9	16.3
Four Stars	9.6	10.8	11.4
Three Stars	5.5	5.9	6.2
Two Stars	3.2	5.8	6.7
Other	18.9	28.9	28.6

**Number of employees in accommodation services, by nationality and class of hotel, relative share (%) (Source: NCSI, 2021).**

**Appendix 50: Number of employees in accommodation services, by nationality and class of hotel in the T&H sector in Oman**

<b>Items</b>	<b>2020<sup>102</sup></b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
	<b>No.</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,432</b>	<b>20,057</b>	<b>18,627</b>
Five Stars	5,615	5,139	4,450
Four Stars	1,817	3,109	3,019
Three Stars	983	1,581	1,529
Two Stars	486	1,448	1,540
Other <sup>103</sup>	3,531	8,780	8,090
<b>Omani</b>	<b>4,206</b>	<b>6,364</b>	<b>5,754</b>
Five Stars	2,006	1,752	1,422
Four Stars	625	941	897
Three Stars	295	404	375
Two Stars	94	282	298
Other	1,186	2,985	2,762
<b>Non Omani</b>	<b>8,226</b>	<b>13,692</b>	<b>12,873</b>
Five Stars	3,609	3,387	3,029
Four Stars	1,192	2,167	2,122
Three Stars	688	1,177	1,153
Two Stars	392	1,166	1,242
Other	2,345	5,795	5,328

**Number of employees in accommodation services, by nationality and class of hotel  
(Source: NCSI, 2021).**

<sup>102</sup> Provisional.

<sup>103</sup> Other: include one star hotels, unclassified hotels in addition to hotels apartments and guest houses.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aarsand, L. and Aarsand, P. (2019), 'Framing and switches at the outset of qualitative research interviews', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 19 No. 6, pp. 635–652.
- Abbas, W. (2020), 'IMF calls for more social spend', *Khaleej Times*, available at: <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/business/imf-calls-for-more-social-spend> (accessed 1 October 2020).
- Abdmouleh, R. and Kalai, M. (2020), 'Can a Cultural Variant Dedicated to Arab-Muslim Tourists Save the Tunisian Tourism Sector?', *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, pp. 1–16.
- Abdulla, O. (2018), 'Gulfization: A Closer Look at Bahrainization.', *The Yale Review of International Studies*, available at: <http://yris.yira.org/comments/2631> (accessed 22 February 2020).
- Abendroth, A.K., Maas, I. and Van Der Lippe, T. (2013), 'Human capital and the gender gap in authority in European countries', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 261–273.
- Aberbach, J.D. and Rockman, B.A. (2002), 'Conducting and coding elite interviews', *PS - Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 673–676.
- Abouzzohour, Y. (2020), 'As Oman enters a new era, economic and political challenges persist', *Brookings Doha Center*, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/01/15/as-oman-enters-a-new-era-economic-and-political-challenges-persist/> (accessed 6 July 2020).
- Adamson, F.B. and Tsourapas, G. (2019), 'The Migration State in the Global South: Nationalizing, Developmental, and Neoliberal Models of Migration Management', *International Migration Review*, Vol. xx No. x, pp. 1–30.

- Adib, A. and Guerrier, Y. (2003), 'The Interlocking of Gender with Nationality, Race, Ethnicity and Class: the Narratives of Women in Hotel Work', *Gender, Work & Organization*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 413–432.
- Affairs, M. of L. (2018), 'The Penal Law Promulgated by Royal Decree 7', available at: [http://www.mola.gov.om/Download.aspx?Path=PDF/Omani Penal.pdf](http://www.mola.gov.om/Download.aspx?Path=PDF/Omani%20Penal.pdf). (accessed 19 May 2020).
- Ahmad, A. (2020), 'When the name matters: An experimental investigation of ethnic discrimination in the Finnish labor market', *Sociological Inquiry*, Wiley Online Library, Vol. 90 No. 3, pp. 468–496.
- Akbari, A.H. and MacDonald, M. (2014), 'Immigration Policy in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States: An Overview of Recent Trends', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 48 No. 3, pp. 801–822.
- Akbari, N. (2011), 'High cost of Omani weddings pose challenge for men', *Reuters*, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-oman-weddings-idUSTRE75D3VS20110614> (accessed 23 January 2021).
- Akgündüz, Y.E. and van Huizen, T. (2015), 'Training in two-tier labor markets: The role of job match quality', *Social Science Research*, Vol. 52, pp. 508–521.
- Akresh, I.R. (2007), 'US immigrants' labor market adjustment: Additional human capital investment and earnings growth', *Demography*, Springer, Vol. 44 No. 4, pp. 865–881.
- Al Abri, M. (2019), '87pc jobseekers prefer public sector', *Oman Observer*, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/87pc-jobseekers-prefer-public-sector/> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Al Bawaba. (2004), 'Oman establishes Tourism Ministry', *Al Bawaba News*, available at:

- <https://www.albawaba.com/news/oman-establishes-tourism-ministry> (accessed 8 September 2020).
- Al Jailaniyah, O. (2020), 'Unemployment among Omani youths crosses 13 per cent', *Oman Observer*, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/unemployment-among-omani-youths-crosses-13-per-cent/> (accessed 16 October 2020).
- Al Jazeera. (2005), 'Oman to build \$15 billion resort city', available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2005/6/6/oman-to-build-15-billion-resort-city> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Al Mukrashi, F. (2018), '199 women arrested in Oman for prostitution | Oman', *Gulf News*, available at: <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/oman/199-women-arrested-in-oman-for-prostitution-1.2186886> (accessed 4 June 2020).
- Al Nasser, Z. (2020), 'Tourism sector in Oman loses half a billion rials due to impact of Coronavirus', *Zawya.Com*, available at: [https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/business/story/Tourism\\_sector\\_in\\_Oman\\_loses\\_half\\_a\\_billion\\_rials\\_due\\_to\\_impact\\_of\\_Coronavirus-SNG\\_195005960/](https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/business/story/Tourism_sector_in_Oman_loses_half_a_billion_rials_due_to_impact_of_Coronavirus-SNG_195005960/) (accessed 28 January 2021).
- Al Othman, R. and Al Balushi, T. (2021), 'Oman Wealth Fund's Latest Revamp Focuses on Tourism, Real Estate', *Bloomberg*, available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-31/oman-wealth-fund-s-latest-revamp-focuses-on-tourism-real-estate> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Al Rahbi, T., (2017). 'Oman 9th Five-Year Development Plan and the Strategic Economic Sectors (2016-2020), London, 2017', *The Supreme Council for Planning (SCP)*, available at: <http://obfaoman.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2.-Oman-UK-comm-July17-V1-1.pdf>, (accessed 26 January 2020).

- Al Sadi, F.H. and Basit, T.N. (2017), 'Omani girls' conceptions of gender equality: addressing socially constructed sexist attitudes through educational intervention', *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 43 No. 2, pp. 209–224.
- Al Sheikh, H. (2015), 'Current Progress in the Nationalisation Programmes in Saudi Arabia', *European University Institute*, No. 2, pp. 1–14.
- Alaali, L. and Rees, C. (2019), 'Capacity Building, Human Resource Development (HRD) and Bahrainisation: Perceptions of Senior Public Sector Employees in Bahrain', *International Journal of Human Resource Development Practice Policy & Research*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 81–90.
- Al-Ali, J. (2008), 'Emiratisation: Drawing UAE nationals into their surging economy', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 28 No. 9–10, pp. 365–379.
- Al-Azr, A. (2018) *Academics', Students', Employers', and Graduates' Perceptions towards Business Management and Administration Undergraduate Employability: Implications for Higher Education and Industry in Oman* (Doctor of Philosophy, Brunel University London).
- Alba, R., Rumbaut, R.G. and Marotz, K. (2005), 'A distorted nation: Perceptions of racial/ethnic group sizes and attitudes toward immigrants and other minorities', *Social Forces*, Vol. 84 No. 2, pp. 901–919.
- Al-Bahrani, A. (2019), 'Vision 2040 Planning For The Future: Creating a Thriving Omani Labor Market', *Center for Economic Education Northern Kentucky University, USA*, available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b40bba6620b8511b2b9d011/t/5c42109b42bfc16e4b39ac1b/1547833500087/Omani+Labor+Market+Report.+Abdullah+Al-Bahrani.pdf> (accessed 26 January 2020).
- Al-Balushi, M. (2018), 'Issues Affecting Omanization of the Hotel Sector', *Journal of Tourism*

*and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 164–177.

- Al-Barwani, K. (2014), ‘Oman Labour Market’, *National Centre for Statistics and Information, Sultanate of Oman*, pp. 1–22, available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@stat/documents/presentation/wcms\\_314041.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@stat/documents/presentation/wcms_314041.pdf), (accessed 30 January 2020).
- Al-Barwani, T., Chapman, D.W. and Ameen, H. (2009), ‘Strategic brain drain: Implications for higher education in Oman’, *Higher Education Policy*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 415–432.
- Alberti, G. and Iannuzzi, F.E. (2020), ‘Embodied intersectionality and the intersectional management of hotel labour: The everyday experiences of social differentiation in customer-oriented work’, *Gender, Work & Organization*, Vol. 0 No. 00, p. gwao.12454.
- Alberti, G., Bessa, I., Hardy, K., Trappmann, V. and Umney, C. (2018), ‘In, Against and Beyond Precarity: Work in Insecure Times’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 447–457.
- Alexander, A.C. and Welzel, C. (2011), ‘Islam and patriarchy: how robust is Muslim support for patriarchal values?’, *International Review of Sociology*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 249–276.
- Al-Harthi, H.K. (2011), ‘University student perceptions of the relationship between university education and the labour market in Egypt and Oman’, *PROSPECTS*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 535–551.
- Ali, Y.Y., Al-Nusair, M.M., Alani, F.S., Khan, F.R. and Al-Badi, L.H. (2017), ‘Employment in the private sector in Oman: a sector-based approach for localization. Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews’, *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp.1-20.
- Al-Lamki, S. (2000), ‘Omanization: A three-tier strategic framework for human resource management and training in the Sultanate of Oman’, *Journal of Comparative International Management*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp.1-18.

- Al-Lamki, S.M. (1998), 'Barriers to Omanization in the private sector: The perceptions of Omani graduates', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 377–400.
- Al-Lawatia, S. (2011), *Omani Women in Labour Market: Facts And Challenges*, World Statistical Congress, Dublin, Available at: <http://2011.isiproceedings.org/papers/650234.pdf> (accessed 2 February 2020).
- Allday, L. (2014), 'The British in the Gulf: an Overview', *Qatar Digital Library*, available at: <https://www.qdl.qa/en/british-gulf-overview> (accessed 27 March 2020).
- Al-Mahrooqi, R. and Denman, C.J. (2016), 'Omani Graduates' English-language Communication Skills in the Workforce: Employees' Perspectives', *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, Vol. 5 No. 4, pp. 172–182.
- Al-Rabaani, A.H. (2013), 'Attitudes of Omani Social Studies Student Teachers to Tourism for Sustainable Development', *European Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 129–138.
- Al-Riyami, M., Fischer, I. and Lopez, V. (2015), 'Nurses' perceptions of the challenges related to the Omanization policy', *International Nursing Review*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 462–469.
- AlShehabi, O. (2015), 'Histories of Migration to the Gulf', *Transit States: Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, pp. 3–38.
- Alsop, R. (2015), 'This is the real reason new graduates can't get hired', *BBC Worklife*, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20151118-this-is-the-real-reason-new-graduates-cant-get-hired> (accessed 31 August 2020).
- Al-Waqfi, M.A. and Al-faki, I.A. (2015), 'Gender-based differences in employment conditions of local and expatriate workers in the GCC context: Empirical evidence from the United

- Arab Emirates', *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 397–415.
- Alzuabi, A.Z. (2016), 'Sociopolitical Participation of Kuwaiti Women in the Development Process: Current State and Challenges Ahead', *Journal of Social Service Research*, Vol. 42 No. 5, pp. 689–702.
- Amelina, A. (2010), 'Searching for an appropriate research strategy on transnational migration: the logic of multi-sited research and the advantage of the cultural interferences approach', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 11, pp. 1–21.
- Amzat, I.H., Al-Ani, W.T.K., Ismail, O.H. and Al Omairi, T. (2019), 'Women's empowerment and its effect on community development in Oman: predictive model and indicators for best practices', *Community, Work & Family*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 338–356.
- Anderson, B. and Ruhs, M. (2010), 'Migrant Workers: Who Needs Them? A Framework for the Analysis of Staff Shortages, Immigration, and Public Policy', *Who Needs Migrant Workers?*, Oxford University Press, pp. 1–41.
- Andrejuk, K. (2019), 'Strategizing integration in the labor market. Turkish immigrants in Poland and the new dimensions of South-to-North Migration', *Polish Sociological Review*, Vol. 206 No. 2, pp. 157–176.
- Ap, J. and Crompton, J.L. (1998), 'Developing and Testing a Tourism Impact Scale', *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 120–130.
- Arab News. (2019), 'Oman more than doubles women's wages in less than a decade', Available at: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1434731/business-economy> (accessed 2 February 2020).
- Arai, M. and Vilhelmsson, R. (2004), 'Unemployment-Risk Differentials Between Immigrant

- and Native Workers in Sweden’, *Industrial Relations*, Vol. 43 No. 3, pp. 690–698.
- Armingeon, K. (2007), ‘Active labour market policy, international organizations and domestic politics’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 14 No. 6, pp. 905–932.
- Armstrong, D., Gosling, A., Weinman, J. and Marteau, T. (1997), ‘The Place of Inter-Rater Reliability in Qualitative Research: An Empirical Study’, *Sociology*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 597–606.
- Arum, R. and Roksa, J. (2014), *Aspiring Adults Adrift*, University of Chicago Press.
- Atef, T. and Al Balushi, M. (2017), ‘Omani tourism and hospitality students’ employment intentions and job preferences: Ramifications on Omanization plans’, *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 440–461.
- Atef, T.M. and Al-Balushi, M. (2016), ‘The Omani tourism and hospitality education – employment dilemma’, *International Academic Research Conference on Small & Medium Enterprises (Vietnam SME Conference)*, No. August, pp. 1–16.
- Atheer. (2021), ‘Oil and Gas sector operating at over eighty percent Omanisation levels’, available at: <https://www.atheer.om/en/44446/oil-gas-sector-operating-eighty-percent-omanisation-levels/> (accessed 20 January 2021).
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001), ‘Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research’, *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 385–405.
- Au, A. (2019), ‘Thinking about cross-cultural differences in qualitative interviewing: Practices for more responsive and trusting encounters’, *Qualitative Report*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 58–77.
- Azhar, A., Duncan, P. and Edgar, D. (2018), ‘The Implementation of Saudization in the Hotel Industry’, *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 222–

246.

Azhar, M. (2016), 'Indian migrant workers in GCC countries', *Diaspora Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 100–111.

Azhari, A. (2017), 'The Kafāla 'sponsorship' system in Saudi Arabia: A critical analysis from the perspective of international human rights and Islamic law', *The SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research*, SOAS, Vol. 10 No. 2016–2017, pp. 61–80.

Babar, Z. (2017), *Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC / [Electronic Resource]*, New York, NY : Oxford University Press.

Babar, Z., Ewers, M. and Khattab, N. (2019), 'Im/mobile highly skilled migrants in Qatar\*', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 45 No. 9, pp. 1553–1570.

Badkar, J., Callister, P., Krishnan, V., Didham, R. and Bedford, R. (2007), 'Gender mobility and migration into new Zealand a case study of Asian migration', *Social Policy Journal Of New Zealand*, No. 32, pp. 126–154.

Bae, S.-O. and Patterson, L. (2014), 'Comparison and implications of human capital theory at the individual, organization, and country levels', *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, Jordan Whitney Enterprises, Inc, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 11–28.

Baez, B. (2002), 'Confidentiality in qualitative research: Reflections on secrets, power and agency', *Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications Sage CA: Thousand Oaks, CA, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 35–58.

Bailey, C. and Madden, A. (2017), 'Time reclaimed: temporality and the experience of meaningful work', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 3–18.

Bailey, T. and Waldinger, R. (1991), 'Primary, secondary, and enclave labor markets: A

- training systems approach', *American Sociological Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 56 No. 4, pp. 432–445.
- Balasubramanian, S. (2019), 'Across Oceans: The Lives of Migrant Workers in the Middle East.', *Pulitzer Center*, available at: <https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/across-oceans-lives-migrant-workers-middle-east> (accessed 19 February 2020).
- Balogun, B. (2019), 'Racialised migration—from the perspective of colour in Poland', *Muslim Minorities and the Refugee Crisis in Europe*, SGH Warsaw, pp. 255–264.
- Bao, H., Zhu, X., Cen, Y., Peng, Y. and Xue, J. (2018), 'Effects of Social Network on Human Capital of Land-Lost Farmers: A Study in Zhejiang Province', *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands, Vol. 137 No. 1, pp. 167–187.
- Baporikar, N. Shah, I. (2012), 'Quality of higher education in the 21st century - A case of Oman', *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, Vol 2 No 2, pp.9-18.
- Barbieri, P. and Scherer, S. (2009), 'Labour market flexibilization and its consequences in Italy', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 677–692.
- Barnett, A., Yandle, B. and Naufal, G. (2013), 'Regulation, trust, and cronyism in Middle Eastern societies: The simple economics of “wasta”', *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, Elsevier, Vol. 44, pp. 41–46.
- Barot, R. and Bird, J. (2001), 'Racialization: the genealogy and critique of a concept', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 601–618.
- Barrett, A. and Duffy, D. (2008), 'Are Ireland's Immigrants Integrating into Its Labor Market?', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 597–619.
- Bartram, D. (2011), 'Economic Migration and Happiness: Comparing Immigrants' and

- Natives' Happiness Gains From Income', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 103 No. 1, pp. 57–76.
- Batton, C. and Wright, E.M. (2019), 'Patriarchy and the Structure of Employment in Criminal Justice: Differences in the Experiences of Men and Women Working in the Legal Profession, Corrections, and Law Enforcement', *Feminist Criminology*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 287–306.
- Battour, M., Ismail, M.N. and Battor, M. (2011), 'The impact of destination attributes on Muslim tourist's choice', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 13 No. 6, pp. 527–540.
- Baum, T. (2013), International Perspectives on Women and Work in Hotels, *Catering and Tourism, Gender Working Paper*, Vol. 1/2013.
- Baxter, J. (2000), 'Barriers to equality: Men's and women's attitudes to workplace entitlements in Australia', *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 12–29.
- Bazeley, P and Jackson.K. (2013), *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*, edited by Bazeley, P. and Jackson, K., Second., Los Angeles ; London: SAGE.
- BBC News. (2011), 'Oman protests: More unrest despite sultan's reform vow - BBC News', available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12600098> (accessed 26 June 2020).
- BBC News. (2013), 'Arab uprising: Country by country - Oman', *BBC News World*, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12598273> (accessed 16 October 2020).
- BBC News. (2019a), 'Almost a third of graduates "overeducated" for their job', available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-48091971> (accessed 31 August 2020).
- BBC News. (2019b), 'South Africa: How common are xenophobic attacks? - BBC News',

available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-47800718> (accessed 16 June 2020).

Beaverstock, J. V. (2005), 'Transnational elites in the city: British highly-skilled inter-company transferees in New York City's financial district', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 245–268.

Becker, G.S. (1993), *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, 3rd ed., Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Beetar, M. (2019), 'A contextualisation of the 2008 and 2015 xenophobic attacks: Tracing South African necropolitics', *Current Sociology*, Vol. 67 No. 1, pp. 122–140.

Bekhuis, H., Ruiters, S. and Coenders, M. (2013), 'Xenophobia among Youngsters: The Effect of Inter-Ethnic Contact', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 229–242.

Belotto, M.J. (2018), 'Data analysis methods for qualitative research: Managing the challenges of coding, interrater reliability, and thematic analysis', *Qualitative Report*, Vol. 23 No. 11, pp. 2622–2633.

Belwal, R. and Belwal, S. (2017), 'Employers' perception of women workers in Oman and the challenges they face', *Employee Relations*, Vol. 39 No. 7, pp. 1048–1065.

Belwal, S. and Belwal, R. (2014), 'Work-life balance, family-friendly policies and quality of work-life issues: Studying employers' perspectives of working women in Oman', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 96–117.

Benda, L., Koster, F. and van der Veen, R.J. (2019), 'Levelling the playing field? Active labour market policies, educational attainment and unemployment', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 39 No. 3–4, pp. 276–295.

Ben-Porath, Y. (1967), 'The Production of Human Capital and the Life Cycle of Earnings',

- Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 75 No. 4, Part 1, pp. 352–365.
- Berger, R. (2015), ‘Now I see it, now I don’t: researcher’s position and reflexivity in qualitative research’, *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 219–234.
- Berglund, T. and Wallinder, Y. (2015), ‘Perceived Employability in Difficult Economic Times: The significance of education systems and labour market policies’, *European Societies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 17 No. 5, pp. 674–699.
- Bergmark, A. and Palme, J. (2003), ‘Welfare and the unemployment crisis: Sweden in the 1990s’, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 108–122.
- Bessudnov, A. (2016), ‘Ethnic Hierarchy and Public Attitudes towards Immigrants in Russia’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 No. 5, pp. 567–580.
- Bevelander, P. (2005), ‘The Employment Status of Immigrant Women: The Case of Sweden1’, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 173–202.
- Bevelander, P. and Nielsen, H.S. (2001), ‘Declining employment success of immigrant males in Sweden: Observed or unobserved characteristics?’, *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 455–471.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2012), *Introduction to Research, Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*, University of South Florida, available at:<https://DOI.org/10.1351/pac198961091657>, (accessed 7 March 2020).
- Bibb, R. and Form, W.H. (1977), ‘The Effects of Industrial, Occupational, and Sex Stratification on Wages in Blue-Collar Markets’, *Social Forces*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 974–996.
- Bielby, W.T. (2000), ‘Minimizing Workplace Gender and Racial Bias’, *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 120–129.

- Bielby, W.T. and Bielby, D.D. (1989), 'Family Ties: Balancing Commitments to Work and Family in Dual Earner Households', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54 No. 5, p. 776–789.
- Bills, D.B., Di Stasio, V. and Gërkhani, K. (2017), 'The Demand Side of Hiring: Employers in the Labour Market', *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 291–310.
- Birkelund, G.E., Johannessen, L.E.F., Rasmussen, E.B. and Rogstad, J. (2020), 'Experience, stereotypes and discrimination. Employers' reflections on their hiring behavior', *European Societies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 503–524.
- Birks, J.S. and Sinclair, C.A. (1979), 'International labour migration in the Arab middle east', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 87–99.
- Birks, J.S., Seccombe, I.J. and Sinclair, C.A. (1986), 'Migrant Workers in the Arab Gulf: The Impact of Declining Oil Revenues', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 799–814.
- Blagg and Blom. (2018), 'Evaluating the Return on Investment in Higher Education An Assessment of Individual-and State-Level Returns', pp. 1-20, available at: <https://nces.ed.gov/datalab>, pdf, (Accessed on 18 Oct. 19).
- Blaikie, N.W.H. (2009), *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation*, Second edition., Cambridge, UK.
- Blair, E. (2015), 'A reflexive exploration of two qualitative data coding techniques.', *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 14–29.
- Blau, P.M. (1979), 'Inequality and Heterogeneity: A Primitive Theory of Social Structure', *Social Forces*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 677–683.
- Bloch, A. (2006), 'Emigration from Zimbabwe: Migrant perspectives', *Social Policy and*

*Administration*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 67–87.

Bloch, A. and McKay, S. (2015), 'Employment, Social Networks and Undocumented Migrants: The Employer Perspective', *Sociology*, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 38–55.

Block, K., Warr, D., Gibbs, L. and Riggs, E. (2012), 'Addressing ethical and methodological challenges in research with refugee-background young people: Reflections from the field', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 69–87.

Blossfeld, H. and Mayer, K.U. (1988), 'Labor market segmentation in the Federal Republic of Germany: an empirical study of segmentation theories from a life course perspective', Vol. 4 No. 2.

Blossfeld, H.-P. and Huinink, J. (1991), 'Human Capital Investments or Norms of Role Transition? How Women's Schooling and Career Affect the Process of Family Formation', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 97 No. 1, pp. 143–168.

Blossfeld, H.-P. and Jaenichen, U. (1992), 'Educational Expansion and Changes in Women's Entry into Marriage and Motherhood in the Federal Republic of Germany', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 302–315.

Bobbitt-Zeher, D. (2007), 'The Gender Income Gap and the Role of Education', *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 1–22.

Bobo, L. (2001), 'Racial attitudes and relations at the close of the twentieth century', *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences*, Vol. 1, pp. 264–301.

Bodvarsson, Ö.B. and Van den Berg, H. (2013), *The Economics of Immigration*, Springer.

Bol, T. (2015), 'Has education become more positional? Educational expansion and labour market outcomes, 1985–2007', *Acta Sociologica (United Kingdom)*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 105–120.

- Bol, T., Ciocca Eller, C., van de Werfhorst, H.G. and DiPrete, T.A. (2019), 'School-to-Work Linkages, Educational Mismatches, and Labour Market Outcomes', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 84 No. 2, pp. 275–307.
- Bolíbar, M. (2020), 'Social capital, human capital and ethnic occupational niches: an analysis of ethnic and gender inequalities in the Spanish labour market', *Palgrave Communications*, Palgrave, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 1–9.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (1999), 'The Essential Social Fact of Race', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 64 No. 6, pp. 899–906.
- Bontenbal, M. and Aziz, H. (2013), 'Oman's Tourism Industry: Student Career Perceptions and Attitudes', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 232–248.
- Bonvin, J.M. and Moachon, E. (2007), 'The impact of contractualism in social policies: The case of active labour market policies in Switzerland', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 27 No. 9, pp. 401–412.
- Borgna, C., Solga, H. and Protsch, P. (2019), 'Overeducation, labour market dynamics, and economic downturn in Europe', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 15–28.
- Bornstein, J. (2019), 'Employees are losing: Have workplace laws gone too far?', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 61 No. 3, pp. 438–456.
- Bott, E. (2010), 'Favourites and others: reflexivity and the shaping of subjectivities and data in qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 159–173.
- Botterill, K. (2015), "'We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are": Questioning the "outsider" in Polish migration research', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, Vol. 16 No. 2, available at:<https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-16.2.2331>.
- Boucher, A.K. (2020), 'How "skill" definition affects the diversity of skilled immigration

- policies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 46 No. 12, pp. 2533–2550.
- Bourdieu, P. (2011), 'The forms of capital.(1986)', *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, Vol. 1, pp. 81–93.
- Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1975), "The problem with human capital theory--a Marxian critique", *The American Economic Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 65 No. 2, pp. 74–82.
- Boxman, E.A.W., De Graaf, P.M. and Flap, H.D. (1991), 'The impact of social and human capital on the income attainment of Dutch managers', *Social Networks*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 51–73.
- Boyatzis, R.E. (1998), *Transforming Qualitative Information : Thematic Analysis and Code Development*, Thousand Oaks, Calif., London: SAGE Publications.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006), 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 77–101.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2019), 'Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis', *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, Routledge, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 589–597.
- Bredgaard, T. (2015), 'Evaluating What Works for Whom in Active Labour Market Policies', *European Journal of Social Security*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 436–452.
- Bredgaard, T. (2018), 'Employers and Active Labour Market Policies: Typologies and Evidence', *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 365–377.
- Brenner, S.-O. and Starrin, B. (1988), 'Unemployment and Health in Sweden: Public Issues and Private Troubles', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 44 No. 4, pp. 125–140.
- Breuer, F. (2003), 'Subjectivity and reflexivity in the social sciences: Epistemic windows and methodical consequences', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative*

*Social Research*, Vol. 4 No. 2, Art. 25, pp. 1–14.

Bridgstock, R. (2009), 'The graduate attributes we've overlooked: enhancing graduate employability through career management skills', *Higher Education Research & Development*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 31–44.

Brinbaum, Y. (2018), 'Incorporation of Immigrants and Second Generations into the French Labour Market: Changes between Generations and the Role of Human Capital and Origins', *Social Inclusion*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 104–118.

British Sociological Association. (2017), 'Statement of Ethical Practice', *BSA Statement of Ethical Practice*, available at: [https://www.britisoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa\\_statement\\_of\\_ethical\\_practice.pdf](https://www.britisoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf) (accessed 7 March 2020).

Britton, J. (2019), 'Being an insider and outsider: whiteness as a key dimension of difference', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 00 No. 0, pp. 1–15.

Broad, D. (1995), 'Globalization and the Casual Labor Problem: History and Prospects', *Social Justice/Global Options*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 67–91.

Brown, L. and Osman, H. (2017), 'The female tourist experience in Egypt as an Islamic destination', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 63, pp. 12–22.

Brown, P. (1995), 'Cultural capital and social exclusion: some observations on recent trends in education, employment and the labour market', *Work, Employment and Society*, Sage Publications Sage CA: Thousand Oaks, CA, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 29–51.

Browne, I. (1997), 'Explaining the Black-White Gap in Labor Force Participation among Women Heading Households', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 62 No. 2, pp. 236–252.

- Brožová, D. (2015), “Modern Labour Economics: The Neoclassical Paradigm with Institutional Content”, *Procedia Economics and Finance*, Elsevier B.V., Vol. 30 No. 15, pp. 50–56.
- Brüß, J. (2005), ‘Proud but isolated? Effects of in-group favouritism and acculturation preferences on inter-ethnic attitudes and contact between German, Turkish and resettler adolescents’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 3–27.
- Bryman, A. (2016), *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, available at: [https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=6\\_K1DAEACAAJ](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=6_K1DAEACAAJ).
- Brynin, M. and Perales, F. (2016), ‘Gender Wage Inequality: The De-gendering of the Occupational Structure’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 162–174.
- Brynin, M. and Schupp, J. (2000), ‘Education, employment, and gender inequality amongst couples: A comparative analysis of Britain and Germany’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 349–365.
- Brzinsky-Fay, C. (2014), ‘The Measurement of School-to-work Transitions as Processes: About events and sequences’, *European Societies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 213–232.
- Buchler, S., Haynes, M. and Baxter, J. (2009), ‘Casual employment in Australia: The influence of employment contract on financial well-being’, *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 271–289.
- Bukodi, E. and Dex, S. (2010), ‘Bad Start: Is There a Way Up? Gender Differences in the Effect of Initial Occupation on Early Career Mobility in Britain’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp. 431–446.
- Bulat, A. (2019), ““High-Skilled Good, Low-Skilled Bad?” British, Polish and Romanian

- Attitudes Towards Low-Skilled EU Migration’, *National Institute Economic Review*, Vol. 248, pp. R49–R57.
- Burgmann, G. (2016) *Globalization and Labour in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Routledge
- Burgoon, B. and Dekker, F. (2010), ‘Flexible employment, economic insecurity and social policy preferences in Europe’, *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 126–141.
- Burns, P.M. (1997), ‘Tourism’s Workforce: Characteristics & Inter-Cultural Perspectives’, *Tourism Recreation Research*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 48–54.
- Burroni, L., Gherardini, A. and Scalise, G. (2019), ‘Policy Failure in the Triangle of Growth: Labour Market, Human Capital, and Innovation in Spain and Italy’, *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 29–52.
- Buss, C. (2019), ‘Public opinion towards targeted labour market policies: A vignette study on the perceived deservingness of the unemployed’, *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 228–240.
- Bussi, M. (2014), ‘Going beyond work-first and human capital approaches to employability: The added-value of the capability approach’, *Social Work and Society*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 1–15.
- Buttorff, G. & Welborne, B. & Al-Lawati, N. (2018), ‘Measuring Female Labor Force Participation in the GCC’. Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, Issue Brief. Available at: <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/files/1fe4b913/bi-brief-011818-wrme-femalelabor.pdf> (accessed 11 April 2019).
- Buttorff, G.J., Al Lawati, N. and Welborne, B.C. (2018), ‘Cursed No More? The Resource Curse, Gender, and Labor Nationalization Policies in the GCC’, *Journal of Arabian*

*Studies*, Vol. 8 No. sup1, pp. 65–86.

Buzdugan, R. and Halli, S.S. (2009), ‘Labor market experiences of Canadian immigrants with focus on foreign education and experience’, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 43 No. 2, pp. 366–386.

Cacciottolo, M. (2015), ‘Saudi Arabia drinking: The risks expats take for a tipples’, *BBC News*, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34516143> (accessed 8 February 2020).

Calabrese, J. (2018), ‘Oman’s Transition to a Post-Oil Economy: Arching Toward Asia’, *Middle East Institute*, available at: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/omans-transition-post-oil-economy-arching-toward-asia> (accessed 29 March 2020).

Campbell, I. and Burgess, J. (2001), ‘Casual employment in Australia and temporary employment in Europe: Developing a cross-national comparison’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Cambridge university press, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 171–184.

Campbell, J.L., Quincy, C., Osseman, J. and Pedersen, O.K. (2013), ‘Coding In-depth Semistructured Interviews: Problems of Unitization and Intercoder Reliability and Agreement’, *Sociological Methods and Research*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 294–320.

Cañibano, C. and Woolley, R. (2015), ‘Towards a socio-economics of the brain drain and distributed human capital’, *International Migration*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 115–130.

Cantillon, B. (2011), ‘The paradox of the social investment state: growth, employment and poverty in the Lisbon era’, *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 432–449.

Capsada-Munsech, Q. (2019), ‘Measuring Overeducation: Incidence, Correlation and Overlaps Across Indicators and Countries’, *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands, Vol. 145 No. 1, pp. 279–301.

- Card, D., Dustmann, C. and Preston, I. (2005), 'Understanding attitudes to immigration : The migration and minority module of the first European Social Survey', *CReAM Discussion Paper Series*, Vol. 03 No. 05, pp. 1-43, available at: <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/14315/1/14315.pdf>, (Accessed on 18 Oct. 19).
- Carnoy, M. (1996), 'Education and racial inequality: The human capital explanation revisited', *Economics of Education Review*, Elsevier, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 259–272.
- Carter, B., Green, M. and Halpern, R. (1996), 'Immigration policy and the racialization of migrant labour: The construction of national identities in the USA and Britain', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 135–157.
- Castelier, S and Muller, Q. (2019), 'Oman's nationalisation of tourism sector creates more job opportunities for youth - The National UAE', available at: <https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/oman-s-nationalisation-of-tourism-sector-creates-more-job-opportunities-for-youth-1.810308> (accessed 26 January 2020).
- Castelier, S. (2020), 'Is tourism the antidote to youth unemployment in Oman?', *Al - Monitor - The Pulse of the Middle East*, available at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/02/oman-unemployment-tourism-economy.html> (accessed 5 July 2020).
- Castilla, E.J. (2008), 'Gender, Race, and Meritocracy in Organizational Careers', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 113 No. 6, pp. 1479–1526.
- Castillo Goncalves, D. (2020), 'Distinctive ethical challenges in qualitative research with migrant children', *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 293–303.
- Castles, S. (2004), 'Why migration policies fail', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 205–227.
- Castles, S. (2006), 'The Factors that Make and Unmake Migration Policies1', *International*

- Migration Review*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 852–884.
- Caterer.com. (2019), ‘Does age matter in hospitality jobs?’, available at: <https://www.caterer.com/advice/hospitality-jobs-for-mature-workers> (accessed 27 January 2021).
- Catron, P. (2017), The citizenship advantage: immigrant socioeconomic attainment across generations in the age of mass migration, pp. 1-68, available at: <https://escholarship.org/content/qt7xn7g0ww/qt7xn7g0ww.pdf>, (Accessed on 17 Oct. 19).
- Cavalier, G. and Upex, R. (2006), ‘The Concept Of Employment Contract In European Union Private Law’, *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 55 No. 3, pp. 587–608.
- Cave, P. and Kilic, S. (2010), ‘The role of women in tourism employment with special reference to Antalya, Turkey’, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 280–292.
- Čeněk, J. (2013), 'Gender stereotypes in organisations', *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 30–37.
- Chaabna, K., Cheema, S. and Mamtani, R. (2017), ‘Migrants, healthy worker effect, and mortality trends in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries’, edited by Ciccozzi, M. *PLOS ONE*, Vol. 12 No. 6, pp. 1–10.
- Chalcraft, J. (2010), *Monarchy, Migration and Hegemony in the Arabian Peninsula*, available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/17357.pdf>, (accessed 23 February 2020).
- Chang, W.-J.A., Wang, Y.-S. and Huang, T.-C. (2013), ‘Work Design-Related Antecedents of Turnover Intention: A Multilevel Approach’, *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 1–26.
- Charles, M. and Bradley, K. (2002), ‘Equal but separate? A cross-national study of sex

- segregation in higher education’, *American Sociological Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 64 No. 4, pp. 573–599.
- Charles, M. and Bradley, K. (2009), ‘Indulging our gendered selves? Sex segregation by field of study in 44 countries’, *American Journal of Sociology*, The University of Chicago Press, Vol. 114 No. 4, pp. 924–976.
- Charrad, M.M. (2011), ‘Gender in the Middle East: Islam, State, Agency’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 417–437.
- Chaudhury, R.R. (2018), ‘India and the Gulf region: building strategic partnerships’, *The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in Berlin*, available at: <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2018/08/india-gulf-strategic-partnerships> (accessed 9 October 2021).
- Cheary, M. (2020), ‘Types of employment contracts’, *Reed.Co.Uk*, available at: <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/types-of-employment-contracts/> (accessed 27 December 2020).
- Chereni, A. (2014), ‘Positionality and Collaboration During Fieldwork: Insights From Research With Co-Nationals Living Abroad’, *In Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 1–21.
- Chiang, C.I. and Saw, Y.L. (2018), ‘Do good looks matter when applying for jobs in the hospitality industry?’, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 71 No. December, pp. 33–40.
- Choi, J.B. and Thomas, M. (2009), ‘Predictive factors of acculturation attitudes and social support among Asian immigrants in the USA’, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 76–84.

- Chowdhury, M. (2014), 'Migration, human capital formation and the beneficial brain drain hypothesis: a note', *Migration and Development*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 174–180.
- Christie, F. (2019), 'Competing voices: a Figured Worlds approach to theorising graduate perspectives on career success', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, Routledge, Vol. 28 No. 3–4, pp. 326–344.
- Christopher, K. (1996), 'Explaining the recent employment gap between black and white women', *Sociological Focus*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 263–280.
- Chuatico, G. and Haan, M. (2020), 'Bonding social ties: relative human capital and immigrant network choices', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–21.
- Ciabattari, T., Lowney, K.S., Monson, R.A., Senter, M.S. and Chin, J. (2018), 'Linking Sociology Majors to Labor Market Success', *Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 46 No. 3, pp. 191–207.
- Clarke, M. (2018), 'Rethinking graduate employability: the role of capital, individual attributes and context', *Studies in Higher Education*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 43 No. 11, pp. 1923–1937.
- Clausing, J. (2018), 'Women in hospitality management: The gender gap is wide', *Travel Weekly*, available at: <https://www.travelweekly.com/Travel-News/Hotel-News/Luxe-gender-gap> (accessed 2 February 2020).
- CNN. (2011), 'Oman protesters unmoved by sultan's offer', *CNN World.Com*, available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/meast/02/28/oman.protests/index.html> (accessed 11 February 2020).
- Cohn, S. (2019), *Race, Gender, and Discrimination at Work*, Routledge.

- Cole, D.P. (2003), 'Where have the Bedouin gone?', *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 76 No. 2, pp. 235–267.
- Coleman, J.S. (1988), 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, pp. S95–S120.
- Collins, R. (2019), *The Credential Society*, Columbia University Press.
- Combet, B. and Oesch, D. (2019), 'The Gender Wage Gap Opens Long before Motherhood. Panel Evidence on Early Careers in Switzerland', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 332–345.
- Common, R.K. (2011), 'Barriers to developing "Leadership" in the Sultanate of Oman', *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 215–228.
- Confurius, D., Gowricharn, R. and Dagevos, J. (2019), 'Labour market participation of Sub-Saharan Africans in the Netherlands: the limits of the human capital approach', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 45 No. 13, pp. 2328–2347.
- Constant, A. (2014), 'Do migrants take the jobs of native workers?', *IZA World of Labor*, available at:<https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.10>.
- Constant, A. and Massey, D.S. (2005), 'Labor Market Segmentation and the Earnings of German Guestworkers', *Population Research and Policy Review*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 489–512.
- Constituteproject. (2011), 'Oman's Constitution of 1996 with Amendments through 2011', *Constituteproject.Org*, available at: [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Oman\\_2011.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Oman_2011.pdf?lang=en) (accessed 18 February 2020).
- Cook, J., Dwyer, P. and Waite, L. (2011), 'The Experiences of Accession 8 Migrants in

England: Motivations, Work and Agency’, *International Migration*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 54–79.

Corluy, V., Marx, I. and Verbist, G. (2011), ‘Employment chances and changes of immigrants in Belgium: The impact of citizenship’, edited by Fullin, G. and Reyneri, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 350–368.

Correll, S.J. (2001), ‘Gender and the career choice process: The role of biased self-assessments’, *American Journal of Sociology*, The University of Chicago Press, Vol. 106 No. 6, pp. 1691–1730.

Corti, L., Day, A. and Backhouse, G. (2000), ‘Confidentiality and Informed Consent: Issues for Consideration in the Preservation of and Provision of Access to Qualitative Data Archives’, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 1–16.

Cotton, J. (1988), ‘Discrimination and Favoritism in the U.S. Labor Market: The Cost to a Wage Earner of Being Female and Black and the Benefit of Being Male and White’, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 15–28.

Creswell, J.W., (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches*, fourth edition. International student. Thousand Oaks: SAGA Publications.

Crompton, R. and Harris, F. (1998), ‘Explaining Women’s Employment Patterns: “Orientations to Work” Revisited’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 118–136.

Cross, S. and Bagilhole, B. (2002), ‘Girls’ jobs for the boys? Men, masculinity and non-traditional occupations’, *Gender, Work & Organization*, Wiley Online Library, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 204–226.

Crotty, M., (1998). *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process*, London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Crow, G. and Wiles, R. (2008), *Managing Anonymity and Confidentiality in Social Research: The Case of Visual Data in Community Research*, available at: [http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/459/1/0808\\_managing%2520anonymity%2520and%2520confidentiality.pdf](http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/459/1/0808_managing%2520anonymity%2520and%2520confidentiality.pdf) (accessed 7 March 2020).

Csedö, K. (2008), 'Negotiating skills in the global city: Hungarian and Romanian professionals and graduates in London', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 803–823.

Cusick, J. (2018), *The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): What Organizations Need to Know*, CT Corporation Resource Center, available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323538588\\_The\\_General\\_Data\\_Protection\\_Regulation\\_GDPR\\_What\\_Organizations\\_Need\\_to\\_Know](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323538588_The_General_Data_Protection_Regulation_GDPR_What_Organizations_Need_to_Know) (accessed 7 March 2020).

Czaika, M. (2019), 'High-skilled Migration Policies', *Migration & Integration 8-Dialog Zwischen Politik, Wissenschaft Und Praxis*, Vol. 8, Edition Donau-Universität Krems, pp. 17-32.

Czaika, M. and de Haas, H. (2014), 'The Globalization of Migration: Has the World Become More Migratory?', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 283–323.

Czaika, M. and Varela, M. V. (2015), 'Labour market activity, occupational change and length of stay in the Gulf', *Migration Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 315–342.

D'Angelo, A., Kofman, E. and Keles, J.Y. (2020), 'Migrants at Work: Perspectives, Perceptions and New Connections', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 745–748.

Daher, M., Carré, D., Jaramillo, A., Olivares, H. and Tomicic, A. (2017), 'Experience and

- Meaning in Qualitative Research: A Conceptual Review and a Methodological Device Proposal', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 1–25.
- Dahinden, J., Fischer, C. and Menet, J. (2020), 'Knowledge production, reflexivity, and the use of categories in migration studies: tackling challenges in the field', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 9870, pp. 1–20.
- Damelang, A., Abraham, M., Ebensperger, S. and Stumpf, F. (2019), 'The Hiring Prospects of Foreign-Educated Immigrants: A Factorial Survey among German Employers', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 33 No. 5, pp. 739–758.
- Damir-Geilsdorf, S. and Pelican, M. (2019), 'Between regular and irregular employment: subverting the kafala system in the GCC countries', *Migration and Development*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 155–175.
- Darbi, W.P.K. and Hall, C.M. (2014), 'Elite interviews: critical practice and tourism', *Current Issues in Tourism*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 17 No. 9, pp. 832–848.
- Das, K.. and Gokhale, N. (2010), 'Omanisation Policy and International Migration in Oman', *Middle East Institute*, available at: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/omanization-policy-and-international-migration-oman> (accessed 16 June 2020).
- Davidov, E. and Semyonov, M. (2017), 'Attitudes toward immigrants in European societies', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 58 No. 5, pp. 359–366.
- Davies, J. (2020), 'Oman: Challenges to limit pace of diversification', *Gulf Monitor*, available at: <https://castlereagh.net/oman-challenges-to-limit-pace-of-diversification/> (accessed 11 May 2020).
- Davila, A. and Saenz, R. (1990), 'The effect of maquiladora employment on the monthly flow of Mexican undocumented immigration to the U.S., 1978-1982'. *International Migration*

*Review*, Vol. 24, pp. 96–107.

De Bel-Air, F. (2015), ‘Demography, Migration, and the Labour Market in Oman’, *Gulf Labour Markets and Migration*, No. 9, pp. 1–24, available at: [http://gulfmigration.org/media/pubs/exno/GLMM\\_EN\\_2018\\_07.pdf](http://gulfmigration.org/media/pubs/exno/GLMM_EN_2018_07.pdf), (Accessed on 16 Oct. 19).

de Gialdino, I.V. (2009), ‘Ontological and epistemological foundations of qualitative research’, *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 1–18.

De Jong, G.F. and Steinmetz, M. (2004), ‘Receptivity Attitudes and the Occupational Attainment of Male and Female Immigrant Workers’, *Population Research and Policy Review*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 91–116.

De Tona, C. (2006), ‘But what is interesting is the story of why and how migration happened’, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 1–12.

DeFlumere, A. (2021), ‘What is Omanization?’, *Vinnie Ferraro’s World Politics Class*, available at: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~deflu20a/classweb/omanization/omanization.html> (accessed 30 March 2021).

Delsen, L. (1997), ‘A New Concept of Full Employment’, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 119–135.

Demireva, N. (2011), ‘New migrants in the UK: Employment patterns and occupational attainment’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 637–655.

Demireva, N. and Fellini, I. (2018), ‘Returns to human capital and the incorporation of highly-skilled workers in the public and private sector of major immigrant societies: An introduction’, *Social Inclusion*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 1–5.

- Denham, M.A. and Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2013), 'Beyond words: Using nonverbal communication data in research to enhance thick description and interpretation', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 670–696.
- Di Fabio, A. (2017), "A review of empirical studies on employability and measures of employability", *Psychology of Career Adaptability, Employability and Resilience*, Springer, pp. 107–123.
- Di Stasio, V. (2017), 'Who Is Ahead in the Labor Queue? Institutions' and Employers' Perspective on Overeducation, Undereducation, and Horizontal Mismatches', *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 90 No. 2, pp. 109–126.
- Di Stasio, V. and Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (2016), 'Why does education matter to employers in different institutional contexts? A vignette study in England and the Netherlands', *Social Forces*, Vol. 95 No. 1, pp. 77–106.
- Di Stasio, V., Lancee, B., Veit, S. and Yemane, R. (2019), 'Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–22.
- Diamond, J. (1998), 'African-American attitudes towards United States immigration policy', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 451–470.
- Dietz, J.S. and Bozeman, B. (2005), 'Academic careers, patents, and productivity: Industry experience as scientific and technical human capital', *Research Policy*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 349–367.
- Din, K.H. (1989), 'Islam and tourism: Patterns, issues, and options', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 542–563.

- Diop, A., Johnston, T. and Le, K.T. (2018) Migration Policies across the GCC: Challenges in Reforming the Kafala. Migration to the Gulf: Policies in Sending and Receiving Countries, pp.33-60.
- Diop, A., Le, K.T., Johnston, T. and Ewers, M. (2017), ‘Citizens’ attitudes towards migrant workers in Qatar’, *Migration and Development*, Routledge, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 144–160.
- Dito, M.E. (2008), ‘GCC labour migration governance’, *UN Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand*, pp. 20–21.
- Dobbins, T., Plows, A. and Lloyd-Williams, H. (2014), “‘Make do and mend’ after redundancy at Anglesey Aluminium: critiquing human capital approaches to unemployment’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 515–532.
- Domański, H. (2019), ‘The effect of education on earnings distribution in Poland: 1988-2013’, *Polish Sociological Review*, Vol. 2019 No. 3, pp. 305–321.
- Donald, W.E., Baruch, Y. and Ashleigh, M. (2019), ‘The undergraduate self-perception of employability: human capital, careers advice, and career ownership’, *Studies in Higher Education*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 44 No. 4, pp. 599–614.
- Dudley, D. (2018), ‘Oman Told By IMF It Needs To Make “Substantial” Reforms To Its Economy’, *Forbes*, available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dominicdudley/2018/04/19/oman-reform-economy-imf/#755b27673198> (accessed 15 February 2020).
- Duffy, J.C. and Ridinger, B. (1981), ‘Stereotyped connotations of masculine and feminine names’, *Sex Roles*, Springer, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 25–33.
- Dumitru, S. (2014), ‘From “brain drain” to “care drain”: Women’s labour migration and methodological sexism’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Elsevier B.V., Vol. 47

No. PB, pp. 203–212.

Düşmezkalender, E., Secilmis, C. and Yilmaz, V. (2020), 'The effect of Islamic work ethic on person-organization fit and workplace deviance in hotels', *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 164–182.

Economist. (2019), 'Vision 2040 calls for increased private-sector participation', *The Economist - Intelligence Unit*, available at: <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=2007881184>, (accessed 26 January 2020).

Ehlert, M. (2017), 'Who benefits from training courses in Germany? Monetary returns to non-formal further education on a segmented labour market', *European Sociological Review*, Oxford University Press, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 436–448.

El Hag, S. and El Shazly, M.R. (2012), 'Oil dependency, export diversification and economic growth in the Arab Gulf States', *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 397–404.

Ellermann, A. (2020), 'Human-capital citizenship and the changing logic of immigrant admissions', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 46 No. 12, pp. 2515–2532.

Elliott, K. and Roberts, S. (2020), 'Balancing generosity and critique: reflections on interviewing young men and implications for research methodologies and ethics', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 00 No. 0, pp. 1–17.

Elrick, J. (2016), 'Screening, Skills and Cultural Fit: Theorizing Immigrant Skill Utilization from an Organizational Perspective', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 801–817.

Emerson, C. (2018), 'Localization of the Nursing Workforce in the Sultanate of Oman', *Case Studies in Global Health Policy Nursing*, Springer Publishing Company, p. 85.

Emilsson, H. and Mozetič, K. (2019), 'Intra-EU youth mobility, human capital and career

- outcomes: the case of young high-skilled Latvians and Romanians in Sweden', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–18.
- Emmenegger, P. (2009), 'Barriers to entry: insider/outsider politics and the political determinants of job security regulations', *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 131–146.
- Engel, H. (2018), 'Prohibited Items for Business Travel in Saudi Arabia', *USA TODAY*, available at: <https://traveltips.usatoday.com/prohibited-items-business-travel-saudi-arabia-106700.html> (accessed 8 February 2020).
- England, P., Farkas, G., Kilbourne, B.S. and Dou, T. (1988), 'Explaining Occupational Sex Segregation and Wages: Findings from a Model with Fixed Effects', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53 No. 4, pp. 544–558.
- Ennis, C.A. (2019), 'The Gendered Complexities of Promoting Female Entrepreneurship in the Gulf', *New Political Economy*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 365–384.
- Ennis, C.A. and Al-Jamali, R.Z. (2014), *Elusive Employment Development Planning and Labour Market Trends in Oman, Middle East and North Africa*, available at: [http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field\\_document/20140916\\_ElusiveEmploymentOmanEnnisJamali.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20140916_ElusiveEmploymentOmanEnnisJamali.pdf), (accessed 6 August 2020).
- Ennis, C.A. and Walton-Roberts, M. (2018), 'Labour market regulation as global social policy: The case of nursing labour markets in Oman', *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 169–188.
- Erhel, C. and Zajdela, H. (2004), 'The Dynamics of Social and Labour Market Policies in France and the United Kingdom: Between Path Dependence and Convergence', *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 125–142.

- Erickson, R.J. (2005), 'Why emotion work matters: sex, gender, and the division of household labour', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 67 No. 2, pp. 337–351.
- Errichiello, G. (2012), 'Foreign Workforce in the Arab Gulf States (1930–1950): Migration Patterns and Nationality Clause', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 389–413.
- Essomba, W. (2017), 'Labour Immigration into the Gulf: Policies and Impacts', under the Kuwait Program at Sciences Po, pp. 1–12.
- Eturbonews. (2014), 'Oman identifies challenges facing tourism industry', *Eturbonews*, available at: <https://www.eturbonews.com/96166/oman-identifies-challenges-facing-tourism-industry/> (accessed 26 January 2020).
- European Commission, D.-G. for E. and F.A. (2010), *Labour Markets Performance and Migration Flows in Arab Mediterranean Countries: Determinants and Effects.*, Luxembourg: Publications Office, Luxembourg, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/occasional\\_paper/2010/pdf/ocp60\\_1\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2010/pdf/ocp60_1_en.pdf), (accessed 22 February 2020).
- Eydal, G.B., Gíslason, I. V., Rostgaard, T., Brandth, B., Duvander, A.-Z. and Lammi-Taskula, J. (2015), 'Trends in parental leave in the Nordic countries: has the forward march of gender equality halted?', *Community, Work & Family*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 167–181.
- Fargues, P. (2005), 'Women in Arab Countries: Challenging the Patriarchal System?', *Reproductive Health Matters*, Vol. 13 No. 25, pp. 43–48.
- Fargues, P. (2011), 'Immigration without Inclusion: Non-Nationals in Nation-Building in the Gulf States', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3–4, pp. 273–292.
- Fargues, P. and Shah, N.M. (2011), *Socio-Economic Impacts of GCC Migration*, available at: [http://grm.grc.net/workshop/27\\_Workshop\\_4\\_Migration\\_-\\_Fargues\\_and\\_Shah.pdf](http://grm.grc.net/workshop/27_Workshop_4_Migration_-_Fargues_and_Shah.pdf),

(accessed 26 January 2020).

- Farkas, G. and Vicknair, K. (1996), 'Appropriate tests of racial wage discrimination require controls for cognitive skill: Comment on Cancio, Evans, and Maume', *American Sociological Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 61 No. 4, pp. 557–560.
- Fasano, U. and Goyal, R. (2004), 'Emerging Strains in GCC Labor Markets', *IMF Working Papers*, Vol. 04 No. 71, pp. 1-35.
- Favell, A. (2008), 'The new face of East-West migration in Europe', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 701–716.
- Fawcett, B. and Hearn, J. (2004), 'Researching others: epistemology, experience, standpoints and participation', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 201–218.
- Fedyuk, O. and Zentai, V. (2018), 'The Interview in Migration Studies: A Step towards a Dialogue and Knowledge Co-production?', *Qualitative Research in European Migration Studies*, Springer, Cham, pp. 171–188.
- Feinstein, Y. and Bonikowski, B. (2019), 'Nationalist narratives and anti-Immigrant attitudes: exceptionalism and collective victimhood in contemporary Israel', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, pp. 1–21.
- Feischmidt, M. and Zakariás, I. (2020), 'How Migration Experience Affects the Acceptance and Active Support of Refugees? Philanthropy and Paid Work of Hungarian Migrants in the German Immigrant Service', *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, Routledge, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–17.
- Feldberg, R.L. and Glenn, E.N. (1979), 'Male and Female: Job versus Gender Models in the Sociology of Work', *Social Problems*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 524–538.
- Fernandez-Mateo, I. (2009), 'Cumulative Gender Disadvantage in Contract Employment',

*American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 114 No. 4, pp. 871–923.

Ferrie, J.P. and Hatton, T.J. (2013), *Two Centuries of International Migration, Handbook of the Economics of International Migration*, Vol. 1, available at:<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-53764-5.00002-5>, (accessed 22 March 2020).

Fisher, P. (2012), ‘Ethics in qualitative research: “Vulnerability”, citizenship and human rights’, *Ethics and Social Welfare*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 2–17.

Fix, B. (2018), *The Trouble with Human Capital Theory*, Working Papers on Capital as Power.

Flick, E. (2013). *The SAGE handbook of the qualitative data analysis*. London: SAGE Publications.

Flick, U. (2014). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, (5th Ed). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Flick, U., Bogner, A., Littig, B. and Menz, W. (2018), ‘Generating Qualitative Data with Experts and Elites’, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, pp. 652–665.

Forsman, J.A. and Barth, J.M. (2017), ‘The Effect of Occupational Gender Stereotypes on Men’s Interest in Female-Dominated Occupations’, *Sex Roles*, Vol. 76 No. 7–8, pp. 460–472.

Forstenlechner, I. and Rutledge, E. (2010), ‘Unemployment in the Gulf: Time to Update the “Social Contract”’, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 38–51.

Forstenlechner, I., Madi, M.T., Selim, H.M. and Rutledge, E.J. (2012), ‘Emiratisation: determining the factors that influence the recruitment decisions of employers in the UAE’, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 406–421.

- Fossati, F. (2018), 'Who Wants Demanding Active Labour Market Policies? Public Attitudes towards Policies that put Pressure on the Unemployed', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 77–97.
- Fossati, F., Liechti, F. and Wilson, A. (2020), 'Participation in labour market programmes: A positive or negative signal of employability?', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. XX No. X, pp. 1–16.
- Franklin, C. and Ballan, M. (2001), 'Reliability and validity in qualitative research', *The Handbook of Social Work Research Methods*, Sage Publications Thousand Oaks, CA, Vol. 4, pp. 273–292.
- Franklin, R. (1985), 'Migrant Labor and the Politics of Development in Bahrain', *MERIP Reports*, No. 132, pp. 7–13.
- Freeman, M. (2014), 'The Hermeneutical Aesthetics of Thick Description', *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 20 No. 6, pp. 827–833.
- Friberg, J.H. and Midtbøen, A.H. (2019), 'The Making of Immigrant Niches in an Affluent Welfare State', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 53 No. 2, pp. 322–345.
- Froyland, K., Andreassen, T.A. and InnvÆr, S. (2019), 'Contrasting supply-side, demand-side and combined approaches to labour market integration', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 311–328.
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A.J. and Ashforth, B.E. (2004), 'Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications', *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Elsevier, Vol. 65 No. 1, pp. 14–38.
- Fussell, E. (2014), 'Warmth of the Welcome: Attitudes Toward Immigrants and Immigration Policy in the United States', *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 479–498.
- Gaddis, S.M. (2015), 'Discrimination in the credential society: An audit study of race and

- college selectivity in the labor market', *Social Forces*, Oxford University Press, Vol. 93 No. 4, pp. 1451–1479.
- Ganga, D. and Scott, S. (2006), 'Cultural" insiders" and the issue of positionality in qualitative migration research: Moving" across" and moving" along" researcher-participant divides', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Art.7, pp. 1-12.
- Ganji, S.K. (2016), 'Leveraging the World Cup: Mega Sporting Events, Human Rights Risk, and Worker Welfare Reform in Qatar', *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 221–259.
- Gans, H.J. (2007), 'Acculturation, assimilation and mobility', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 30 No. 1, pp. 152–164.
- Ganter, S.A. (2017), 'Perception and articulation of own cultural otherness in elite interview situations: Challenge or repertoire?', *Qualitative Report*, Vol. 22 No. 4, pp. 942–955.
- Gardner, A. (2012), 'Why Do They Keep Coming? Labour Migrants in the Persian Gulf States', *Migrant Labor in the Persian Gulf*, pp. 1–58.
- Gardner, A.M. (2011), 'Gulf Migration and the Family', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 3–25.
- Gash, V. (2008), 'Bridge or Trap? Temporary Workers' Transitions to Unemployment and to the Standard Employment Contract', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 651–668.
- Gawlewicz, A. (2016), 'Language and translation strategies in researching migrant experience of difference from the position of migrant researcher', *Qualitative Research*, SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 27–42.

- Gerrard, J. (2014), 'All that is solid melts into work: Self-work, the "learning ethic" and the work ethic', *Sociological Review*, Vol. 62 No. 4, pp. 862–879.
- Gërkhani, K. and Van De Werfhorst, H.G. (2013), 'The effect of education on informal sector participation in a post-communist country', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 464–476.
- Ghosal, S. and Porkodi, S. (2014), 'Reasons for Migration of Contract Labor to Oman: A SEM Approach', Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 213–224.
- Gibson, J. and Al-Sabahi, F. (2020), 'New fund to support Omani terminated employees and job seekers', *Dentons*, available at: <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/alerts/2020/september/7/new-fund-to-support-omani-terminated-employees-and-job-seekers> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Giesecke, J. (2009), 'Socio-economic risks of atypical employment relationships: Evidence from the German labour market', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 629–646.
- Giesecke, J. and Groß, M. (2003), 'Temporary Employment: Chance or Risk?', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 161–177.
- Gilbertson, G.A. (1995), 'Women's Labour and Enclave Employment: The Case of Dominican and Colombian Women in New York City', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 657–670.
- Gill, J. (2018), 'Oman jobs protest spreads to other cities as arrests reported', *Middle East Eye*, available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/oman-jobs-protest-spreads-other-cities-arrests-reported> (accessed 15 February 2020).
- GIZ and ILO. (2015), 'Labour Market Trends Analysis and Labour Migration from South Asia to Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, India and Malaysia', *The Deutsche Gesellschaft*

*Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the International Labour Organization*, available at: [http://www.oit.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms\\_377416.pdf](http://www.oit.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/publication/wcms_377416.pdf)

(accessed 15 February 2020).

Glick, P., Wilk, K. and Perreault, M. (1995), 'Images of occupations: Components of gender and status in occupational stereotypes', *Sex Roles*, Springer, Vol. 32 No. 9–10, pp. 565–582.

Global Detention Project. (2016), 'Immigration Detention in Oman', *Country Detention Reports*, pp. 1–13, available at: [https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/gdp\\_oman\\_immigration\\_detention\\_report\\_jan\\_16.pdf](https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/gdp_oman_immigration_detention_report_jan_16.pdf),

(accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020).

Goh, E. and Lee, C. (2018), 'A workforce to be reckoned with: The emerging pivotal Generation Z hospitality workforce', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 73, pp. 20–28.

Golafshani, N. (2003), 'Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research', *The Qualitative Report*, Canadá, Vol. 8 No. 4, pp. 597–607.

Gold, R.L. and Saunders, C. (1983), 'Social Stigma of Occupations: The Lower Grade Worker in Service Organisations.', *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 2, p. 212.

Goldstein, K. (2002), 'Getting in the door: Sampling and completing elite interviews', *PS - Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 669–672.

Gong, Y. (2008), 'Managing cultural diversity in the hospitality industry'. UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones. 480.

González, A.L. (2018), 'Women's university attainment and labour force participation in Gulf Cooperation Council countries', *Global Women's Work: Perspectives on Gender and*

*Work in the Global Economy*, Routledge.

Gonzalez, G., Karoly, L.A. and Constant, L. (2008), *Facing Human Capital Challenges of the 21st Century: Education and Labor Market Initiatives in Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates*, Vol. 786, Rand Corporation.

González, M.J.C., Cortina, C. and Rodríguez, J. (2019), 'The role of gender stereotypes in hiring: A field experiment', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 187–204.

Gonzalez, M.M. (2016), 'The Coding Manual for Qualitative Research: A Review.', *Qualitative Report*, Vol. 21 No. 8, pp. 1546–1548.

Goodwin, J. (2011), 'Why we were surprised (again) by the Arab Spring', *Swiss Political Science Review*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd Oxford, UK, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 452–456.

Gorman, E.H. (2005), 'Gender stereotypes, same-gender preferences, and organizational variation in the hiring of women: Evidence from law firms', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 70 No. 4, pp. 702–728.

Gorvett, J. (2018), 'Omani youth see an uncertain future', *Asia Times*, available at: <https://asiatimes.com/2018/10/omani-youth-see-an-uncertain-future/> (accessed 29 March 2020).

Gowayed, H. (2019), 'Diverging by Gender: Syrian Refugees' Divisions of Labour and Formation of Human Capital in the United States', *Gender and Society*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 251–272.

Gracia, P., Vázquez-Quesada, L. and Van de Werfhorst, H.G. (2016), 'Ethnic penalties? The role of human capital and social origins in labour market outcomes of second-generation Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 69–87.

- Granovetter, M. (1985), 'Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness', *American Journal of Sociology*, University of Chicago Press, Vol. 91 No. 3, pp. 481–510.
- Gratton, B. (2007), 'Ecuadorians in the United States and Spain: History, gender and niche formation', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 581–599.
- Gray, D.E. (2014), *Doing Research in the Real World*, Third edit., London: SAGE Publications.
- Grayson, J.P. (2004), 'Social dynamics, university experiences, and graduates' job outcomes', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 25 No. 5, pp. 609–627.
- Greener, I. (2011), *Designing Social Research: A Guide for the Bewildered*, Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011, Los Angeles.
- Grimes, M.D. and Morris, J.M. (1997), *Caught in the Middle: Contradictions in the Lives of Sociologists from Working-Class Backgrounds*, Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Grinyer, A. (2002), 'The anonymity of research participants: assumptions, ethics and practicalities', *Social Research Update*, University of Surrey UK, Vol. 36 No. 1, p. 4.
- Grönlund, A. (2012), 'On-The-job training-A mechanism for segregation? examining the relationship between gender, occupation, and on-The-Job training Investments', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 408–420.
- Grönlund, A., Halldén, K. and Magnusson, C. (2017), 'A Scandinavian success story? Women's labour market outcomes in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 60 No. 2, pp. 97–119.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M. and Namey, E.E. (2011), *Applied Thematic Analysis*, sage publications.

- Gulf Business. (2018), ‘Oman to ban firms that don’t meet Omanisation targets from hiring foreign staff’, available at: <https://gulfbusiness.com/oman-to-ban-firms-that-dont-meet-omanisation-targets-hiring/> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Gupta, R. (2013), ‘India and the Gulf: Looking Beyond Energy, Islam and the Diaspora’, *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Vol. 4193.
- Gwiazda, A. (2011), ‘The Europeanization of flexicurity: The Lisbon strategy’s impact on employment policies in Italy and Poland’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 546–565.
- Haas, H. de, Czaika, M., Flahaux, M.L., Mahendra, E., Natter, K., Vezzoli, S. and Villares-Varela, M. (2018), ‘International migration: Trends, determinants and policy effects’, *IMIn Working Paper Series*, University of Southampton Institutional Repository, No. 142, pp. 1–59, available at: <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/417084/>, (Accessed on 20 Oct 2019).
- Hagan, J., Lowe, N. and Quingla, C. (2011), ‘Skills on the move: Rethinking the relationship between human capital and immigrant economic mobility’, *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 149–178.
- Hagan, J.M. and Thomas Wassink, J. (2020), ‘Return migration around the world: An integrated agenda for future research’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 46, pp. 533–552.
- Hage, J., Garnier, M.A. and Fuller, B. (1988), ‘The Active State, Investment in Human Capital, and Economic Growth: France 1825-1975’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53 No. 6, pp. 824–837.
- Haghighat, E. (2002), ‘Culture, development and female labour force participation: disaggregating different sectors’, *International Review of Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 343–362.

- Haghighat-Sordellini, E. (2009), 'Determinants of female labour force participation: a focus on Muslim countries<sup>1</sup>', *International Review of Sociology*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 103–125.
- Hainmueller, J. and Hopkins, D.J. (2014), 'Public Attitudes Toward Immigration', *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 225–249.
- Hakim, C. (1982), 'The Social Consequences of High Unemployment', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 433–467.
- Hakim, C. (2000), *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory*, OUP Oxford.
- Hall, M. and Farkas, G. (2008), 'Does human capital raise earnings for immigrants in the low-skill labour market?', *Demography*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 619–639.
- Hamberg, K., Johansson, E., Lindgren, G. and Westman, G. (1994), 'Scientific rigour in qualitative research—examples from a study of women's health in family practice', *Family Practice*, Oxford University Press, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 176–181.
- Hamilton, T.G., Easley, J.A. and Dixon, A.R. (2018), 'Black immigration, occupational niches, and earnings disparities between US-born and foreign-born blacks in the United States', *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 60–77.
- Hansen, H.T. (2005), 'Unemployment and marital dissolution: A panel data study of Norway', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 135–148.
- Hardie, J.H. (2015), 'Women's work? Predictors of young men's aspirations for entering traditionally female-dominated occupations', *Sex Roles*, Springer, Vol. 72 No. 7–8, pp. 349–362.
- Harrison, J.L. and Lloyd, S.E. (2013), 'New jobs, new workers, and new Inequalities: Explaining employers' roles in occupational segregation by nativity and race', *Social*

*Problems*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 281–301.

Hartmann, H. (1976), 'Capitalism, patriarchy, and job segregation by sex', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, University of Chicago Press, Vol. 1 No. 3, Part 2, pp. 137–169.

Harvey, W.S. (2011), 'Strategies for conducting elite interviews', *Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications Sage UK: London, England, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 431–441.

Harvie, K., Marshall-Mcaskey, J. and Johnston, L. (1998), 'Gender-Based Biases in Occupational Hiring Decisions 1', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Wiley Online Library, Vol. 28 No. 18, pp. 1698–1711.

Hasan, S. (2015), 'Workforce localization in the GCC countries: Policies, practices, and the labor-exporting countries responses', *Philippine Political Science Journal*, Routledge, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 147–166.

Hathaway, A.D., Sommers, R. and Mostaghim, A. (2020), 'Active Interview Tactics Revisited: A Multigenerational Perspective', *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 106–119.

Hawker, R.W. (2002), 'Imagining a Bedouin past: Stereotypes and cultural representation in the contemporary United Arab Emirates', *In a Conference at Beirut Institute for Media Arts (BIMA), Lebanese American University*, pp. 1–8.

He, Q. and Gerber, T.P. (2020), 'Origin-Country Culture, Migration Sequencing, and Female Employment: Variations among Immigrant Women in the United States', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 233–261.

Heikes, E.J. (1991), 'When Men Are the Minority: The Case of Men in Nursing', *Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 389–401.

- Herring, C. (2009), 'Does Diversity Pay?: Race, Gender, and the Business Case for Diversity', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74 No. 2, pp. 208–224.
- Herring, C. (2017), 'Is Diversity Still a Good Thing?', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 82 No. 4, pp. 868–877.
- Hertog, S. (2012), *A Comparative Assessment of Labor Market Nationalization Policies in the GCC, National Employment, Migration and Education in the GCC*, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1s474nj.5>.
- Hertog, S. (2014) Arab Gulf States: An Assessment of Nationalisation Policies. GLMM Research Paper No. 1/2014. Cambridge: European University Institute and Gulf Research Centre
- Hertog, S., (2019). The future of migrant work in the GCC: literature review and a research and policy agenda.
- Hira-Friesen, P. (2018), 'Immigrants and Precarious Work in Canada: Trends, 2006–2012', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Journal of International Migration and Integration, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 35–57.
- Hix, S. and Noury, A. (2007), 'Politics, not economic interests: Determinants of migration policies in the European Union', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 182–205.
- Hjalmarsson, R. and Lochner, L. (2012), 'The impact of education on crime: International evidence', *CESifo DICE Report*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 49-55.
- Ho, C. and Alcorso, C. (2004), 'Migrants and employment - Challenging the success story', *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 237–259.
- Hochman, A. (2019), 'Racialization: a defense of the concept', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 8, pp. 1245–1262.

- Hodges, M.J. and Budig, M.J. (2010), 'Who gets the daddy bonus? Organizational hegemonic masculinity and the impact of fatherhood on earnings', *Gender & Society*, Sage Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, Vol. 24 No. 6, pp. 717–745.
- Holbrow, H.J. and Nagayoshi, K. (2018), 'Economic Integration of Skilled Migrants in Japan: The Role of Employment Practices', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 458–486.
- Holden, L. and Biddle, J. (2017), "The Introduction of Human Capital Theory into Education Policy in the United States", *History of Political Economy*, Vol. 49 No. 4, pp. 537–574.
- Hollingsworth, R., Hanneman, R., Hage, J. and Ragin, C. (1996), 'The Effect of Human Capital and State Intervention on the Performance of Medical Systems', *Social Forces*, Vol. 75 No. 2, pp. 459–484.
- Holmes, C. (2019), 'Why do South Africans blame immigrants?', *The Washington Post*, available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/09/09/whats-behind-south-africas-xenophobic-violence-last-week/> (accessed 16 June 2020).
- Holmes, J. and Schnurr, S. (2006), 'Doing femininity" at work: More than just relational practice1', *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 31–51.
- Holston Okae, B. (2018), 'The Effect of Employee Turnover in the Hospitality Industry: Quantitative Correlational Study', *International Journal of Learning and Development*, Vol. 8 No. 1, p. 156.
- Hudson, K. (2007), 'The new labor market segmentation: Labor market dualism in the new economy', *Social Science Research*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 286–312.
- Hudson-Sharp, N. and Runge, J. (2017), 'International Trends in Insecure Work : a Report for the Trades Union Congress. National Institute of Economic and Social Research', May,

pp. 1–72.

Huffman, M.L. (2013), ‘Organizations, Managers, and Wage Inequality’, *Sex Roles*, Vol. 68 No. 3–4, pp. 216–222.

Huggins, C. (2014), *Arranging and Conducting Elite Interviews: Practical Considerations*, SAGE Publications, Ltd., 1 Oliver’s Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom, available at: <https://doi.org/10.4135/978144627305013514687>.

Hultin, M. and Szulkin, R. (2003), ‘Mechanisms of Inequality Unequal Access to Organizational Power and the Gender Wage Gap’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 143–159.

Human Rights Watch (2016a), ‘I Was Sold’ Abuse and Exploitation of Migrant Domestic Workers in Oman. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/13/i-was-sold/abuse-and-exploitation-migrant-domestic-workers-oman>, (Accessed 14 March 2020)

Human Rights Watch (2016b), Boxed In: Women and Saudi Arabia’s Male Guardianship System. available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/16/boxed/women-and-saudi-arabias-male-guardianship-system> (accessed 26 February 2020).

Hunter, A.A. and Leiper, J.M. (1993), ‘On formal education, skills and earnings: The role of educational certificates in earnings determination’, *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 21–42.

Huppatz, K. and Goodwin, S. (2013), ‘Masculinised jobs, feminised jobs and men’s “gender capital” experiences: Understanding occupational segregation in Australia’, *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49 No. 2–3, pp. 291–308.

Hussain, Z. (2014), ‘Kafala neither guarantees nor cares: guest workers in the Gulf’, *World Bank.Org*, available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/kafala->

- neither-guarantees-nor-cares-guest-workers-gulf-0 (accessed 23 February 2020).
- Hvidt, M. (2019), 'Exploring the Nexus between Highly-Skilled Migrants, the Kafala System, and Development in the UAE', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 75–91.
- Hyndman, J. (2012), 'The geopolitics of migration and mobility', *Geopolitics*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 243–255.
- Ibrahim, O.A., Devesh, S. and Ubaidullah, V. (2017), 'Implication of attitude of graduate students in Oman towards entrepreneurship: an empirical study', *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, Vol. 7 No. 8, pp. 1–17.
- ILO (2018), Labour migration. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/beirut/areasofwork/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm> (accessed 8 May 2019).
- ILO. (2003), 'The Omani labour law', available at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/67540/84139/F1719028671/OMN67540.pdf> (accessed 18 March 2021).
- ILO. (2017), *Employer-Migrant Worker Relationships in the Middle East: Exploring Scope for Internal Labour Market Mobility and Fair Migration*, Beirut, available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_552697.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_552697.pdf), (accessed 16 June 2020).
- ILO. (2018), 'The gender gap in employment: What's holding women back?', *InfoStories*, ILO, available at: <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/barriers-women#smarter-solutions> (accessed 30 January 2021).
- IMF. (2020), 'IMF Executive Board Concludes 2019 Article IV Consultation with Oman', *International Monetary Fund*, available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/07/03/pr19266-imf-executive-board-concludes-2019-article-iv-consultation-with-oman> (accessed 11 February 2020).

- Indrelid, T.D. (2018), 'Oman: Migration and the importance of state policies', *The Turban Times*, available at: <https://www.theturbantimes.com/2018/03/07/migration-in-oman/> (accessed 16 June 2020).
- Ingold, J. and Stuart, M. (2015), 'The Demand-Side of Active Labour Market Policies: A Regional Study of Employer Engagement in the Work Programme', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 443–462.
- Inside Arabia. (2018), 'Oman Invests in Tourism Sector to Diversify Oil-Based Economy', *Inside Arabia*, available at: <https://insidearabia.com/oman-invests-tourism-oil-economy/> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- IOM. (2004), *Arab Migration in a Globalized World*, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Organization for Migration, Geneva, Switzerland, available at: [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/arab\\_migration\\_globalized\\_world.pdf#page=117](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/arab_migration_globalized_world.pdf#page=117) (accessed 29 February 2020).
- Iosifides, T. (2018), 'Epistemological issues in qualitative migration research: Self-Reflexivity, objectivity and subjectivity', *Qualitative Research in European Migration Studies*, Springer, Cham, pp. 93–109.
- Iredale, R. (2001), 'The migration of professionals: theories and typologies', *International Migration*, Wiley Online Library, Vol. 39 No. 5, pp. 7–26.
- Iredale, R. (2005), 'Gender, immigration policies and accreditation: valuing the skills of professional women migrants', *Geoforum*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 155–166.
- Irgil, E. (2020), 'Broadening the positionality in migration studies: Assigned insider category', *Migration Studies*, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–15.
- Irvine, A., Drew, P. and Sainsbury, R. (2013), "'Am I not answering your questions properly?'"

- Clarification, adequacy and responsiveness in semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews’, *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 87–106.
- Islam, M.M., Dorvlo, A.S. and Al-Qasbi, A.M. (2013), ‘The Pattern of Female Nuptiality in Oman’, *Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 32–42.
- Jabeen, F., Friesen, H.L. and Ghoudi, K. (2018), ‘Quality of work life of Emirati women and its influence on job satisfaction and turnover intention’, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 352–370.
- Jacobs, S. (1999), ‘Trends in Women’s Career Patterns and in Gender Occupational Mobility in Britain’, *Gender, Work & Organization*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 32–46.
- Jafari, J. and Scott, N. (2014), ‘Muslim world and its tourisms’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 44 No.1, pp. 1–19.
- Jain, P.C. (2005), ‘Indian migration to the Gulf countries: Past and present’, *India Quarterly*, Vol. 61 No. 2, pp. 50–81.
- Jakimovski, J. (2018), ‘Unemployment as a complex and serious personal and social issue’, *Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Viewed*, Vol. 22 No. 0, pp. 73–79.
- James, E.A. and Slater, T. (2014), ‘Writing your Doctoral Dissertation or Thesis Faster: A Proven Map to Success’, SAGE Publications, Ltd, 55 City Road, London, available at:<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506374727>.
- Jarvis, J.A. (2020), ‘Lost in Translation: Obstacles to Converting Global Cultural Capital to Local Occupational Success’, *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 63 No. 2, pp. 228–248.
- Jendrissek, D. (2014), ‘Brain Drain and Brain Gain: The Global Competition to Attract High-skilled Migrants / The Cultural Politics of Talent Migration in East Asia’, *Journal of*

- Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 40 No. 12, pp. 2055–2057.
- Jenkins, J.C. (1977), ‘Push/pull in recent Mexican migration to the U.S.’, *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 11 No. 12, pp. 178–189.
- Johnson, J.H., Farrell, W.C. and Guinn, C. (1997), ‘Immigration reform and the browning of America: Tensions, conflicts and community instability in metropolitan Los Angeles’, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 1055–1095.
- Jonck, P. and Van Der Walt, F. (2015), ‘Graduate employability skills: Differences between the private and the public sector in South Africa’, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 345–352.
- Jones, F.L. and Kelley, J. (1984), ‘Decomposing differences between groups: A cautionary note on measuring discrimination’, *Sociological Methods & Research*, Sage publications, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 323–343.
- Jureidini, R. (2003), ‘Migrant workers and xenophobia in the Middle East’, *Racism and Public Policy*, Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, No. 2, pp. 48–71.
- Jureidini, R. (2010), ‘Trafficking and Contract Migrant Workers in the Middle East’, *International Migration*, Vol. 48 No. 4, pp. 142–163.
- Juroš, T.V. (2011), ‘Reporting on the issues of research rigour and ethics: The case of publications using qualitative methods in the Croatian social science journals’, *Revija Za Sociologiju*, Hrvatsko sociološko društvo, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 161–184.
- Kajackaite, A. and Sliwka, D. (2018), Prosocial Managers, Employee Motivation, and the Creation of Shareholder Value. *IZA Institute Discussion Paper Series*, IZA DP No. 11789, pp. 1–39.

- Kakande, Y. (2015), *Slave States: The Practice of Kafala in the Gulf Arab Region*, John Hunt.
- Kalev, A., Dobbin, F. and Kelly, E. (2006), 'Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 71 No. 4, pp. 589–617.
- Kalleberg, A.L. (2009), 'Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74 No. 1, pp. 1–22.
- Kalter, F. and Kogan, I. (2014), 'Migrant networks and labor market integration of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Germany', *Social Forces*, Vol. 92 No. 4, pp. 1435–1456.
- Kamrava, M. and Babar, Z. (2012), *Migrant Labor in the Persian Gulf*, Hurst.
- Kanas, A. and Steinmetz, S. (2020), 'Economic Outcomes of Immigrants with Different Migration Motives: The Role of Labour Market Policies', *European Sociological Review*, pp. 1–16.
- Kane, J.B., Harris, K.M., Morgan, S.P. and Guilkey, D.K. (2018), 'Pathways of Health and Human Capital from Adolescence into Young Adulthood', *Social Forces*, Vol. 96 No. 3, pp. 949–976.
- Kantor, J. and Weisberg, J. (2002), 'Ethical attitudes and ethical behaviour: Are managers role models?', *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 23 No. 8, pp. 687–703.
- Kapiszewski, A. (2006) "Arab versus Asian migrant workers in the GCC countries," United Nations expert group meeting on international migration and development in the Arab region. Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/pdf/expert/11/P02\\_Kapiszewski.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/events/pdf/expert/11/P02_Kapiszewski.pdf) (accessed on 22 June 2017).
- Karadsheh, M. and Al Zari, A.A. (2017), 'The role of gender in determining the trends of

- Omani society towards preferred and non-preferred professions for women', *Advance Research in Social Science and Humanities*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 1–24.
- Karoly, L.A. (2010), *The Role of Education in Preparing Graduates for the Labor Market in the GCC Countries*, *RAND Working Paper Series*, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1554716>.
- Karshenas, M. and Moghadam, V.M. (2009), 'Bringing social policy back in: A look at the Middle East and North Africa', *International Journal of Social Welfare*, Vol. 18 No. SUPPL. 1, pp. 52–61
- Kaufman, R.L. (1986), 'The Impact of Industrial and Occupational Structure on Black-White Employment Allocation', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 310–323.
- Kerr, P., Durrheim, K. and Dixon, J. (2019), 'Xenophobic Violence and Struggle Discourse in South Africa', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 54 No. 7, pp. 995–1011.
- Kerr, S. (2020), 'Regional conflict threat poses early test for Oman's new sultan', *Financial Times*, available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/9f64a51c-355f-11ea-a6d3-9a26f8c3cba4> (accessed 11 February 2020).
- Kessler, K. (2015), 'Conceptualizing Mosque Tourism: A central feature of Islamic and Religious Tourism', *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 1–23.
- Khalaf, 'Abd al-Hadī, AlShehabi, O. and Hanieh, A. (2015), *Transit States : Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf* / [Electronic Resource], London : Pluto Press, 2015, London.
- Khalaf, S. and Alkobaisi, S. (1999), 'Migrants' strategies of coping and patterns of accommodation in the oil-rich Gulf societies: Evidence from the UAE', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 271–298.

- Khalid, A. and Varghese, T. (2012), 'Youth's Entrepreneurial Attitudes in Oman. World Journal of Social Sciences', Vol. 26 No.7, pp.302–325.
- Khalid, F. (2010), 'Islam and the Environment - Ethics and Practice an Assessment', *Religion Compass*, Vol. 4 No. 11, pp. 707–716.
- Khan, A. and Harroff-Tavel, H. (2011), 'Reforming the Kafala: Challenges and opportunities in moving forward', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, Vol. 20 No. 3–4, pp. 293–313.
- Khan, M.F.R. and Krishnamurthy, J. (2016), 'Future of Oman Tourism Perception of the Students in Tourism Studies', *International Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Reviews*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 1–11.
- Khatab, N., Babar, Z., Ewers, M. and Shaath, M. (2020), 'Gender and mobility : Qatar ' s highly skilled female migrants in context', *Migration and Development*, Routledge, Vol. 00 No. 00, pp. 1–21.
- Khatab, N., Johnston, R. and Manley, D. (2018), 'Human capital, family structure and religiosity shaping British Muslim women's labour market participation', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 44 No. 9, pp. 1541–1559.
- Khraif, R.M., Salam, A.A. and Nair, P.S. (2019), 'Migration in Saudi Arabia: Present and Prospects', *India's Low-Skilled Migration to the Middle East*, Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore, pp. 99–123.
- Khumalo, T. (2019), 'South African government accused of xenophobia over its treatment of migrants, DW, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/south-african-government-accused-of-xenophobia-over-its-treatment-of-migrants/a-49997237> (accessed 16 June 2020).
- Kiersztyn, A. (2020), 'Who moves from fixed-term to open-ended contracts? Youth employment transitions in a segmented labour market', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 0 No. 0,

pp. 1–17.

Kiker, B.F. (1966), 'The historical roots of the concept of human capital', *Journal of Political Economy*, The University of Chicago Press, Vol. 74 No. 5, pp. 481–499.

King, B., McKercher, B. and Waryszak, R. (2003), 'A comparative study of hospitality and tourism graduates in Australia and Hong Kong', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 5 No. 6, pp. 409–420.

Kingston, P.W. (2006), 'How meritocratic is the United States?', *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 111–130.

Klaus, W. and Pachocka, M. (2019), 'Examining the Global North Migration Policies: A “Push Out – Push Back” Approach to Forced Migration', *International Migration*, Vol. 57 No. 5, pp. 280–293.

Kloc-Nowak, W., Jancewicz, B. and Pszczołkowska, D. (2020), 'Push, Pull and Brexit: Polish Migrants' Perceptions of Factors Discouraging them from Staying in the UK', *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 101–123.

Knight, J. (2015), 'Migrant Employment in the Ethnic Economy: Why Do Some Migrants Become Ethnic Entrepreneurs and Others Co-Ethnic Workers?', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 575–592.

Knoke, D. and Yang, S. (2003), 'Fattenin' Frogs for Snakes? Company Investments in Job Skills Training', *Research in the Sociology of Work*, Vol. 12, pp. 3–30.

Kogan, I. (2004), 'Last Hired, First Fired? The Unemployment Dynamics of Male Immigrants in Germany', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 445–461.

Kolbe, M. and Kayran, E.N. (2019), 'The limits of skill-selective immigration policies: Welfare states and the commodification of labour immigrants', *Journal of European Social Policy*,

Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 478–497.

Korstjens, I. and Moser, A. (2018), ‘Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing’, *European Journal of General Practice*, Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 120–124.

Kosyakova, Y. and Brücker, H. (2020), ‘Seeking Asylum in Germany: Do Human and Social Capital Determine the Outcome of Asylum Procedures?’, *European Sociological Review*, pp. 1–20.

Kovjanic, G. (2014), ‘Islamic tourism as a factor of the Middle East regional development’, *Turizam*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 33–43.

Koyame-Marsh, R.O. (2017), ‘The Dichotomy Between the Saudi Women’s Education and Economic Participation’, *The Journal of Developing Areas*, Vol. 51 No. 1, pp. 431–441.

Kramer, K.Z. and Kramer, A. (2016), ‘At-Home Father Families in the United States: Gender Ideology, Human Capital, and Unemployment’, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 78 No. 5, pp. 1315–1331.

Kremer, M. (2016), ‘Earned Citizenship: Labour Migrants’ Views on the Welfare State’, *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 395–415.

Kreyenfeld, M. (2010), ‘Uncertainties in Female Employment Careers and the Postponement of Parenthood in Germany’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 351–366.

Kreyenfeld, M. and Konietzka, D. (2002), ‘The performance of migrants in occupational labour markets’, *European Societies*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 53–78.

Kristen, C., Mühlau, P. and Schacht, D. (2016) ‘Language acquisition of recently arrived immigrants in England, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands’, *Ethnicities*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 180–212.

- Kucel, A. and Vilalta-Buffi, M. (2012), 'Graduate Labor Mismatch in Poland', *Polish Sociological Review*, Polish Sociological Association, Vol. 179 No. 3, pp. 413–429.
- Kurasaki, K.S. (2000), 'Intercoder Reliability for Validating Conclusions Drawn from Open-Ended Interview Data', *Field Methods*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 179–194.
- Kutty, S. (2018), 'Oman ranks high in social welfare', *Omanobserver*, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/oman-ranks-high-in-social-welfare/> (accessed 24 September 2020).
- Lacroix, J. and Vidal-Coso, E. (2018), 'Differences in Labor Supply by Birthplace and Family Composition in Switzerland: the Role of Human Capital and Household Income', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Journal of International Migration and Integration, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 659–684.
- Lafer, G. (1992), 'Minority unemployment, labor market segmentation, and the failure of job-training policy in New York City', *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, Sage Publications Sage CA: Thousand Oaks, CA, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 206–235.
- Laferrère, A. and McEntee, P. (1995), 'Self-employment and intergenerational transfers of physical and human capital: An empirical analysis of French data', *Economic and Social Review*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 43–54.
- Lancaster, K. (2017), 'Confidentiality, anonymity and power relations in elite interviewing: conducting qualitative policy research in a politicised domain', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Routledge, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 93–103.
- Lane, C. (1993), 'Gender and the Labour Market in Europe: Britain, Germany and France Compared', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 41 No. 2, pp. 274–301.
- Le Roux, C.S. (2017), 'Exploring rigour in autoethnographic research', *International Journal*

- of Social Research Methodology*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 195–207.
- Le, T. (2008), “‘Brain drain’ or ‘brain circulation’”: Evidence from OECD’s international migration and R&D spillovers’, *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 55 No. 5, pp. 618–636.
- Leicht, K.T. (2008), ‘Broken down by race and gender? sociological explanations of new sources of earnings inequality’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 237–255.
- Leontaridi, M. (1998), ‘Segmented Labour Markets: Theory and Evidence’, *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 103–109.
- Leschke, J. and Weiss, S. (2020), ‘With a Little Help from My Friends: Social-Network Job Search and Overqualification among Recent Intra-EU Migrants Moving from East to West’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 00 No. 0, pp. 1–20.
- Levels, M., van der Velden, R. and Di Stasio, V. (2014), ‘From school to fitting work: How education-to-job matching of European school leavers is related to educational system characteristics’, *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 57 No. 4, pp. 341–361.
- Levitt, P., DeWind, J. and Vertovec, S. (2003), ‘International Perspectives on Transnational Migration: An Introduction’, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 565–575.
- Li, P.S. (2004), ‘Social capital and economic outcomes for immigrants and ethnic minorities’, *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l’integration et de La Migration Internationale*, Springer, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 171–190.
- Liefbroer, A.C. and Corijn, M. (1999), ‘Who, what, where, and when? Specifying the impact of educational attainment and labour force participation on family formation’, *European Journal of Population*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 45–75.

- Liem, R. and Liem, J.H. (1988), 'Psychological Effects of Unemployment on Workers and Their Families', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 44 No. 4, pp. 87–105.
- Lietz, C.A. and Zayas, L.E. (2010), 'Evaluating Qualitative Research for Social Work Practitioners', *Advances in Social Work*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 188–202.
- Light, I. (2007), 'Women's economic niches and earnings inferiority: The view from the ethnic economy', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 541–557.
- Lindsay, C. and McQuaid, R.W. (2004), 'Avoiding the "McJobs": Unemployed job seekers and attitudes to service work', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 297–319.
- Lindsay, C., Mcquaid, R.W. and Dutton, M. (2007), 'New approaches to employability in the UK: Combining "human capital development" and "Work First" strategies?', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 539–560.
- Lips, H.M. (2013), 'The Gender Pay Gap: Challenging the Rationalizations. Perceived Equity, Discrimination, and the Limits of Human Capital Models', *Sex Roles*, Vol. 68 No. 3–4, pp. 169–185.
- Liu-Farrer, G. and Shire, K. (2020), 'Who are the fittest? The question of skills in national employment systems in an age of global labour mobility', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–18.
- Liu-Farrer, G., Yeoh, B.S. and Baas, M. (2020), 'Social construction of skill: an analytical approach toward the question of skill in cross-border labour mobilities', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–15.
- Liversage, A. (2009), 'Finding a path: Investigating the labour market trajectories of high-skilled immigrants in Denmark', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 203–226.

- Livingstone, D.W. (1990), 'Beyond human capital theory: The underemployment problem', *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 163–192.
- Longva, A.N. (1999), 'Keeping Migrant Workers in Check: The Kafala System in the Gulf', *Middle East Report*, Vol. 0 No. 211, pp. 20–22.
- Looney, R. (2004), 'Saudization: A Useful Tool in the Kingdom's Battle Against Unemployment?', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 13–33.
- Looney, R.E. (1990), 'Reducing dependence through investment in human capital: An assessment of Oman's development strategy', *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 65–75.
- Lorence, J. (1987), 'A Test of "Gender" and "Job" Models of Sex Differences in Job Involvement', *Social Forces*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 121–142.
- Lorence, J. (1991), 'Growth in Service Sector Employment and MSA Gender Earnings Inequality: 1970-1980', *Social Forces*, Vol. 69 No. 3, p. 763.
- Louër, L. (2008), 'The Political Impact of Labor Migration in Bahrain', *City & Society*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 32–53.
- Louër, L. (2015), 'The Arab Spring Effect on Labor Politics in Bahrain and Oman', *Arabian Humanities*, Vol. 0 No. 4, pp. 1–20.
- Loveman, M. (1999), 'Is "Race" Essential?', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 64 No. 6, pp. 891–898.
- Lu, Y. and Hou, F. (2020), 'Immigration System, Labor Market Structures, and Overeducation of High-Skilled Immigrants in the United States and Canada', *International Migration Review*, Vol. xx No. x, pp. 1–32.

- Lucas, S. (2009), *Theorizing Discrimination in an Era of Contested Prejudice: Discrimination in the United States*, Temple University Press.
- Lugosi, P., Janta, H. and Wilczek, B. (2016), 'Work(ing) dynamics of migrant networking among Poles employed in hospitality and food production', *Sociological Review*, Vol. 64 No. 4, pp. 894–911.
- Lulle, A., Janta, H. and Emilsson, H. (2019), 'Introduction to the Special Issue: European youth migration: human capital outcomes, skills and competences', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–15.
- Lundmark, L. (2005), 'Economic restructuring into tourism in the Swedish mountain range', *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 23–45.
- Lynch, K. and Moran, M. (2006), 'Markets, schools and the convertibility of economic capital: the complex dynamics of class choice', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 221–235.
- Lynch, T. (2014), 'Writing up your PhD (Qualitative Research) Independent Study version', *English Language Teaching Centre University of Edinburgh*, available at: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/writing\\_up\\_your\\_phd\\_qualitative\\_research.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/writing_up_your_phd_qualitative_research.pdf) (accessed 1 November 2020).
- Machlup, F. (1982), 'Issues in the theory of human capital: Education as investment', *The Pakistan Development Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 1–17.
- Mackieson, P., Shlonsky, A. and Connolly, M. (2019), 'Increasing rigor and reducing bias in qualitative research: A document analysis of parliamentary debates using applied thematic analysis', *Qualitative Social Work*, SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 965–980.

- Madill, A., Jordan, A. and Shirley, C. (2000), 'Objectivity and reliability in qualitative analysis: Realist, contextualist and radical constructionist epistemologies', *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 91 No. 1, pp. 1–20.
- Madziva, R., McGrath, S. and Thondhlana, J. (2016), 'Communicating Employability: the Role of Communicative Competence for Zimbabwean Highly Skilled Migrants in the UK', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 235–252.
- Magnusson, C. (2009), 'Gender, occupational prestige, and wages: A test of devaluation theory', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 87–101.
- Maher, C., Hadfield, M., Hutchings, M. and de Eyto, A. (2018), 'Ensuring Rigor in Qualitative Data Analysis: A Design Research Approach to Coding Combining NVivo With Traditional Material Methods', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 1–13.
- Mahroum, S. (2001), 'Europe and the Immigration of Highly Skilled Labour', *International Migration*, Vol. 39 No. 5, pp. 27–43.
- Mailand, M. (2008), 'The uneven impact of the European Employment Strategy on member states' employment policies: a comparative analysis', *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 353–365.
- Majlis Shura. (2020), 'About the Majlis', available at: <https://www.shura.om/About-Us/About-the-Majlis> (accessed 11 June 2020).
- Malecki, E.J. and Ewers, M.C. (2007), 'Labor migration to world cities: with a research agenda for the Arab Gulf', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 467–484.
- Malit, F.T. and Naufal, G. (2017), *Labour Migration, Skills Development and the Future of Work in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries, Working Paper*.
- Malterud, K. (2001), 'Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines', *Qualitative*

*Research Series*, Vol. 358 No. panel 2, pp. 483–488.

Mann, L. (2014), 'Wasta! The long-term implications of education expansion and economic liberalisation on politics in Sudan', *Review of African Political Economy*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 41 No. 142, pp. 561–578.

Manoharan, A. and Singal, M. (2017), 'A systematic literature review of research on diversity and diversity management in the hospitality literature', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 66, pp. 77–91.

Marfouk, A. (2019), 'I'm neither racist nor xenophobic, but: dissecting European attitudes towards a ban on Muslims' immigration', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 10, pp. 1747–1765.

Marginson, S. (2015), 'Rethinking education, work and 'employability' Foundational problems of human capital theory', *Keynote Address to Society for Research in Higher Education Conference*, Vol. 9.

Marginson, S. (2019), 'Limitations of human capital theory', *Studies in Higher Education*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 287–301.

Marimuthu, M., Arokiasamy, L. and Ismail, M. (2009), 'Human Capital Development and Its Impact on Firm Performance: Evidence from Developmental Economics', *The Journal of International Social Research*, Vol. 2 No. 8, pp. 265–272.

Marshall, T., Mottier, E.M. and Lewis, R.A. (2015), 'Motivational Factors And The Hospitality Industry: A Case Study Examining The Effects Of Changes In The Working Environment', *Journal of Business Case Studies (JBACS)*, Vol. 11 No. 3, p. 123–132.

Martin, P.L. and Malit, F. (2017), 'A new era for labour migration in the GCC?', *Migration Letters*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 113–126.

- Mason, G., Williams, G. and Cranmer, S. (2009), 'Employability skills initiatives in higher education: what effects do they have on graduate labour market outcomes?', *Education Economics*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 1–30.
- Mason, J. (2002), *Qualitative researching*, second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, London.
- Mason, J. (2018), *Qualitative Researching*, Third edition., Los Angeles : SAGE.
- Mason-Bish, H. (2019), 'The elite delusion: reflexivity, identity and positionality in qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 263–276.
- Massey, D.S. and Sánchez, M. (2010), *Brokered Boundaries: Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times*, Russell Sage Foundation.
- Massey, D.S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A. and Taylor, J.E. (1993), 'Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 431-466
- Mastekaasa, A. (1992), 'Organizational Contexts and Individual Behaviour: Potential and Limitations of the Norwegian Study of Organizations', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 141–150.
- Mata, F. (2019), 'Human Capital Attainments of Refugee and Non Refugee Intake Class Workers in Canada: An Analysis of Ethnic Cross-Classifications', *Conference Proceedings. Canadian Sociological Association. Vancouver, British Columbia*.
- Mathai, K., Duenwald, C. and Guscina, A. (2020), 'Social Spending for Inclusive Growth in the Middle East and Central Asia', *International Monetary Fund*, available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Departmental-Papers-Policy-Papers/Issues/2020/09/25/Social-Spending-for-Inclusive-Growth-in-the-Middle-East->

and-Central-Asia-49669 (accessed 1 October 2020).

- Matherly, L.L. and Hodgson, S. (2014), 'Implementing Employment Quotas to Develop Human Resource Capital : A Comparison of Oman and the UAE', *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*, Vol. 2 No. 2307, pp. 75–90.
- Mauthner, N.S. and Doucet, A. (2003), 'Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis', *Sociology*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 413–431.
- Maxwell, J.A (2013), *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach: 41 (Applied Social Research Methods)*, SAGE, Los Angeles, California.
- May, T. (2001), *Social Research : Issues, Methods and Process*, 3rd ed., Buckingham : Open University Press, 2001, Buckingham.
- Mayer, G., Collins, B. and Bradley, D.H. (2013), 'The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): An overview', *Washington, DC, Congressional Research Service*, pp. 1–22.
- McCarthy, L.P., Imboden, R., Shdaimah, C.S. and Forrester, P. (2020), "'Ethics Are Messy": Supervision as a Tool to Help Social Workers Manage Ethical Challenges', *Ethics and Social Welfare*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 118–134.
- McDonald, S. (2011), 'What You Know or Who You Know? Occupation-specific work experience and job matching through social networks', *Social Science Research*, Elsevier Inc., Vol. 40 No. 6, pp. 1664–1675.
- McDowell, L., Batnitzky, A. and Dyer, S. (2009), 'Division, Segmentation, and Interpellation: The Embodied Labors of Migrant Workers in a Greater London Hotel', *Economic Geography*, Vol. 83 No. 1, pp. 1–25.
- McGarry, O. (2016), 'Repositioning the research encounter: exploring power dynamics and positionality in youth research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*,

Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 339–354.

McGinnity, F. and Lunn, P.D. (2011), ‘Measuring discrimination facing ethnic minority job applicants: An Irish experiment’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 693–708.

McManus, P.A. (2001), ‘Women’s Participation in Self-Employment in Western Industrialized Nations’, *International Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 70–97.

McQuaid, R.W. and Lindsay, C. (2005), ‘The concept of employability’, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 2, pp. 197–219.

McTier, A. and McGregor, A. (2018), ‘Influence of Work–Welfare Cycling and Labour Market Segmentation on Employment Histories of Young Long-Term Unemployed’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 20–37.

Mehta, S.R. (2017), ‘Contesting victim narratives: Indian women domestic workers in Oman’, *Migration and Development*, Routledge, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 395–411.

Mennino, S.F., Rubin, B.A. and Brayfield, A. (2005), ‘Home-to-job and job-to-home spillover: The impact of company policies and workplace culture’, *Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 107–135.

Mesch, G.S. (2003), ‘Language Proficiency among New Immigrants: The Role of Human Capital and Societal Conditions’, *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 41–58.

Metcalfe, B.D. and Mutlaq, L. (2011), ‘Women, leadership and development: reappraising the value of the feminine in leadership theorizing in the Middle East’, *Leadership Development in the Middle East*, Edward Elgar Cheltenham, pp. 328–370.

Mgobozi, I. (2004), ‘Human Capital and Credentialism: The Sociological Explanation of Racial Inequalities in South Africa’, *Current Sociology*, Vol. 52 No. 5, pp. 775–783.

- Middle East Eye. (2019), 'Omani government promises to address unemployment after nationwide protests', available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/omani-government-promises-address-unemployment-after-nationwide-protests> (accessed 29 March 2020).
- Middle East News, O. (2020), 'Omani sultan approves 2020 budget with deficit of \$6.5bn', *Middle East Monitor*, available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200104-omani-sultan-approves-2020-budget-with-deficit-of-6-5bn/> (accessed 11 February 2020).
- Midgley, J. and Tang, K. (2001), 'Introduction: social policy, economic growth and developmental welfare', *International Journal of Social Welfare*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 244–252.
- Midtbøen, A.H. (2015), "The context of employment discrimination: interpreting the findings of a field experiment", *The British Journal of Sociology*, Wiley Online Library, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 193–214.
- Midtbøen, A.H. and Nadim, M. (2019), 'Ethnic niche formation at the top? Second-generation immigrants in Norwegian high-status occupations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 42 No. 16, pp. 177–195.
- Migration Policy Institute. (2019), 'United Arab Emirates', Migrationpolicy.Org, available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/country-resource/united-arab-emirates> (accessed 5 July 2020).
- Mikecz, R. (2012), 'Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues', *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 18 No. 6, pp. 482–493.
- Miller, A. (2014), 'Are Women's Roles Changing in Oman?', *The Student Researcher: A Phi Alpha Theta*, available at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/788e/7a75366f6f23171fb8b64c3be2647fbce57b.pdf>

(accessed 18 February 2020).

- Miller, K., Kyriazi, T. and Paris, C.M. (2017), 'Arab women employment in the UAE: exploring opportunities, motivations and challenges', *International Journal of Sustainable Society*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 20–40.
- Miller, R.L. (2006), 'Lyn Richards (2005). Handling qualitative data: a practical guide', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 7, pp. 1–7.
- Mincer, J. (1958), 'Investment in Human Capital and Personal Income Distribution', *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 66 No. 4, pp. 281–302.
- Ministry Of Economy – Oman. (2021), 'The National Program for Bracing the Economic Diversity (TANFEEDH)', *Ministry Of Economy*, available at: <https://www.economy.gov.om/en/Page.aspx?I=37> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Ministry of Finance – Oman. (2020), 'Oman Budget 2020', *Ministry of Finance, Muscat, Oman*, available at: [https://www.mof.gov.om/Portals/1/documents/Financial-reports/The-state-budget/2020/2020\(Eng\).pdf](https://www.mof.gov.om/Portals/1/documents/Financial-reports/The-state-budget/2020/2020(Eng).pdf) (accessed 2 October 2020).
- Ministry of Manpower – Oman, M.C. (2020), Annual reports (2018, 2017 and 2016)', *Ministry of Manpower Oman, Media Center*, available at: <https://www.manpower.gov.om/mediacenter?tab=7> (accessed 28 January 2020).
- Mintz, B. and Krymkowski, D.H. (2010), 'The Intersection of Race/Ethnicity and Gender in Occupational Segregation', *International Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 31–58.
- Mirza, C. and Karolak, M. (2019), 'GCC Labor Market, Education and Generation Y Females : A Match or Mismatch ?', *International Women's Studies*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 166–181.
- Moen, P., Kelly, E.L., Fan, W., Lee, S.R., Almeida, D., Kossek, E.E. and Buxton, O.M. (2016), 'Does a Flexibility/Support Organizational Initiative Improve High-Tech Employees'

- Well-Being? Evidence from the Work, Family, and Health Network’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 81 No. 1, pp. 134–164.
- Moghadam, V.M. (2004), ‘Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East’, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 137–162.
- Mohajan, H.K. (2018), ‘Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects’, *Journal of Economic Development*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 23–48.
- Mok, T.M. and Platt, L. (2020), ‘All look the same? Diversity of labour market outcomes of Chinese ethnic group populations in the UK’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 87–107.
- Momani, B. (2016), Equality and the Economy: Why the Arab World Should Employ More Women, Brookings Doha Center, available at: [https://www.think-asia.org/bitstream/handle/11540/7523/bdc\\_20161207\\_equality\\_in\\_me\\_en.pdf?sequence=1](https://www.think-asia.org/bitstream/handle/11540/7523/bdc_20161207_equality_in_me_en.pdf?sequence=1), (accessed 14 March 2020).
- Mooi-Reci, I. and Ganzeboom, H.B. (2015), ‘Unemployment scarring by gender: Human capital depreciation or stigmatization? Longitudinal evidence from the Netherlands, 1980–2000’, *Social Science Research*, Vol. 52, pp. 642–658.
- Morakabati, Y. (2011), ‘Deterrents to tourism development in Iran’, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 103–123.
- Morgan, Z. (2018), ‘Why are our professional kitchens still male dominated?’, *BBC News*, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-45486646> (accessed 14 July 2020).
- Morse, J.M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K. and Spiers, J. (2002), ‘Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research’, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp.

13–22.

Mruck, K. and Breuer, F. (2003), Subjectivity and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research - The FQS, Issues, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 4 No. 2, Art. 23, pp. 1-13.

Muffett, T. (2010), 'Graduates struggling to find jobs', *BBC News*, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/education-10910810> (accessed 31 August 2020).

Muller, Q. and Castelier, S. (2019), 'Oman's nationalisation of tourism sector creates more job opportunities for youth - The National', *N World*, available at: <https://www.thenational.ae/world/gcc/oman-s-nationalisation-of-tourism-sector-creates-more-job-opportunities-for-youth-1.810308> (accessed 5 July 2020).

Murray, J.Y. and Zhang-Zhang, Y. (2018), 'Insights on women's labour participation in Gulf Cooperation Council countries', *Business Horizons*, Vol. 61 No. 5, pp. 711–720.

Musawah. (2017), *Thematic Report on Article 16, Muslim Family Law and Muslim Women's Rights in Oman, Musawah for Equality in the Family - Geneva, Switzerland*, available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared Documents/OMN/INT\\_CEDAW\\_NGO\\_OMN\\_29224\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/SharedDocuments/OMN/INT_CEDAW_NGO_OMN_29224_E.pdf) (accessed 7 September 2020)

Muscat Daily. (2021), 'Ministry looks to speed up Omanisation in 4-5 star hotels', available at: <https://muscatdaily.com/Oman/389395/Ministry-looks-to-speed-up-Omanisation-in-4-5-star-hotels-> (accessed 30 March 2021).

Nadler, J.T. and Kufahl, K.M. (2014), 'Marital status, gender, and sexual orientation: Implications for employment hiring decisions.', *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 270–278.

Nair, V. (2019), 'Nearly 31% Omanisation in the hotel industry', *ZAWYA MENA Edition*,

- available at:  
[https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/Nearly\\_31\\_Omanisation\\_in\\_the\\_hotel\\_industry-SNG\\_162300949/](https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/Nearly_31_Omanisation_in_the_hotel_industry-SNG_162300949/) (accessed 4 July 2020).
- Nazki, A. (2018), 'Religion and Tourism : Role of religion in mitigation of negative impacts of tourism', *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 309–312.
- NCSI, (2018), 'Statistical Year Book', *National Centre for Statistics and Information*, No. 46, p. 1-431, available at:  
[https://www.ncsi.gov.om/Elibrary/LibraryContentDoc/bar\\_Statistical%20Year%20Book%202018\\_a8b32d59-cdc9-4987-ba29-1e7ce78d5cca.pdf](https://www.ncsi.gov.om/Elibrary/LibraryContentDoc/bar_Statistical%20Year%20Book%202018_a8b32d59-cdc9-4987-ba29-1e7ce78d5cca.pdf), (accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2020).
- NCSI. (2015), *Population Projections in the Sultanate of Oman 2015 - 2040*, Oman, Muscat, available at: [https://ncsi.gov.om/Elibrary/LibraryContentDoc/ben\\_population\\_projections\\_In\\_Sultanate\\_of\\_Oman\\_fa17fe2c-34fe-4d6b-93fd-1f7746e7b23e.pdf](https://ncsi.gov.om/Elibrary/LibraryContentDoc/ben_population_projections_In_Sultanate_of_Oman_fa17fe2c-34fe-4d6b-93fd-1f7746e7b23e.pdf) (accessed 25 May 2020).
- NCSI. (2020), 'National Center for Statistics and Information PORTAL', available at: <https://www.ncsi.gov.om/pages/ncsi.aspx> (accessed 25 May 2020).
- NCSI. (2021), 'Statistical Year Book 2021: Issue 49', *National Center for Statistics and Information, Oman*.
- Nee, V., Sanders, J.M. and Sernau, S. (1994), 'Job Transitions in an Immigrant Metropolis: Ethnic Boundaries and the Mixed Economy', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59 No. 6, pp. 849–872.
- Negrey, C. (1993), *Gender, Time, and Reduced Work*, SUNY Press.

- Nerdrum, L. and Erikson, T. (2001), "Intellectual capital: a human capital perspective", *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 127–135.
- Netherlandsworldwide.nl. (2017), 'Oman's economic diversification, the National Program for Enhancing Economic Diversification (Tanfeedh) - Tanfeedh Handbook', available at: <https://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl/documents/publications/2017/08/13/tanfeedh-handbook> (accessed 18 March 2021).
- Newsome, Y.D. and Dodoo, F.N.-A. (2002), 'Reversal of fortune: Explaining the decline in Black women's earnings', *Gender & Society*, Sage Publications Thousand Oaks, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 442–464.
- Ngo, H.-Y. (1992), 'Employment status of married women in Hong Kong. Sociological Perspectives', *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 475–488.
- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. and Moules, N.J. (2017), 'Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 1–13.
- O'Connor, C. and Joffe, H. (2020), 'Intercoder Reliability in Qualitative Research: Debates and Practical Guidelines', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 19, pp. 1–13.
- O'Neill, J. (1990), 'The role of human capital in earnings differences between black and white men', *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 25–45.
- OCHR Oman. (2018), 'Mounting problems of unemployment and salary stagnation in Oman', *The Omani Centre for Human Rights*, available at: <https://ochroman.org/eng/2018/08/umemployed/> (accessed 29 March 2020).
- Ochsenfeld, F. (2014), 'Why Do Women's Fields of Study Pay Less? A Test of Devaluation,

- Human Capital, and Gender Role Theory’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 536–548.
- OECD. (2019), ‘Public social spending is high in many OECD countries’, *Social Expenditure Update*, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/social/soc/OECD2019-Social-Expenditure-Update.pdf> (accessed 1 October 2020).
- Oesch, D. and Lipps, O. (2013), ‘Does Unemployment Hurt Less if There is More of it Around? A Panel Analysis of Life Satisfaction in Germany and Switzerland’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 29 No. 5, pp. 955–967.
- Offenhauer, P. and Buchalter, A.R. (2005), ‘Women in Islamic societies: a selected review of social scientific literature’, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress Washington, DC.
- Okay-Somerville, B. and Scholarios, D. (2017), “Position, possession or process? Understanding objective and subjective employability during university-to-work transitions”, *Studies in Higher Education*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 42 No. 7, pp. 1275–1291.
- Olmedo, E. (2015), *Identity at Work: Ethnicity, Food & Power in Malaysian Hospitality Industry*, Springer.
- Olson, J.E. (2013), ‘Human Capital Models and the Gender Pay Gap’, *Sex Roles*, Vol. 68 No. 3–4, pp. 186–197.
- Olsthoorn, M. (2016), ‘Institution-driven inequalities in the risk of temporary employment: Job or skill based? The relative deregulation of temporary employment and its relation to inequalities in the risk of temporary employment’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 517–531.
- Oltmann, S. (2016), ‘Qualitative interviews: A methodological discussion of the interviewer

and respondent contexts’, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 17 No. 2, pp. 1–16.

Oman Daily Observer. (2020), ‘Investment in Oman’s human capital pays off’, *ZAWYA MENA Edition*, available at: [https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/Investment\\_in\\_Omans\\_human\\_capital\\_pays\\_off-SNG\\_164383699/](https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/Investment_in_Omans_human_capital_pays_off-SNG_164383699/) (accessed 25 December 2020).

Oman Observer. (2017), ‘For jobs, follow 2 agencies on social media’, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/jobs-follow-2-agencies-social-media/> (accessed 18 July 2020).

Oman Observer. (2018), ‘93.5 per cent staff in banks are Omanis’, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/93-5-per-cent-staff-in-banks-are-omanis/> (accessed 20 January 2021).

Oman Observer. (2019), ‘Final results of Shura elections declared’, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/final-results-of-shura-elections-declared/> (accessed 24 February 2020).

Oman Observer. (2020), ‘Move to speed up Omanisation in health sector’, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/move-to-speed-up-omanisation-in-health-sector/> (accessed 30 March 2021).

Oman Vision 2040. (2020), ‘Oman Vision 2040, themes’, available at: <https://www.2040.om/en/oman-vision-2040/themes/> (accessed 27 December 2020).

Ortiz, L. and Rodriguez-Menés, J. (2016), ‘The positional value of education and its effect on general and technical fields of education: Educational expansion and occupational returns to education in Spain’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 216–237.

- Owtram, F. and Hayek, M. (2020), 'Oman in the COVID-19 Pandemic: People, Policy and Economic Impact | Middle East Centre', *LSE's Middle East Centre Blog*, available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2020/07/23/oman-in-the-covid-19-pandemic-people-policy-and-economic-impact/> (accessed 21 September 2020).
- Păcurariu, G. (2019), 'The Integration of Higher Education Graduates on the Labor Market', *European Review Of Applied Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 19, pp. 23–32.
- Paechter, C. (2006), 'Masculine femininities/feminine masculinities: Power, identities and gender', *Gender and Education*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 253–263.
- Pager, D. and Quillian, L. (2005), 'Walking the Talk? What Employers Say Versus What They Do', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 70 No. 3, pp. 355–380.
- Pager, D. and Shepherd, H. (2008), 'The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets', *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 181–209.
- Paju, E., Näre, L., Haikkola, L. and Krivonos, D. (2020), 'Human capitalisation in activation: Investing in the bodies, selves and skills of unemployed youth in Finland', *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 7–28.
- Palik, J. (2013), 'The Challenges of Dual-Societies: The Interaction of Workforce Nationalisation and National Identity Construction through the Comparative Case Studies of Saudisation and Emiratisation. Migration to the Gulf: Policies in Sending and Receiving Countries', *Gulf Research Centre Cambridge*, Vol. 53 No. 9, pp. 105–125.
- Pande, A. (2013), 'The Paper that you Have in Your Hand is My Freedom': Migrant Domestic Work and the Sponsorship (Kafala) System in Lebanon', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 47 No. 2, pp. 414–441.
- Pandey, S. and Kim, J.H. (2008), 'Path to poverty alleviation: Marriage or postsecondary

- education?’, *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 166–184.
- Pang, J.M. (2010), ‘Perceptions of the tourism and hospitality industry by Singapore polytechnic hospitality students’, *An Exploratory Study*, pp. 1–53.
- Parsons, C.R., Rojon, S., Rose, L. and Samanani, F. (2018), ‘High skilled migration through the lens of policy’, *Migration Studies*, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–28.
- Pasura, D. (2013), ‘Modes of incorporation and transnational Zimbabwean migration to Britain’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 199–218.
- Patterson, L., Varadarajan, D.S. and Saji Salim, B. (2020), ‘Women in STEM/SET: gender gap research review of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – a meta-analysis’, *Gender in Management*, pp. 1–31.
- Patzina, A. and Wydra-Somaggio, G. (2020), ‘Early Careers of Dropouts from Vocational Training: Signals, Human Capital Formation, and Training Firms’, *European Sociological Review*, pp. 1–19.
- Paulsen, M.B. (2001), ‘The economics of human capital and investment in higher education’, *The Finance of Higher Education: Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice*, pp. 55–94.
- Payne, G. and Williams, M. (2005), ‘Generalization in Qualitative Research’, *Sociology*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 295–314.
- Pechurina, A. (2014), “Positionality and ethics in the qualitative research of migrants’ homes”, *Sociological Research Online*, SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 111–120.
- Pellegrino, A. (2001), ‘Trends in Latin American Skilled Migration: “Brain Drain” or “Brain Exchange”?’’, *International Migration*, Vol. 39 No. 5, pp. 111–132.

- Perales, F. (2013), 'Occupational sex-segregation, specialized human capital and wages: evidence from Britain', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 600–620.
- Perales, F.P. (2010), 'The Impact of Occupational Sex-Segregation on Wages: Evidence from Britain1', *Essex Graduate Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 10, pp. 35–53.
- Peters, F., Vink, M. and Schmeets, H. (2018), 'Anticipating the citizenship premium: before and after effects of immigrant naturalisation on employment', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 44 No. 7, pp. 1051–1080.
- Petersen, T., Snartland, V., Becken, L.-E. and Olsen, K.M. (1997), 'Within-Job Wage Discrimination and the Gender Wage Gap: The Case of Norway', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 199–213.
- Pew Research Center. (2016), 'Economic growth attracts migrants to Persian Gulf', available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/10/18/economic-growth-attracts-migrants-to-persian-gulf/> (accessed 23 September 2020).
- Phillimore, J. (2015), *Migration and Social Policy*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2015, Cheltenham.
- Phillips, J. and Land, K.C. (2012), 'The link between unemployment and crime rate fluctuations: An analysis at the county, state, and national levels', *Social Science Research*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 681–694.
- Phillips, P.P. and Phillips, J.J. (2019), 'The state of human capital analytics in developing countries: a focus on the Middle East', *Strategic HR Review*, Vol. 18 No. 5, pp. 190–198.
- Phillips, R., Benoit, C., Hallgrimsdottir, H. and Vallance, K. (2012), 'Courtesy stigma: a hidden health concern among front-line service providers to sex workers', *Sociology of Health & Illness*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 681–696.

- Phillipson, C., Vickerstaff, S. and Lain, D. (2016), 'Achieving fuller working lives: labour market and policy issues in the United Kingdom', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 51 No. 2, pp. 187–203.
- Pichler, F. and Wallace, C. (2009), 'What are the Reasons for Differences in Job Satisfaction across Europe? Individual, Compositional, and Institutional Explanations', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 25 No. 5, pp. 535–549.
- Pillalamarri, A. (2016), 'India and the Gulf States Share a Long History', *The Diplomat*, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/06/india-and-the-gulf-states-share-a-long-history/> (accessed 27 March 2020).
- Piore, M.J. (1979), *Birds of Passage : Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies*, Cambridge etc. : Cambridge University Press.
- Plecher, H. (2020), '• Oman - youth unemployment rate 1999-2019', *Statista*, available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/812896/youth-unemployment-rate-in-oman/> (accessed 16 October 2020).
- Pleck, J.H. (1975), 'Masculinity—Femininity', *Sex Roles*, Springer, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 161–178.
- Plewis, I. and Mason, P. (2005), 'What Works and Why: Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in Large-scale Evaluations', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 185–194.
- Polachek, S. (1995), 'Human capital and the gender earnings gap', *Out of the Margin. Feminist Perspectives on Economics*, London: Routledge, pp. 61–79.
- Polachek, S.W. (1981), 'Occupational self-selection: A human capital approach to sex differences in occupational structure', *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, The MIT Press, Vol. 63 No. 1, pp. 60–69.

- Polachek, S.W. (2004), *How the Life-Cycle Human-Capital Model Explains Why the Gender Wage Gap Narrowed, The Declining Significance of Gender?* State University of New York, Binghamton, NY.
- Polavieja, J.G. (2003), ‘Temporary Contracts and Labour Market Segmentation in Spain: An Employment-Rent Approach’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp. 501-517.
- Ponterotto, J.G. (2006), ‘Brief note on the origins , evolution , and meaning of the qualitative research concept “ thick description ”’, *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 538–549.
- Popkova, E. (2020), ‘The social management of human capital: basic principles and methodological approaches’, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, No. 18, pp. 1–13.
- Portes, A. and Borocz, J. (1989), ‘Contemporary immigration: theoretical perspectives on its determinants and modes of incorporation’, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 606–630.
- Portes, A. and Zhou, M. (1992), ‘Gaining the upper hand: Economic mobility among immigrant and domestic minorities’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 491–522.
- Portes, J. (2020), ‘Immigration between the referendum and Brexit’, *UK in a Changing Europe*, available at: <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/long-read/immigration-between-the-referendum-and-brexit/> (accessed 19 December 2020).
- Prabhu, C. (2018), ‘Oman to pull in \$50bn in tourism investment by 2040’, *Omanobserver*, available at: <https://www.omanobserver.om/oman-to-pull-in-50bn-in-tourism-investment-by-2040/> (accessed 14 July 2020).

- Pradhan, S. (2010), “India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): An economic and political perspective”, *Strategic Analysis*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 93–103.
- Pratt, G. and Hanson, S. (1991), ‘Time, space, and the occupational segregation of women: a critique of human capital theory’, *Geoforum*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 149–157.
- Protsch, P. and Solga, H. (2014), ‘How Employers Use Signals of Cognitive and Noncognitive Skills at Labour Market Entry: Insights from Field Experiments’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 31 No. 5, pp. 521–532.
- Public Authority for Social Insurance – Oman. (2020), ‘Insurance systems’, available at: <https://www.pasi.gov.om/en/Pages/InsuranceSystems/CitizensWorkingInsideOman.aspx> (accessed 4 June 2020).
- Pulla, V. and Carter, E. (2018), ‘Employing interpretivism in social work research’, *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 9–14.
- Pulse of Oman. (2018), ‘Gender debate: Are women equal to men in Oman?’, *Y Magazine*, available at: <https://www.y-oman.com/2018/03/gender-equality-are-women-equal-to-men-in-oman/> (accessed 2 February 2020).
- Purcell, K. (1997), ‘Women’s employment in UK tourism: Gender roles and labour markets’, *Gender, Work and Tourism*, Routledge London, pp. 35–59.
- Qing, S. (2020), ‘Gender role attitudes and male-female income differences in China’, *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, Vol. 7 No. 12, pp. 1–23.
- Quadlin, N. (2018), ‘The Mark of a Woman’s Record: Gender and Academic Performance in Hiring’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 83 No. 2, pp. 331–360.
- Quillian, L. (2006), ‘New Approaches to Understanding Racial Prejudice and Discrimination’,

- Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 299–328.
- Quillian, L., Heath, A., Pager, D., Midtbøen, A., Fleischmann, F. and Hexel, O. (2019), ‘Do Some Countries Discriminate More than Others? Evidence from 97 Field Experiments of Racial Discrimination in Hiring’, *Sociological Science*, Vol. 6, pp. 467–496.
- Quinlan, K.M. and Renninger, K.A. (2022), “Rethinking employability: how students build on interest in a subject to plan a career”, *Higher Education*, pp. 1–21.
- Quinlan, M. (2016), *Precarity and Workplace Well-Being: A General Review*, Routledge, pp. 29-44.
- Radonjić, O. and Bobić, M. (2020), ‘Brain Drain Losses – A Case Study of Serbia’, *International Migration*, available at:<https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12710>.
- Rahman, M.M. (2011), ‘Emigration and the Family Economy: Bangladeshi Labor Migration to Saudi Arabia’, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3–4, pp. 389–411.
- Rahman, M.M. (2018), ‘Beyond labour migration: The making of migrant enterprises in Saudi Arabia’, *International Sociology*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 86–106.
- Rajendran, D., Ng, E.S., Sears, G. and Ayub, N. (2020), ‘Determinants of Migrant Career Success: A Study of Recent Skilled Migrants in Australia’, *International Migration*, Vol. 58 No. 2, pp. 30–51.
- Ram, M., Abbas, T., Sanghera, B., Barlow, G. and Jones, T. (2001), ‘‘Apprentice Entrepreneurs’? Ethnic Minority Workers in the Independent Restaurant Sector’, *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 353–372.
- Ranasinghe, K.P. (2015), *Migrant Identities and Culture: The Second-Generation Sri Lankan Experience in the Sultanate of Oman. PhD Thesis.*, available at: <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/6001/1/2013ranasinghephd.pdf>, (accessed on 5 March 2020).

- Randeree, K. (2012) “Workforce nationalization in the Gulf Cooperation Council states,” Center for International and Regional Studies Occasional Paper No. 9.
- Rapley, T. (2014), ‘Sampling strategies in qualitative research’, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 49–63.
- Ratcliffe, R. (2018), ‘Qatar law change hailed as milestone for migrant workers in World Cup run-up.’, *The Guardian*, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/sep/06/qatar-law-change-milestone-migrant-workers-world-cup-2022-exit-permits> (accessed 23 February 2020).
- Redbird, B. and Escamilla-García, A.A. (2020), ‘Borders within Borders: The Impact of Occupational Licensing on Immigrant Incorporation’, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 22–45.
- Redden, G. (2020), ‘Human capital at work: performance measurement, prospective valuation and labour inequality’, *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–17.
- Reeskens, T. and Velasco Aguilar, R. (2020), ‘Being white is a full time job? Explaining skin tone gradients in income in Mexico’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–23.
- Reid, L.L. (2002), ‘Occupational segregation, human capital, and motherhood - Black women’s higher exit rates from full-time employment’, *Gender and Society*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 728–747.
- Reitz, J.G. (2001), ‘Immigrant skill utilization in the Canadian labour market: Implications of human capital research’, *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de l’integration et de La Migration Internationale*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 347–378.
- Reitz, J.G. (2007), ‘Immigrant Employment Success in Canada, Part I: Individual and

- Contextual Causes’, *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de l’integration et de La Migration Internationale*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 11–36.
- Remennick, L. (2013), ‘Professional Identities in Transit: Factors Shaping Immigrant Labour Market Success’, *International Migration*, Vol. 51 No. 1, pp. 152–168.
- Reskin, B.F. (1988), ‘Bringing the men back in: Sex differentiation and the devaluation of women’s work.’, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 58–81.
- Reskin, B.F. (2000), ‘The Proximate Causes of Employment Discrimination’, *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 319–328.
- Reskin, B.F. and McBrier, D.B. (2000), ‘Why Not Ascription? Organizations’ Employment of Male and Female Managers’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 65 No. 2, pp. 210–233.
- Reynolds, J. and Xian, H. (2014), ‘Perceptions of meritocracy in the land of opportunity’, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 36, pp. 121–137.
- Rich, B.L. (1995), ‘Explaining feminization in the US banking industry, 1940–1980: Human capital, dual labour markets or gender queuing’, *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 357–380.
- Riley, S., Schouten, W. and Cahill, S. (2003), ‘Exploring the dynamics of subjectivity and power between researcher and researched’, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 1–19.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C.M. and Ormston, R. (2013), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, sage.
- Roberts, B.R., Frank, R. and Lozano-Ascencio, F. (1999), ‘Transnational migrant communities and Mexican migration to the US’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 238–266.

- Robertson, S.L. (2006), 'Brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 1–5.
- Roex, K.L.A. and Rözer, J.J. (2018), 'The Social Norm to Work and the Well-Being of the Short- and Long-Term Unemployed', *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 139 No. 3, pp. 1037–1064.
- Roney, S. and Öztin, P. (2007), 'Career perceptions of undergraduate tourism students: A case study in Turkey', *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 4–17.
- Rose, J. and Johnson, C.W. (2020), 'Contextualizing reliability and validity in qualitative research: toward more rigorous and trustworthy qualitative social science in leisure research', *Journal of Leisure Research*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 51 No. 4, pp. 432–451.
- Roth, W.-M. and von Unger, H. (2018), 'Current perspectives on research ethics in qualitative research', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 19, pp. 1–12.
- Rudman, L.A. and Mescher, K. (2013), 'Penalizing Men Who Request a Family Leave: Is Flexibility Stigma a Femininity Stigma?', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 69 No. 2, pp. 322–340.
- Ruhs, M. and Anderson, B. (2010), *Who Needs Migrant Workers?: Labour Shortages, Immigration, and Public Policy*, Oxford University Press.
- Russell, H., O'Connell, P.J. and McGinnity, F. (2009), 'The impact of flexible working arrangements on work-life conflict and work pressure in Ireland', *Gender, Work and Organization*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 73–97.
- Russell, S.S. (1989), 'Politics and ideology in migration policy formulation: the case of

- Kuwait', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 23 No. 1, pp. 24–47.
- Ryan, L. (2011), 'Migrants' Social Networks and Weak Ties: Accessing Resources and Constructing Relationships Post-Migration', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 59 No. 4, pp. 707–724.
- Ryan, L. (2015), "'Inside" and "outside" of what or where? Researching Migration through Multi-Positionalities', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 16, No. 2. Art. 17, pp.1-17.
- Ryan, L., Rodriguez, M.L. and Trevena, P. (2016), 'Opportunities and challenges of unplanned follow-up interviews: Experiences with Polish migrants in London', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 17. No. 2, Art. 26, pp. 1–20.
- Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M. and Siara, B. (2008), 'Social networks, social support and social capital: The experiences of recent Polish migrants in London', *Sociology*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 672–690.
- Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M. and Siara, B. (2009), 'Family strategies and transnational migration: Recent polish migrants in London', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 61–77.
- Rydgren, J. (2004), "Mechanisms of exclusion: ethnic discrimination in the Swedish labour market", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 697–716.
- Rzepnikowska, A. (2019), 'Racism and xenophobia experienced by Polish migrants in the UK before and after Brexit vote', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 45 No. 1, pp. 61–77.
- Sage, D. (2019), 'Unemployment, wellbeing and the power of the work ethic: Implications for social policy', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 205–228.

- Said, B.M. (2016), 'The future of reform in Oman', *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 49–67.
- Sakamoto, A. and Chen, M.D. (1991), 'Inequality and attainment in a dual labor market', *American Sociological Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 295–308.
- Sakamoto, I. (2007), 'A critical examination of immigrant acculturation: Toward an anti-oppressive social work model with immigrant adults in a pluralistic society', *British Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 515–535.
- Saldaña, J. (2015), *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Sage.
- Saldaña, J. (2016), *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Third edition., Los Angeles : SAGE.
- Salikutluk, Z. (2016), 'Why Do Immigrant Students Aim High? Explaining the Aspiration–Achievement Paradox of Immigrants in Germany', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 No. 5, pp. 581–592.
- Salmona, M. and Kaczynski, D. (2016), 'Don't blame the software: Using qualitative data analysis software successfully in doctoral research', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 17, pp. 1–24.
- Saloniemi, A., Virtanen, P. and Vahtera, J. (2004), 'The Work Environment in Fixed-Term Jobs: Are Poor Psychosocial Conditions Inevitable?', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 193–208.
- Sanders, J.M. and Nee, V. (1996), 'Immigrant Self-Employment: The Family as Social Capital and the Value of Human Capital', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61 No. 2, p. 231.
- Sapsford, R., Tsourapas, G., Abbott, P. and Teti, A. (2019), 'Corruption, Trust, Inclusion and Cohesion in North Africa and the Middle East', *Applied Research in Quality of Life*,

Applied Research in Quality of Life, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 1–21.

Sarah, Z. (2011) Factors affecting the motivation of expatriate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Sultanate of Oman (Doctoral Thesis, University of Exeter).

Sater, J. (2014), ‘Citizenship and migration in Arab Gulf monarchies’, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 18 No. 3–4, pp. 292–302.

Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J. and Kitzinger, C. (2015), ‘Anonymising interview data: challenges and compromise in practice’, *Qual. Res.*, Vol. 15 No. 5, pp. 616–632.

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., et al. (2018), ‘Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and operationalization’, *Quality & Quantity*, Springer, Vol. 52 No. 4, pp. 1893–1907.

Sawyer, D.O. (1978), ‘Social Roles and Economic Firms: The Sociology of Human Capital Human Capital. Gary S. Becker’, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 83 No. 5, pp. 1259–1270.

Schieman, S., Milkie, M.A. and Glavin, P. (2009), ‘When work interferes with life: Work-nonwork interference and the influence of work-related demands and resources’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 74 No. 6, pp. 966–988.

Schmelzer, P. and Schneider, T. (2020), ‘Consequences of Overeducation among Career Starters in Germany: A Trap for the Vocationally Trained as well as for University Graduates?’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 413–428.

Schmidt, S.M., Moideenkutty, U. and Al-Busaidi, A. (2013), ‘Expatriate and Omani workplace relationships and individual performance’, *Culture and Gender in Leadership*, Springer, pp. 228–250.

Schoffstall, D.G. (2013), ‘The benefits and challenges hospitality management students

- experience by working in conjunction with completing their studies Bohdansk, B. (2010). “ THE McWorld “ The Fast Food Industry As A Result Of.’, *Graduate Thesis and Dissertations*, pp. 1–268.
- Schrover, M., van der Leun, J. and Quispel, C. (2007), ‘Niches, labour market segregation, ethnicity and gender’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 529–540.
- Schuller, T. (2001), ‘The complementary roles of human and social capital’, *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 18–24.
- Schultz, T. (1961), ‘Investment in human capital’, *The American Economic Review*, Vol 51 No 1, pp. 1–16.
- Schultz, T.W. (1972), *Human Capital: Policy Issues and Research Opportunities*, Vol. 6, pp. 1–84.
- Schuman, H., Steeh, C. and Bobo, L. (1985), *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*, Vol. 2, Harvard University Press.
- Schwab, S. (1986), “Is statistical discrimination efficient?”, *The American Economic Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 76 No. 1, pp. 228–234.
- Seale, C. (2002), ‘Quality Issues in Qualitative Inquiry’, *Qualitative Social Work*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 97–110.
- Semyonov, M. and Glikman, A. (2009), ‘Ethnic Residential Segregation, Social Contacts, and Anti-Minority Attitudes in European Societies’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 25 No. 6, pp. 693–708.
- Sevilla, H.A. (2014), ‘Nationalization Scheme (Nitaqat) in Saudi Arabia and the Condition of Filipino Migrant Workers’, *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 1–

91.

Sfakianakis, J. (2020), 'Oman's New Sultan Needs to Take Bold Economic Steps', *Chatham House*, available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/dr-john-sfakianakis> (accessed 11 February 2020).

Shapira, M. (2004), *Immigrant Impact on Employment and Occupational Opportunities of Population in Britain*, Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh, Vol. 28, available at: [http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk/PDF\\_Files/IMP\\_WP1.pdf](http://www.ces.ed.ac.uk/PDF_Files/IMP_WP1.pdf), (accessed 23 February 2020).

Sharda, B.D. (1998), 'Labour Markets and Status Allocation', *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 47 No. 1, pp. 17–31.

Shaw, R.M., Howe, J., Beazer, J. and Carr, T. (2020), 'Ethics and positionality in qualitative research with vulnerable and marginal groups', *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 277–293.

Shayah, M.H. and Sun, Z. (2019), 'Employment in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries—Current Issues and Future Trends', *2nd International Conference on Social Science, Public Health and Education (SSPHE 2018)*, Atlantis Press, pp. 412–415.

Sheppard, M., Newstead, S. and Ryan, K. (2000), 'Reflexivity and the development of process knowledge in social work: a classification and empirical study', *British Journal of Social Work*, Oxford, Vol. 30 No. 4, p. 465–488.

Sher, N. (2017), 'Unemployment: Causes of Poverty in Oman', *The Borgen Project*, available at: <https://borgenproject.org/causes-of-poverty-in-oman/> (accessed 21 September 2020).

Shigihara, A.M. (2019), "I Mean, Define Meaningful!": Accounts of Meaningfulness among Restaurant Employees', *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 106–131.

- Shih, J. (2002), “...Yeah, I could hire this one, but I know it’s gonna be a problem”: How race, nativity and gender affect employers’ perceptions of the manageability of job seekers’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 99–119.
- Shin, Y.-K., Kemppainen, T. and Kuitto, K. (2020), ‘Precarious Work, Unemployment Benefit Generosity and Universal Basic Income Preferences: A Multilevel Study on 21 European Countries’, *Journal of Social Policy*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–23.
- Silva, C.N. (2008), ‘Catherine Marshall & Gretchen B. Rossman (2006). Designing Qualitative Research’, *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 9, pp. 1–6.
- Silva, E.B. (2005), ‘Gender, home and family in cultural capital theory’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 83–103
- Silverman, D. (2014), *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5E., Los Angeles : SAGE, 2014, Los Angeles.
- Simmons, L.A., Braun, B., Wright, D.W. and Miller, S.R. (2007), ‘Human capital, social support, and economic well-being among rural, low-income mothers: A latent growth curve analysis’, *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, Springer, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 635–652.
- Simpson, N. (2018), ‘Tourism: Taking Oman to the next level’, *Lexology*, available at: [https://www.lexology.com/675/author/Nick\\_Simpson/](https://www.lexology.com/675/author/Nick_Simpson/) (accessed 4 July 2020).
- Simpson, R. (2005), ‘Men in non-traditional occupations: Career entry, carrer orientation and experience of role strain’, *Gender, Work and Organization*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 363–380.
- Sin, S. (2010), ‘Considerations of quality in phenomenographic research’, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, Vol. 9

No. 4, pp. 305–319.

Sivaly, C.T. (2017), *Down-Skilling African Women Downunder: A Bourdieuan Analysis*.

Sjaastad, L.A. (1962), 'The Costs and Returns of Human Migration', *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 70 No. 5, Part 2, pp. 80–93.

Skalpe, O. (2007), 'The CEO gender pay gap in the tourism industry - Evidence from Norway', *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 845–853.

Skinner, C. (2005), 'Coordination points: A hidden factor in reconciling work and family life', *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 99–119.

Slavnic, Z. (2013), 'Towards qualitative data preservation and re-use—Policy trends and academic controversies in UK and Sweden', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 14, pp. 1–21.

Sloan, A. (2014), 'Domestic workers suffer under the enduring kafala system', *Middle East Monitor*, available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20141027-domestic-workers-suffer-under-the-enduring-kafala-system/> (accessed 23 February 2020).

Smetherham, C (2003), 'The employability of first class graduates', *Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, 11-13th September 2003*.

Smith, H.L. (1986), 'Trends in the Effects of Family Background on Educational Attainment in the Philippines', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91 No. 6, pp. 1387–1408.

Smith, J.A. (2019), 'Participants and researchers searching for meaning: Conceptual developments for interpretative phenomenological analysis', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Routledge, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 166–181.

Smith, K.E. (2006), 'Problematizing power relations in "elite" interviews', *Geoforum*, Vol. 37

No. 4, pp. 643–653.

Smith, M.R. (1990), 'What is New in "New Structuralist" Analyses of Earnings?', *American Sociological Review*, JSTOR, Vol. 55 No. 6, pp. 827–841.

Smith, R.A. (2002), 'Race, gender, and authority in the workplace: Theory and research', *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 509–542.

Smith-Doerr, L., Alegria, S., Fealing, K.H., Fitzpatrick, D. and Tomaskovic-Devey, D. (2019), 'Gender pay gaps in U.S. federal science agencies: An organizational approach', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 125 No. 2, pp. 534–576.

Smyth, R. and Strathdee, R. (2010), 'The effects of type of institution attended on graduate earnings in New Zealand: A cross-field comparison', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 31 No. 4, pp. 489–508.

Solga, H. and Koniet, D. (1989), 'Theoretical Insights and Empirical Observations Taken from a German-German Comparison', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 25–47.

Solomon, R. (2019), 'Xenophobic violence and the ambivalence of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa', *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 156–171.

Sorensen, A.B. (1990), 'Throwing the Sociologists Out? A Reply to Smith', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 55 No. 6, pp. 842–845.

Spence, M. (1973), 'Job Market Signaling', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 87 No. 3, p. 355.

Sperling, J., Marcati, C. and Rennie, M. (2014), 'GCC Women in Leadership – from the first to the norm - Women Matter', *McKinsey & Company*, available at: <https://es.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/uefaorg/CaptainsofChange/02/20/42/36/>

2204236\_DOWNLOAD.pdf (accessed 23 December 2020).

Spierings, N. (2014), 'The Influence of Patriarchal Norms, Institutions, and Household Composition on Women's Employment in Twenty-Eight Muslim-Majority Countries', *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 87–112.

Spindler-Ruiz, P. (2020), 'Mexican Niches in the US Construction Industry: 2009–2015', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Journal of International Migration and Integration, pp. 1–23.

Stainback, K., Ratliff, T.N. and Roscigno, V.J. (2011), 'The context of workplace sex discrimination: Sex composition, workplace culture and relative power', *Social Forces*, Vol. 89 No. 4, pp. 1165–1188.

Stam, K., Sieben, I., Verbakel, E. and de Graaf, P.M. (2016), 'Employment status and subjective well-being: the role of the social norm to work', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 309–333.

Staniscia, B., Deravignone, L., González-Martín, B. and Pumares, P. (2019), 'Youth mobility and the development of human capital: is there a Southern European model?', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 0 No. 0, pp. 1–17.

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (2010), 'The ESRC's 2010 Framework for Research Ethics: Fit for Research Purpose?', *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 106–115.

Statista, (2020), 'Labor migration flow from selected Asian countries to Oman in 2016, by country of origin', *Statista Research Department*, available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/880792/oman-labor-migration-flow-selected-asian-countries/> (accessed 27 March 2020).

Steiger, T.L. and Wardell, M. (1995), 'Gender and Employment in the Service Sector', *Social*

*Problems*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 91–123.

Steiner, I. and Wanner, P. (2019), *Migrants and Expats: The Swiss Migration and Mobility Nexus*, Springer International Publishing.

Stephenson, M.L. (2014), ‘Deciphering “Islamic hospitality”’: Developments, challenges and opportunities’, *Tourism Management*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 40, pp. 155–164.

Stephenson, M.L., Russell, K.A. and Edgar, D. (2010), ‘Islamic hospitality in the UAE: indigenization of products and human capital’, *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 9–24.

Stier, H. and Yaish, M. (2008), ‘The determinants of womens employment dynamics: The case of Israeli women’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 363–377.

Stojmenovska, D., Bol, T. and Leopold, T. (2017), ‘Does Diversity Pay? A Replication of Herring (2009)’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 82 No. 4, pp. 857–867.

Stolzenberg, R.M. (1975), ‘Occupations, Labour Markets and the Process of Wage Attainment’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 40 No. 5, pp. 645–665.

Storbeck, D. (2011), ‘Indian labour migration to the Arab Gulf states: the impact of a growing interdependence’, *Internationales Asienforum*, Vol. 42 No. May, pp. 21–46.

Storer, A., Schneider, D. and Harknett, K. (2020), ‘What Explains Racial/Ethnic Inequality in Job Quality in the Service Sector?’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 85 No. 4, pp. 537–572.

Suleman, F. (2021), ‘Revisiting the concept of employability through economic theories: Contributions, limitations and policy implications’, *Higher Education Quarterly*, pp. 1–14.

- Sullivan, O. and Gershuny, J. (2016), 'Change in spousal human capital and housework: A longitudinal analysis', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 32 No. 6, pp. 864–880.
- Summers, K. (2020), 'For the greater good? Ethical reflections on interviewing the “rich” and “poor” in qualitative research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Routledge, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 593–602.
- Sundström, M. and Duvander, A.Z.E. (2002), 'Gender Division of Childcare and the Sharing of Parental Leave among New Parents in Sweden', *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 18 No. 4, pp. 433–447.
- Sunstein, C.R. (1991), 'Why Markets Don't Stop Discrimination', *Social Philosophy & Policy*, New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, New York, USA, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 22–37.
- Supreme Council for Planning – Oman. (2016), 'Strategic Direction of the Ninth Five Year Development Plan (2016 -2020).', Supreme Council for Planning, available at: [https://www.scp.gov.om/PDF/Economic Diversification Sector Book-EN.pdf](https://www.scp.gov.om/PDF/Economic%20Diversification%20Sector%20Book-EN.pdf), (accessed 19 February 2020).
- Surmiak, A. (2018), 'Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: Researchers' perspectives', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, Vol. 19 No. 3, Art. 12, pp. 1–26.
- Sweetland, S.R. (1996), 'Human Capital Theory: Foundations of a Field of Inquiry', *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 66 No. 3, pp. 341–359.
- Szewczyk, A. (2014), 'Continuation or Switching? Career Patterns of Polish Graduate Migrants in England', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 40 No. 5, pp. 847–864.
- Tam, T. (1997), 'Sex Segregation and Occupational Gender Inequality in the United States:

- Devaluation or Specialized Training?', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 102 No. 6, pp. 1652–1692.
- Tan, E. (2014), 'Human capital theory: A holistic criticism', *Review of Educational Research*, Sage Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, Vol. 84 No. 3, pp. 411–445.
- Tani, M. (2019), 'Migration Policy and Immigrants' Labor Market Performance', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 35–57.
- Tanner, J., Cockerill, R., Barnsley, J. and Williams, A.P. (1999), 'Gender and income in pharmacy: human capital and gender stratification theories revisited', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 97–117.
- Tapp, L. (2020), 'Paid parental leave rights introduced in UAE', *Pinsent Masons*, available at: <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/paid-parental-leave-rights-introduced-in-uae> (accessed 20 December 2020).
- Tarlau, R. (2016), 'If the past devours the future, why study? Piketty, social movements, and future directions for education', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Routledge, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 861–872.
- Tauri, J.M. (2018), 'Research ethics, informed consent and the disempowerment of First Nation peoples', *Research Ethics*, SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 1–14.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (2021), "Home - ASEAN", *The Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, available at: <https://asean.org/> (accessed 18 October 2021).
- The Civil Service Employees Pension Fund – Oman. (2020), 'About the Fund', available at: <https://www.civilpension.gov.om/en/SitePages/Aboutus.aspx> (accessed 4 June 2020).
- The Guardian. (2011), 'Middle East unrest spreads to Oman | World news', available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/feb/27/middle-east-protests-oman-bahrain>  
(accessed 11 May 2020).

The Guardian. (2012), 'Graduates without work experience face struggle to secure jobs, report says', available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2012/jan/11/graduates-work-experience-jobs> (accessed 31 August 2020).

The ISFU. (2021), 'Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit', available at: <https://isfu.gov.om/AnnualReports> (accessed 27 February 2021).

The National Center for Employment – Oman. (2020), 'About The Center', available at: <https://pamr.gov.om/en-us/eportal/Public/Pages/About-the-Authority.aspx> (accessed 4 June 2020).

The Omani Centre for Human Rights. (2018), 'Mounting problems of unemployment and salary stagnation in Oman', available at: <https://ochroman.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2.pdf> (accessed 21 September 2020).

The University of Queensland Library. (2020), *NVivo: 12 Pro Essentials for Getting Started Qualitative Data Analysis*, available at: <https://web.library.uq.edu.au/files/78937/NVIVO12-EssentialsforGettingStarted.pdf> (accessed 1 November 2020).

The University of Sheffield - IT Services. (2020c), NVivo, available at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/it-services/software/nvivo> (accessed 5 November 2020).

The University of Sheffield Library. (2020a), 'Copyright guide: eTheses - Copyright - The University Library - The University of Sheffield', available at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/copyright/etheses> (accessed 15 December 2020).

The University of Sheffield Library. (2020b), 'Open access and PhD theses', *The University Library - The University of Sheffield*, available at:

- <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/openaccess/theses> (accessed 1 November 2020).
- The University of Sheffield. (2021), ‘GDPR and data protection | Governance and Management’, available at: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection> (accessed 16 March 2021).
- The World Bank. (2018), ‘Oman’s Economic Outlook - April 2018’, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gcc/publication/economic-outlook-april-2018-oman> (accessed 16 October 2020).
- The World Bank. (2019), ‘Investing in Human Capital is Key to Sustainable Growth in GCC’, available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/05/01/investing-in-human-capital-is-key-to-sustainable-growth-in-gcc> (accessed 25 December 2020).
- The World Bank. (2020), ‘Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Oman | Data’, *World Bank*, available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=OM> (accessed 16 October 2020).
- Thébaud, S. (2010), ‘Masculinity, bargaining, and breadwinning: Understanding men’s housework in the cultural context of paid work’, *Gender & Society*, Sage Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 330–354.
- Thébaud, S. and Pedulla, D.S. (2016), ‘Masculinity and the Stalled Revolution’, *Gender & Society*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 590–617.
- Thiollet, H. (2011), ‘Migration as Diplomacy: Labor Migrants, Refugees, and Arab Regional Politics in the Oil-Rich Countries’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, Vol. 79 No. 1, pp. 103–121.
- Thiollet, H., (2019), ‘Immigrants , Markets , Brokers , and States The Politics of Illiberal

Migration in Governance in the Arab Gulf', Working Papers, No. 155, pp. 1–35.

Thistlethwaite, F. (2015), 'Things you should NEVER do in Saudi Arabia ... or you could be risking your LIFE', *Travel News | Travel | Express.Co.Uk*, available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/615330/Rules-laws-Saudi-Arabia-life-death-prison> (accessed 1 September 2020).

Tholen, G. (2015), 'What can research into graduate employability tell us about agency and structure?', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Routledge, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 766–784.

Thomas, M.E., Herring, C. and Horton, H.D. (1994), "Discrimination over the Life Course: A Synthetic Cohort Analysis of Earnings Differences between Black and White Males, 1940-1990", *Social Problems*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 608–628.

Thompson, M.C. (2018), 'The Saudi 'Social Contract' Under Strain: Employment and Housing.', *Social Policy in the Middle East and North Africa*, Vol. 31 No. 0, pp. 75–80.

Thompson, M.C. (2020), 'Inherent contradictions in the Saudi rentier state: distributive capacity, youth employment preferences, and attitudes to education', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Routledge, Vol. 00 No. 00, pp. 1–19.

Tight, M. (2016), 'Phenomenography: the development and application of an innovative research design in higher education research', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Routledge, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 319–338.

Times News Service. (2018a), '16 expats arrested for gambling in Oman', *Times Of Oman*, available at: <https://timesofoman.com/article/234386/oman/16-expats-arrested-for-gambling-in-oman> (accessed 1 September 2020).

Times News Service. (2018b), 'Oman invest billions in tourism', *Times of Oman*, available at: <https://timesofoman.com/article/126450/Oman/Transport/Omans-expenditure-on->

tourism-facilities-to-cross-one-billion-dollars (accessed 11 December 2020).

Times News Service. (2021), 'Oman economy to grow by nearly 8 per cent in 2022', *Times of Oman*, available at: <https://timesofoman.com/article/oman-economy-to-grow-by-nearly-8-per-cent-in-2022> (accessed 1 March 2021).

Times of Oman (2016a) "Number of expats in Oman reaches 2 million." Available at <http://timesofoman.com/article/81891/Oman/Government/Expatriate-population-crosses-2-million-in-Oman> (accessed on 24 June 2017).

Times of Oman. (2016b), 'Tourism sector in Oman needs more women leaders, available at: <https://timesofoman.com/article/77952/Oman/Tourism/Tourism-sector-in-Oman-needs-more-women-leaders> (accessed 26 January 2020).

Times of Oman. (2018), '45,000 jobs in Oman tourism industry by 2020', *ZAWYA MENA Edition*, available at: [https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/45000\\_jobs\\_in\\_Oman\\_tourism\\_industry\\_by\\_2020-SNG\\_129376167/](https://www.zawya.com/mena/en/economy/story/45000_jobs_in_Oman_tourism_industry_by_2020-SNG_129376167/) (accessed 13 July 2020).

Times of Oman. (2019), 'From oil to human capital investment', available at: <https://timesofoman.com/article/from-oil-to-human-capital-investment> (accessed 25 December 2020).

Times of Oman. (2020), 'Oman ranked fourth at the Arab countries' level in Human Capital Index', available at: <https://timesofoman.com/article/oman-ranked-fourth-at-the-arab-countries-level-in-human-capital-index> (accessed 20 January 2021).

Tolich, M. (2004), 'Internal confidentiality: When confidentiality assurances fail relational informants', *Qualitative Sociology*, Springer, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 101–106.

- Toma, S. and Villares-Varela, M. (2019), 'The Role of Migration Policies in the Attraction and Retention of International Talent: The Case of Indian Researchers', *Sociology*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 52–68.
- Tomaskovic-Devey, D., Thomas, M. and Johnson, K. (2005), 'Race and the Accumulation of Human Capital across the Career: A Theoretical Model and Fixed-Effects Application', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 111 No. 1, pp. 58–89.
- Tomlinson, M. (2008), "'The degree is not enough": students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 49–61.
- Tomlinson, M. (2017), 'Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability', *Education and Training*, Vol. 59 No. 4, pp. 338–352.
- Torabi, F. and Abbasi-Shavazi, M. (2015), 'Women's Human Capital and Economic Growth in the Middle East and North Africa', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Bridgewater, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 237–261.
- Torchia, A. (2019), 'Oman slows spending growth in 2019 budget, may not cut deficit', *Reuters*, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/oman-budget/update-1-oman-slows-spending-growth-in-2019-budget-may-not-cut-deficit-idUSL8N1Z107K> (accessed 25 February 2020).
- Tudzarovska, E. (2013), *The Economic Rationale behind Investments in Education and Human Capital*, available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312167239\\_Economic\\_rationale\\_behind\\_investments\\_in\\_education\\_and\\_human\\_capital/link/5873ebcc08ae8fce4924ce27/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312167239_Economic_rationale_behind_investments_in_education_and_human_capital/link/5873ebcc08ae8fce4924ce27/download), (accessed 16 June 2020).
- Turmo-Garuz, J., Bartual-Figueras, M.T. and Sierra-Martinez, F.J. (2019), 'Factors Associated

- with Overeducation Among Recent Graduates During Labour Market Integration: The Case of Catalonia (Spain)', *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands, Vol. 144 No. 3, pp. 1273–1301.
- United Nations Population Division. (2019), 'International migrant stock 2019 in Oman', Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- United Nations. (2019), 'International migrant stock 2019: Country Profiles', *United Nations Population Division | Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/countryprofiles.asp>, (accessed 27 March 2020).
- University Research Ethics Committee. (2018), 'Changes to data protection legislation – implications for your research Summary of key changes to Ethics Policy and guidance', *University of Sheffield*, available at: [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.777395!/file/SummaryofChangesGDPRApr18.pdf](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.777395!/file/SummaryofChangesGDPRApr18.pdf) (accessed 7 March 2020).
- US Embassy – Oman. (2016), *The National Program For Enhancing Economic Diversification-''Tanfeedh''*, available at: <https://om.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2017/02/Tanfeedh-10-Jan-17.pdf> (accessed 18 March 2021).
- Vaismoradi, M. and Snelgrove, S. (2019), 'Theme in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 20. No. 3, pp. 1–15.
- Valenta, M. (2017), 'A comparative analysis of migration systems and migration policies in the European Union and in the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries', *Migration and Development*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 428–447.
- Valenta, M. and Jakobsen, J. (2016), 'Moving to the Gulf: an empirical analysis of the patterns

- and drivers of migration to the GCC countries, 1960–2013’, *Labor History*, Routledge, Vol. 57 No. 5, pp. 627–648.
- Valeri, M. (2020), ‘Oman’s new sultan faces mammoth challenges - BBC News, University of Exeter’, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-51112191> (accessed 26 January 2020).
- Van Belle, E., Di Stasio, V., Caers, R., De Couck, M. and Baert, S. (2018), ‘Why Are Employers Put Off by Long Spells of Unemployment?’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 34 No. 6, pp. 694–710.
- Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O. and Long, K. (2018), ‘Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Taylor & Francis, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 927–944.
- Van Tubergen, F. and De Werfhorst, H. van. (2007), ‘Postimmigration Investments in Education: A Study of Immigrants in the Netherlands’, *Demography*, Vol. 44 No. 4, pp. 883–898.
- Van Tubergen, F. and Kalmijn, M. (2005), ‘Destination-language proficiency in cross-national perspective: A study of immigrant groups in nine Western countries’, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 110 No. 5, pp. 1412–1457.
- Van Tubergen, F., Maas, I. and Flap, H. (2004), ‘The Economic Incorporation of Immigrants in 18 Western Societies: Origin, Destination, and Community Effects’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69 No. 5, pp. 704–727.
- Vanhercke, D., De Cuyper, N., Peeters, E. and De Witte, H. (2014), ‘Defining perceived employability: a psychological approach’, *Personnel Review*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

- Varghese, D.T. (2016), 'Omani women and their happiness: An exploratory study based on Gnh and Swls tool', *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 01–07.
- Varghese, T., Hassau, A. and Al Qartooqi, A. (2012), 'Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship among Young People in Oman', Sohar University, available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329360381\\_Attitudes\\_Towards\\_Entrepreneurship\\_among\\_Young\\_People\\_in\\_Oman](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329360381_Attitudes_Towards_Entrepreneurship_among_Young_People_in_Oman), (accessed 14 March 2020).
- Varshney, D. (2019), 'The Strides of the Saudi Female Workforce: Overcoming Constraints and Contradictions in Transition', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 359–372.
- Vella, F. (1994), 'Gender Roles and Human Capital Investment: The Relationship between Traditional Attitudes and Female Labour Market Performance', *Economica*, Vol. 61 No. 242, pp. 191–211.
- Vercherand, J. (2014), "The Neoclassical Model of the Labour Market", *Labour*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, London, pp. 53–74.
- Vidal, M. (2007), 'Lean Production, Worker Empowerment, and Job Satisfaction: A Qualitative Analysis and Critique', *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 33 No. 1–2, pp. 247–278.
- Vora, N. and Koch, N. (2015), 'Everyday Inclusions: Rethinking Ethnocracy, Kafala, and Belonging in the Arabian Peninsula', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 540–552.
- Vosko, L.F., MacDonald, M. and Campbell, Iain. (2009), *Gender and the Contours of Precarious Employment*, London ; New York: Routledge, available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203874424>.
- Voßemer, J. and Schuck, B. (2016), 'Better overeducated than unemployed? The short- and long-term effects of an overeducated labour market re-entry', *European Sociological*

- Review*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 251–265.
- WAF. (2020), ‘Oman tourism sector incurs \$1.3 billion in losses due to Corona’, available at: <https://wafoman.com/2020/12/10/oman-tourism-sector-incurs-1-3-billion-in-losses-due-to-corona/?lang=en> (accessed 30 March 2021).
- Walby, S. (1989), ‘Theorising Patriarchy’, *Sociology*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 213–234.
- Walker, A. (2019), *The Future of Ageing in Europe: Making an Asset of Longevity*, Basingstoke, Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, Basingstoke, Hampshire.
- Walsh, K. (2014) ‘Placing Transnational Migrants through Comparative Research: British Migrant Belonging in Five GCC Cities’, *Population, Space and Place*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 1–17.
- Walters, D., Phythian, K. and Anisef, P. (2007), ‘The acculturation of Canadian immigrants: Determinants of ethnic identification with the host society’, *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 37–64.
- Warman, C., Sweetman, A. and Goldmann, G. (2015), ‘The Portability of New Immigrants’ Human Capital: Language, Education, and Occupational Skills’, *Canadian Public Policy*, Vol. 41 No. Supplement 1, pp. S64–S79.
- Weber, H. (2019), ‘Attitudes Towards Minorities in Times of High Immigration: A Panel Study among Young Adults in Germany’, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 239–257.
- Wei, K., Jacobson López, D. and Wu, S. (2019), ‘The Role of Language in Anti-Immigrant Prejudice: What Can We Learn from Immigrants’ Historical Experiences?’, *Social Sciences*, Vol. 8 No. 3, p. 1 – 18.
- Weiner, M. (1982), ‘International Migration and Development: Indians in the Persian Gulf’,

- Population and Development Review*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1–36.
- Weisgram, E.S., Dinella, L.M. and Fulcher, M. (2011), ‘The Role of Masculinity/Femininity, Values, and Occupational Value Affordances in Shaping Young Men’s and Women’s Occupational Choices’, *Sex Roles*, Vol. 65 No. 3–4, pp. 243–258.
- Welsh, E. (2002), ‘Dealing with Data: Using NVivo in the Qualitative Data Analysis Process’, *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 1–7.
- Western, B. and Sirois, C. (2019), ‘Racialized re-entry: labour market inequality after incarceration’, *Social Forces*, Vol. 97 No. 4, pp. 1517–1542.
- White, A. and Ryan, L. (2008), ‘Polish “Temporary” Migration: The Formation and Significance of Social Networks’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 60 No. 9, pp. 1467–1502.
- White, M.J. and White, G.B. (2006), ‘Implicit and explicit occupational gender stereotypes’, *Sex Roles*, Vol. 55 No. 3–4, pp. 259–266.
- Whitton, T. (2003), ‘The Growth of Precarious Employment in Great Britain’, *Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 1–12.
- Wickramasekara, P. (2016), ‘South Asian Gulf migration to the Gulf: a safety valve or a development strategy?’, *Migration and Development*, Routledge, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 99–129.
- Wiles, R., Crow, G., Charles, V. and Heath, S. (2007), ‘Informed Consent and the Research Process: Following Rules or Striking Balances?’, *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 99–110.
- Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S. and Charles, V. (2008), ‘The Management of Confidentiality and Anonymity in Social Research’, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 11 No. 5, pp. 417–428.

- Williams, A.M. and Baláž, V. (2005), 'What Human Capital, Which Migrants? Returned Skilled Migration to Slovakia from the UK', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 39 No. 2, pp. 439–468.
- Williams, M. (2000), 'Interpretivism and generalisation', *Sociology*, University of Sheffield Library, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 209–224.
- Wiltshier, F. (2011), 'Qualitative Social Researching With NVivo 8', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 1–8.
- Winchester, D. (2008), 'Embodying the Faith: Religious Practice and the Making of a Muslim Moral Habitus', *Social Forces*, Vol. 86 No. 4, pp. 1753–1780.
- Winckler, O. (1997), 'The immigration policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states', *Middle Eastern Studies*, London, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 480–493.
- Winckler, O. (2000), 'The challenge of foreign workers in the Persian/Arabian Gulf: The case of Oman', *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 23–52.
- Winckler, O. (2007), 'The birth of Oman's tourism industry', *Tourism*, Vol. 55 No. 2, pp. 221–234.
- Winckler, O. (2010), 'The challenge of foreign workers in the Persian/Arabian Gulf: The case of Oman', *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 23–52.
- Wingfield, A.H. and Chavez, K. (2020), 'Getting In, Getting Hired, Getting Sideways Looks: Organizational Hierarchy and Perceptions of Racial Discrimination', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 85 No. 1, pp. 31–57.
- Winslow-Bowe, S. (2009), 'Husbands' and Wives' Relative Earnings: Exploring Variation by Race, Human Capital, Labor Supply, and Life Stage', *Journal of Family Issues*, SAGE Publications Inc, Vol. 30 No. 10, pp. 1405–1432.

- Witts, S. (2015), "High staff turnover in hospitality causing a productivity crisis." Available at: <http://www.bighospitality.co.uk/Trends-Reports/High-staff-turnover-in-hospitality-causing-a-productivity-crisis>, (accessed on 7 August 2017).
- Wood, G. and Keskin, T. (2013), 'A New Introduction Sociology of Islam: Social, Political and Economic Transformations in Muslim Societies', *Sociology of Islam*, Vol. 1 No. 1–2, pp. 1–6.
- Woolf, N.H. and Silver, C. (2017), *Qualitative Analysis Using NVivo: The Five-Level QDA® Method*, Routledge.
- World Bank. (2020), 'Human Capital Index (HCI) (scale 0-1) - Oman', available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/HD.HCI.OVRL?end=2020&locations=OM&start=2020&view=bar> (accessed 20 January 2021).
- World Bank. (2021), 'Global Economic Prospects January 2021 MENA data', available at: <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/356361599838768642/Global-Economic-Prospects-January-2021-Analysis-MENA.pdf> (accessed 20 January 2021).
- World Economic Forum. (2020), *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, available at: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf) (accessed 31 January 2021).
- World Population Review. (2020), 'Oman Population 2020 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs)', available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/oman-population> (accessed 10 November 2020).
- Worrall, J. (2012), 'Oman: The "Forgotten" Corner of the Arab Spring', *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 98–115.
- Yalçın, S. (2015), 'Migrant labour in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council A fix for Gulf capitalism?', *Middle East Centre, London School of Economics and Political*

*Science*, No. January 2015, pp. 1–20.

Yan Min, C. (2018), ‘Singapore’s human capital most developed in Asia, Economy News & Top Stories’, *The Straits Times*, available at: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/singapore-tops-new-world-bank-human-capital-rankings-based-on-health-education> (accessed 18 December 2020).

Yan, L.S., Zahari, N.A., Ismail, A.S. and Zain, N.M. (2017), ‘Halal Tourism: A New World for Tourism Industry’, *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, Vol. 7 No. 8, pp. 643–657.

Yavorsky, J.E., Keister, L.A., Qian, Y. and Nau, M. (2019), ‘Women in the One Percent: Gender Dynamics in Top Income Positions’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 84 No. 1, pp. 54–81.

Yeung, W.J.J. and Rauscher, E. (2014), ‘Youth early employment and behavior problems: Human capital and social network pathways to adulthood’, *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 57 No. 3, pp. 382–403.

Yorke, M. (2004), ‘Employability in the undergraduate curriculum: Some student perspectives’, *European Journal of Education*, Wiley Online Library, Vol. 39 No. 4, pp. 409–427.

Young, K.E. (2016), ‘Women’s Labor Force Participation Across the GCC’, *The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington*.

Zachariah, K.C., Prakash, B.A. and Rajan, S.I. (2003), ‘The impact of immigration policy on Indian contract migrants: The case of the United Arab Emirates’, *International Migration*, Vol. 41 No. 4, pp. 161–172.

Zahra, M. (2015), *Oman’s Legal Framework of Migration*, Gulf Research Center - Gulf

*Labour Markets and Migration*, available at:  
[https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/37399/GLMM\\_ExpNote\\_08\\_2015.pdf?](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/37399/GLMM_ExpNote_08_2015.pdf?)  
(accessed 12 March 2020).

Zamani-Farahani, H. and Henderson, J.C. (2010), 'Islamic tourism and managing tourism development in islamic societies: The cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 79–89.

Zamudio, M.M. and Lichter, M.I. (2008), 'Bad Attitudes and Good Soldiers: Soft Skills as a Code for Tractability in the Hiring of Immigrant Latina/os over Native Blacks in the Hotel Industry', *Social Problems*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 573–589.

Zangelidis, A. (2008), 'Occupational and industry specificity of human capital in the British labour market', *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 420–443.

Zapata-Barrero, R. and Yalaz, E. (2020), 'Qualitative migration research ethics: a roadmap for migration scholars', *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 269–279.

Zeffane, R. and Kemp, L. (2020), 'Emiratization: Benefits and challenges of strategic and radical change in the United Arab Emirates', *Case Studies in Work, Employment and Human Resource Management*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

Zerovec, M. and Bontenbal, M. (2011), 'Labor nationalization policies in Oman: Implications for Omani and migrant women workers', *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 3–4, pp. 365–387.

Zhou, M. and Logan, J.R. (1989), 'Returns on Human Capital in Ethic Enclaves: New York City's Chinatown', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54 No. 5, pp. 809–820.

Zschirnt, E. and Ruedin, D. (2016), 'Ethnic discrimination in hiring decisions: a meta-analysis of correspondence tests 1990–2015', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 42

No. 7, pp. 1115–1134.

Zwerling, C. and Silver, H. (1992), 'Race and Job Dismissals in a Federal Bureaucracy', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 57 No. 5, pp. 651–660.

Zwysen, W. (2019), 'Different Patterns of Labour Market Integration by Migration Motivation in Europe: The Role of Host Country Human Capital', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 59–89.