

# Temporary Labour–Migration System and Long–term Residence Strategies in the United Arab Emirates

Marko Valenta\*

Kaley Elizabeth Knowlton\*

Jo Jakobsen\*

Mouawiya Al Awad\*\*

Zan Strabac\*

\*Norwegian University of Science and Technology

\*\*Zayed University; [Mouawiya.alawad@zu.ac.ae](mailto:Mouawiya.alawad@zu.ac.ae)

## Summary

The United Arab Emirates' migration system, the sponsorship–based kafala system, is defined as a temporary labour–migration regime. Although there are policies making permanent residence unattainable for virtually all migrants, it is still relevant to explore the temporality of migrations in the UAE. The purpose of this study is to investigate developments in migration, migration policies and population trends in the country, including trends that concern the duration of migrants' stay. We also identify some of the major strategies used by migrants to prolong their sojourn in the UAE. It is maintained that the migrant stock has increased continuously in the last decades and that many migrants devise strategies to continue their residence and remain in the country for years. The authors also identify and discuss migrants' transition within and in-between regularity and irregularity and analyze the reasons for utilizing different strategies over time.

**For full paper:** <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12551>