

Reforming *Kafala*

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, it is *information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Gray, D. E. (Ed.). (2016). *Reforming Kafala* [unpublished course material].

Comment

The topic of migrant labor in Qatar has generated a lot of heated rhetoric in the international press, especially with the *Guardian* in the UK and the *New York Times* in the US. I have instead selected readings primarily from *Doha News* because—as far as I can tell—it represents the most in-depth analysis I can find written in English.

However, if you find an article or blog post in Arabic (or any other language) that offers an important perspective not contained in this reading, please do send it to me! I will get a translation and include it.

Questions

As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. Why is the *kafala* system a topic in business, society, and ethics?
2. According to estimates by the Qatar National Human Rights Committee, in September 2013, there were around 1.5 million blue-collar foreign workers in Qatar from India, Nepal, Philippines, and Bangladesh.
Why does Qatar need to import so much foreign labor from developing countries? Why not have nationals or Western expatriates do these jobs?
3. What are the key features of Qatar's *kafala* system for foreign labor? What changes have been proposed for this system and why have they been proposed?
4. Why might businesses in Qatar be resistant to these changes?
5. In response to the reports by Amnesty International, the United Nations, and DLA Piper, what changes have happened in Qatar? Is there anything in particular that the government should be focusing on with its ongoing reforms of the *kafala* system?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.