
A CRITICAL FIELD GUIDE

WHO BUILDS YOUR ARCHITECTURE?

2017

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INTRODUCTION

Who Builds Your Architecture? (WBYA?) asks architects and allied fields to better understand how the production of buildings connects their design and consulting practices to the workers who ultimately build them. As a primer, the WBYA? Critical Field Guide introduces key terms, questions, case-studies, and proposals that locate architecture within the complex transnational networks of contemporary building construction and connects it to the problems faced by construction workers who exist within the same system. It aims to shift the focus from how buildings are conceived by architects to how they are materialized by a broad network of people including architects, construction workers, and a host of other actors. The Critical Field Guide employs the representational tools and techniques of architecture along with critical analysis to explain and make legible architecture's entanglements with the vast geopolitical and economic structures of contemporary building construction. The WBYA? Critical Field Guide offers proposals for best practices, ideas for action, and resources for more in-depth study on the many issues and challenges affecting workers worldwide.

Global Networks of Construction Workers and Architects

Global capitalism has expanded the scope and scale of the building industry to form an expansive supply chain—a vast network of manufacturers, suppliers, and builders whose operations are aided by digital technologies and facilitated by transportation systems connecting most regions of the world. It employs an array of actors linked via legal and professional relationships—architects, construction managers, engineers, contractors, consultants, clients, financiers, and construction workers. This has led to the atomization and dispersion of fields related to the design and construction of buildings, and the proliferation of contracts and agreements that bind them together.

Since the 1970s, the liberalization of economies has propelled the movement of capital and labor to new markets around the world. These globalized connections

of production have spawned economic lifelines, as families and home nations depend upon the remittances sent back by legions of migrant workers. As the number of workers seeking employment in other parts of the world has increased exponentially, so has their exploitation and abuse through predatory recruitment networks and unsavory employers seeking to maximize profit by reducing wages and expanding work hours. The construction industry has taken advantage of these labor trends by contracting seasonal and short-term workforces from abroad—a labor procurement practice ideal for the one-time-only, site-specific nature of building projects. Migrant construction workers often face unscrupulous conduct by recruitment firms, subcontractors, and local authorities—each jockeying to extract a bigger cut of the workers’ salaries.

Persistent problems with the recruitment process include exorbitant fees exacted from workers to secure a position abroad, as well as fraudulent representation of the type of work and level of compensation. On poorly managed job sites, migrant workers can be repeatedly exposed to dangerous working conditions. Construction companies and subcontractors seeking to limit expenditures often house thousands of men in poorly maintained, substandard accommodation that lacks basic amenities for food preparation and delivery, proper hygiene, and reliable climate control in regions with scorching temperatures. The human rights organization Amnesty International reported a case in Qatar, for example, where workers were required to sleep in shifts due to scarce accommodations. With “worker camps” often built outside the city limits, migrant construction workers—shut out of the public spaces that architects and urban theorists claim are vital to a robust urban life—are isolated from the civic and social spheres of local residents. Since migrant workers are not citizens of the nations in which they work, they have very few rights and avenues of recourse to protest their poor treatment. Under the threat of deportation if they violate any of the stringent rules, most workers choose to remain and continue to work.

At the other end of the construction industry supply chain, architects are hired not just for their creativity and design capabilities—whose visually compelling designs are celebrated in the media—but also in the service



Migrant workers at the Qatar National Library designed by OMA. Courtesy of Jordan Carver, WBYA?, 2013.

role of interpreting and executing a project within a framework established by a client’s needs and desires. At the same time, international-scale projects, often presented as cultural centerpieces for cities or nations, garner international prestige by exploiting the image of the celebrity architect and thus provide a platform for architects to expand their role beyond form-maker, problem-solver, and service provider.

Advocacy and Action

WBYA? asks how can architects be most effective in bettering the conditions of workers employed in building their designs? Many points of pressure are needed to effect change in the various networks that coordinate

the actors and resources in building these large-scale projects. Architects cannot shoulder this responsibility alone, or resolve the professional and ethical challenges that arise from these immense projects; it will require efforts from all parties within these networks. Labor unions and human rights organizations have become key allies of construction workers to resolve issues with owners and governments. Some solutions will also rest within the purview of the architect's expertise in housing and urban design and should become part of the international debate on these issues. The WBYA? Critical Field Guide offers an introduction to the issues and an outline for possible actions to this critical global problem.

THE ARCHITECT'S PLEDGE FOR FAIR LABOR

The Architect's Pledge for Fair Labor

**WBYA?
DRAFT PLEDGE**

At a time when labor regulation and labor organizations are fast eroding, architects have a professional responsibility to ensure that fair labor standards are promoted and upheld in the construction of their buildings. This challenge is even more acute on design projects in countries where worker protections are chronically weak. In many such countries, the task of construction is designated to migrant workers who are indentured, exploited, and all but stripped of their rights. Architects sought out by governments to add polish and prestige to nation-building are in a position to insist on improved labor conditions just as they expect high construction standards for their designs.

We, the undersigned, pledge to use our professional standing and practice to advance workers' rights and protections in the construction of buildings that utilize our designs.

We pledge to encourage the inclusion of fair labor provisions in our contracts, wherever possible.

We pledge to seek enforceable guarantees from development partners on our project to respect workers' rights under national and international law. These guarantees include contractual commitments that all contractors and subcontractors ensure workplace safety, decent living conditions, and access to quality medical care; allowing workers to retain their passports; reimburse workers for any fees paid in the recruitment process; cease to work with labor-recruitment agents who engage in exploitative practices; pay salaries promptly; and publicly report deaths and injuries on the worksite.

We pledge to insist that our development partners establish mechanisms to oversee how these contractual commitments are implemented during workers' employment on the project.

If abusive labor practices are found on our projects, we pledge to publicly renounce them.

Who Builds Your Architecture?, "The Architect's Pledge for Fair Labor," Andrew Ross, 2012.

GLOBAL LABOR LEXICON

Abscond: The act of a worker who leaves a contract position without the permission of an employer and/or sponsor.

Construction Contract: A legally binding contract between a client and a general contractor. These contracts differ depending upon the agreed method of construction services delivery, which can also be influenced by the type of contract negotiated for architectural services. Contracts are negotiated to minimize risk and liability.

Contract for Architect's Services: A legally binding contract between two parties, typically a client and an architectural practice. These contracts differ depending upon the agreed method of architectural services delivery, which can also be influenced by the type of contract negotiated for construction services. Contracts are negotiated to minimize risk and liability.

Global Architectural Practice: Architectural firms are increasingly hired by international clients to work on projects in another country. Different laws, economic structures, language, and labor practices—along with questions of transparency and trust—can make building in other countries a challenge. Some firms have set up offices in multiple countries to more easily pursue international contracts.

Global Construction Company: Large transnational construction companies that provide a range of services for architectural and engineering services, resource extraction, infrastructural development, facilities management, and residential and commercial development. The five largest construction companies are VINCI (France); Grupo ACS (Spain); Bechtel (US); Hochtief (Germany); and Skanska (Sweden).

Global Supply Chain: The organization and movement of goods from manufacturers and suppliers to customers around the world. In large building projects the construction industry's global supply chain can bring together many different material and labor suppliers—building materials,

construction equipment, migrant construction workers, design consultants, and subcontractors to job sites. Construction managers and architects may not have full knowledge of all sources and site conditions.

Guest Worker Permit: Legal document provided to a migrant construction worker by a host country that allows the person to work for a specific period of time. While every worker is issued a permit, some employers and sponsors do not issue them to workers to prevent the worker from absconding.

Host Country/Sending Country: The sending country is the country of origin for migrant workers; the host country is the country where the migrant worker has secured a job contract and has been issued a guest worker permit. Because migrant workers are not citizens of the host country their rights to protest poor treatment is limited if not prohibited.

International Labor Law: Internationally agreed upon laws that govern the rights and duties of labor practices—employees, employers, trade unions, and workplace conditions. The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) are the two bodies that oversee labor reform. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is a consortium of trade unions that seeks to preserve the rights of workers to unionize.

Job Contract: Migrant construction workers sign contracts with recruitment agents or employers. These contracts, written in multiple languages, are filed with government agencies to ensure that the agreements are honored. It is common for brokers or employers to routinely break the contract stipulations. These violations are rarely prosecuted in either the host or sending country.

Kafala Sponsorship System: A system of sponsorship that monitors migrant workers in many of the Gulf countries. A worker is sponsored by an employer in the host country who has oversight over that worker's legal and visa status. Often, workers cannot change jobs without the permission of their sponsor, which has made the system ripe for

exploitation. The application of the kafala system differs by country and recently there have been many calls for reform.

Labor Recruitment: Workers secure employment through recruitment agents and brokers who represent the type of work and level of pay available. Workers sign job contracts for a specific type of employment abroad. Workers may arrive, however, to the host country and discover the type of work they will be doing may be different and the salary may be less than promised in the signed contract.

Recruitment Fees: Workers' families pay brokers' recruitment fees and often take on debt charged at high interest rates in order to do so. This debt must be repaid even if the migrant worker is not paid by the employer, is injured on the job site, or dies while in the host country.

Remittances: Transfer of money that construction workers send home to families. Remittances are typically used to supplement other forms of income and help pay for daily expenses, including education. Remittances might also be used towards speculative ends in the sending country.

Risk and Liability: Clients, contractors, and architects minimize the likelihood of legal responsibilities that might arise through accidents, inaccurate information, fraud, and theft in a building project in order to reduce the chance of lawsuits.

Specialization: The work of architects has become increasingly specialized. Tasks that might once have been done by one person are now distributed to an array of consultants with expertise in a specific area of design and construction.

Subcontractor: A contractor that takes on part of another contractor's construction contract. The proliferation of the subcontracting process on large building projects has facilitated the abuse of migrant construction workers due to lack of accountability of the main parties involved in the construction contract.

Worker Camp: Enclosed areas that provide housing for migrant construction workers. Run by companies and rented to contractors, these camps are often built outside of major cities. Sometimes they are constructed near the job site. Private transportation companies are hired to shuttle workers to and from the jobsite. Migrant workers often spend as long as three hours a day traveling between the work site and worker camp.

Worker Migration: Globalization has increased the number of people migrating in search of work, particularly in the construction sector. Seeking better pay, workers may migrate internally with a nation or migrate externally to another country (transnational migration). With the growth of large building projects that draw on an international consortium of companies and firms, the need for large numbers of construction workers has fueled migration. The ILO estimates there are 175 million migrant workers globally, but exact numbers in the construction sector are unknown.

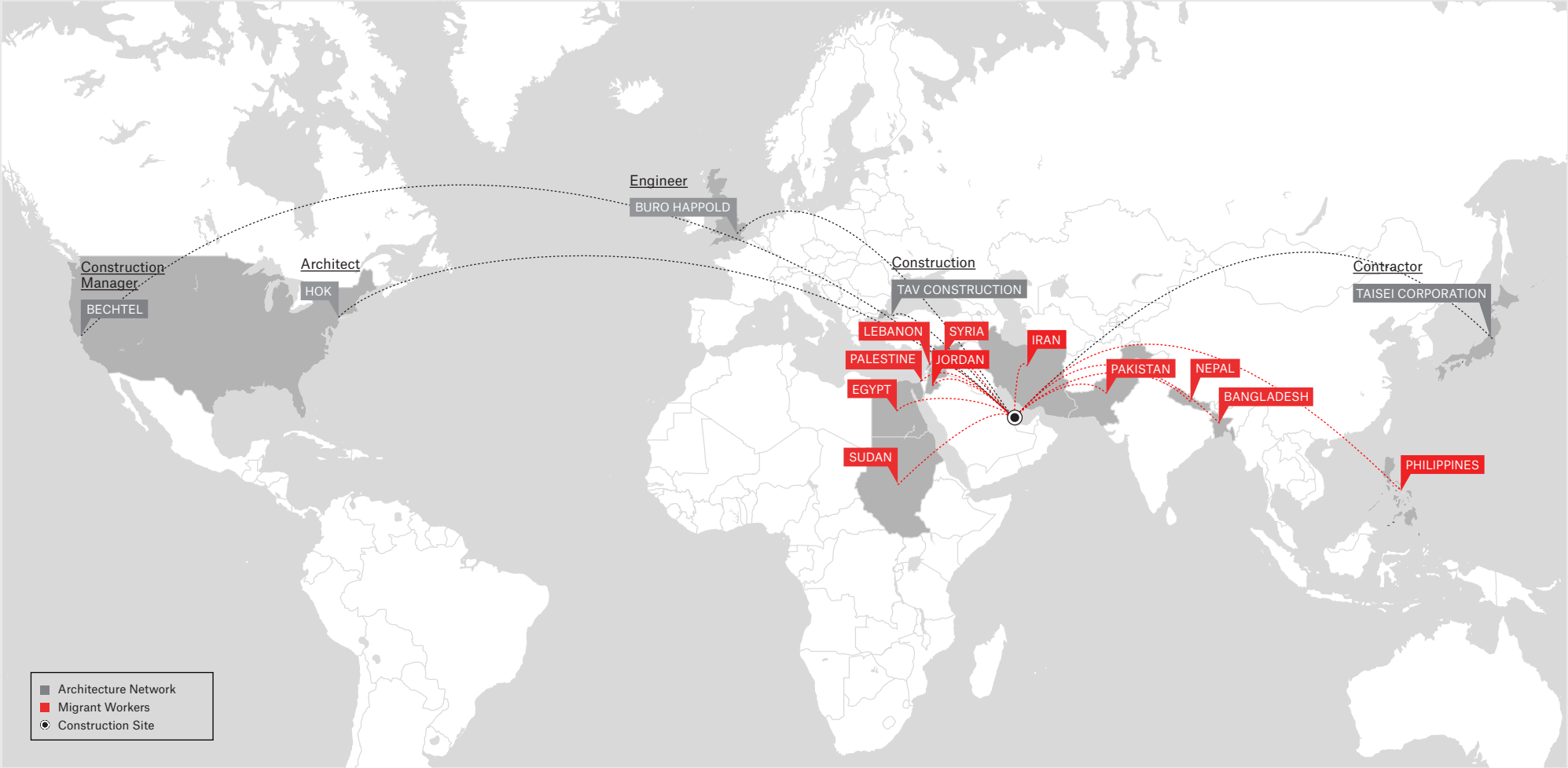
TRANSNATIONAL BUILDING PROJECT

Some of the largest architecture projects currently under construction in the Persian Gulf region are airports. These sites, once completed, serve multiple functions: they bring tourists to the region, they are seen as strategic nodes that support economic growth, and they are also part of the transportation network that connects migrant workers to construction sites.

The Hamad International Airport in Doha, Qatar is one of a number of airports in the Gulf that has recently undergone a major expansion. Planning for the project began in 2003 and the expansion cost has been approximately 15.5

billion USD. The map below shows the architecture and engineering firms that oversaw construction of the new airport as well as the home countries of the migrant workers who worked on the project.

With the expansion, the airport footprint makes up two-thirds of the city of Doha. The airport terminals contain hotels, exercise facilities, spas, and even art exhibitions; the terminal amenities are one of the ways airports in the region compete with one another and develop a global brand closely connected to other strategies for economic growth.



1. HOW DO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS MIGRATE TO THE CONSTRUCTION SITE?

There are many reasons people migrate within a nation or across borders: environmental degradation, social injustices, political conflicts, lack of employment options, and the persuasive influence of friends or relatives. The decision to migrate is the result of a complex set of factors that migrant workers and their families have to think through before deciding to leave their homes. Amid the nuanced process of choosing to migrate, one important characteristic is that many workers are leaving rural areas for cities.

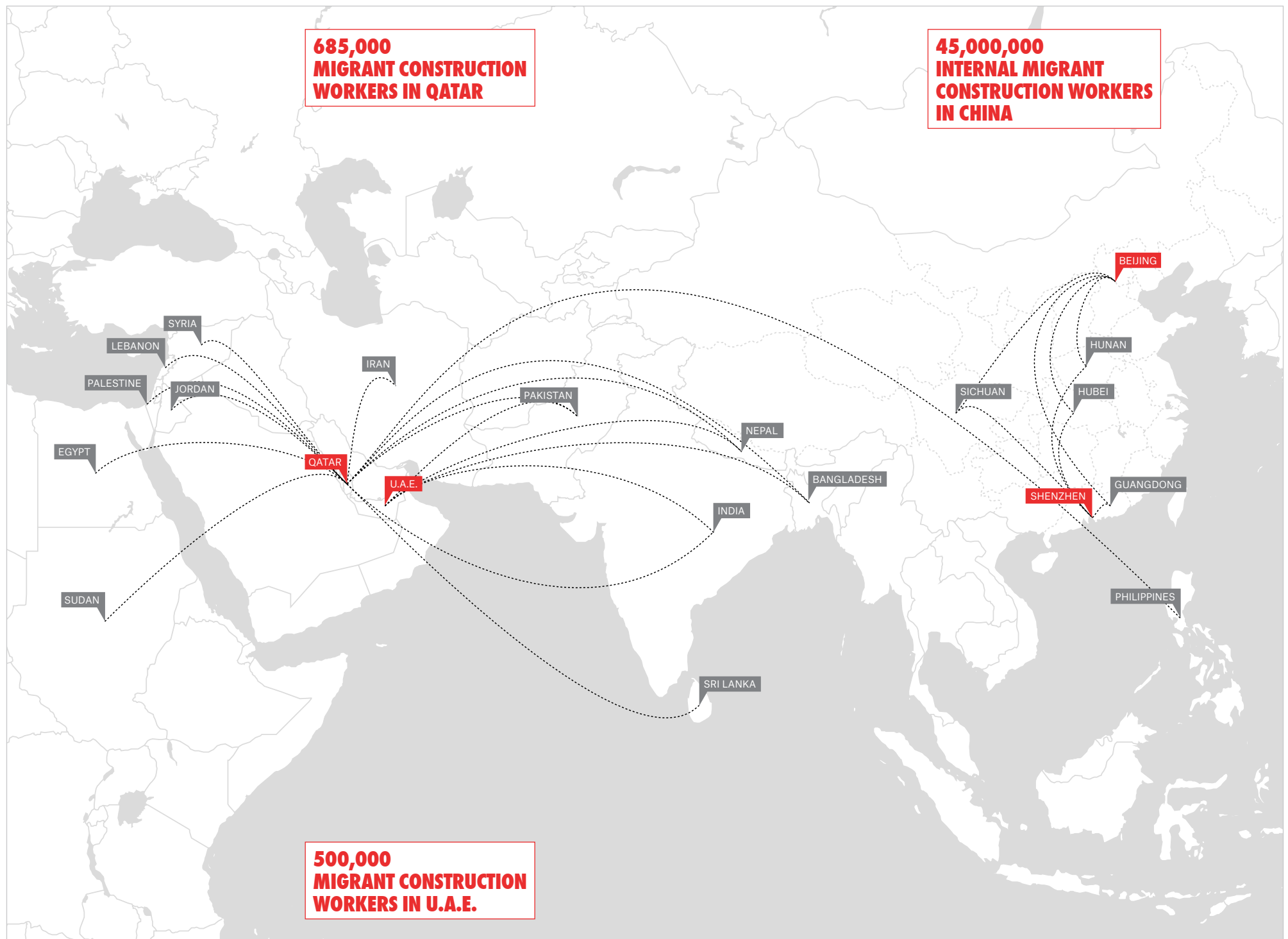
In some countries, such as China, the movement from rural farms to urban construction sites is taking place entirely within national borders. Elsewhere, however, many of the workers who build high-profile architecture projects have crossed national borders for employment at construction sites. Qatar is the most extreme example of this condition, with migrants as 99 percent of the country's private labor sector. The number of construction workers in the country fluctuates, but in recent years these workers have made up 40 to 50 percent of the workforce.

Since a large percentage of the labor for these projects migrates from rural areas, workers are primarily leaving agriculture for the construction industry. Such large-scale movement away from the farm has a profound impact on gender roles in migrant worker households as well as food security in sending countries. Some of the remittances that migrant workers send back are being used in a speculative economy that is funding construction in periurban spaces, which is pulling more labor from rural areas.

The movement of workers to construction sites begins with potential migrants speaking to one of the many labor brokers who circulate in predominantly rural areas of sending countries. These brokers are mostly unregulated. They work with the sending country urban recruitment agencies that receive requests from host country recruitment agencies for a certain

number of workers by type of job. The brokers make the pre-departure arrangements for workers, which involves traveling to urban areas to receive medical exams, orientations about migration, and possibly training before leaving for the host country. Migrant workers typically pay substantial fees to these brokers, which is often borrowed from moneylenders at interest rates that can be as high as 60 percent. Many workers have found on arrival in the host country that their brokers falsified documents, but legal recourse in such situations is exceedingly difficult. A large portion of the remittances that migrant workers send back home goes towards paying off the debt from the broker and recruitment agency fees. In order to significantly reduce the indebtedness of migrant workers, the broker and recruitment agency system needs to change.

WBAYA? believes architects have an ethical responsibility to understand the system that brings workers from their home countries to the construction site. What leverage do architects have to ensure workers on their projects are being paid the wages they agreed to when they signed contracts in their home countries? How can architects work with human rights observers to ensure the recruitment agencies that bring workers to job sites are meeting international labor standards? Additionally, how can architects be part of a process of training construction workers, either in home countries or on the construction site? What sort of vocational skills would be useful not only on the construction site but back in the home country as well?



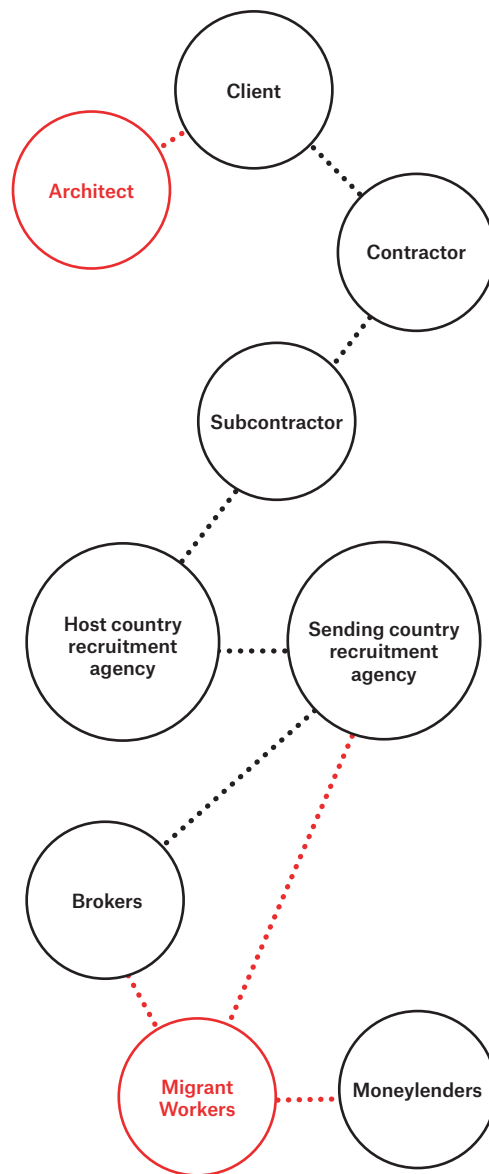
WHAT SPACES DO MIGRANT WORKERS LEAVE?

Many of the migrant workers who are working on architectural projects for events such as the 2022 World Cup in Qatar have left rural areas in sending countries. Within this general category of the rural are countless spaces, each with their own ecosystems, elevations from sea levels, and climates. Some of the villages migrant workers are leaving are below sea level, where rice paddy fields are cultivated. Other workers are leaving from the terraced farms on the foothills of the Himalayas.

The transportation networks that connect migrant workers from villages to the cities where they leave for host countries are not all the same, either. The process of migration could start by walking for hours or days to a dirt or asphalted road that has a bus route to an urban center. Or it could entail first traveling along a waterway before connecting to other means of transportation to reach the departure city.

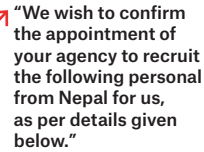
In preparation for leaving a rural area, most migrants work with labor brokers who are usually connected to manpower or recruitment agencies. Workers borrow money for the migration fees from moneylenders in their villages and pay brokers before they travel to urban areas.

Remittances from migrant workers are sent to the rural areas where their families live. A large portion of the remittances are used to pay debts to brokers and recruitment agencies. If a migrant worker dies while employed abroad, the family might receive insurance money after a period of time, while paying the recruitment debt and interest without any income from abroad. Usually, the family can only receive insurance money if the worker has traveled through legal migration channels.

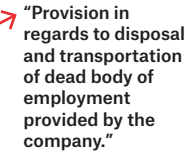


Top to bottom, left to right: Rural areas that workers leave—rice paddy fields in Kerala, India. Waterway in Kerala, India. Agriculture in Nepal. Hill roads in Nepal. Village beside a road (and bus route) in Nepal. All images courtesy of Laura Diamond Dixit, WBYA?, 2015.

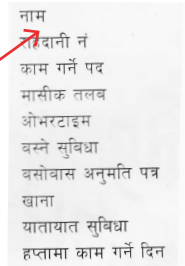
After receiving a request for construction site workers, the sending country recruitment agency posts an advertisement for workers and coordinates with labor brokers in rural areas. There is often an interview or selection process. Once the workers sign a contract for a job, they pay fees to the broker and/or the recruitment agency. Before leaving the country, workers receive copies of their contracts, receipts of the cash they have paid to cover the fees, and their flight information to travel to the construction site. They also undergo a medical examination, a process confirmed via a medical report. Along with the documents for individual migrant workers, the recruitment agency in the sending country compiles a list for the agency in the host country with information about the workers who will do the type of job requested. They also send a list with life insurance information for all of the workers who are leaving the country, as required by law. The final document in the migration process is the entry papers for the migrant worker generated on arrival in the receiving country.



Host country: workers needed



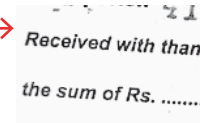
Sending country: employment agreement



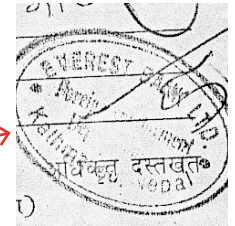
Sending country: basic contract



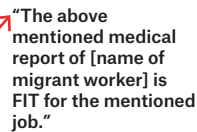
Sending country: recruitment agency receipt



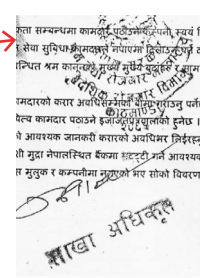
Sending country: recruitment agency receipt



Sending country: recruitment agency receipt



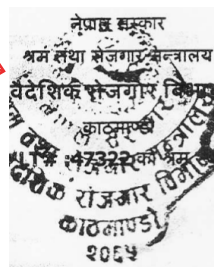
Sending country: medical report



Sending country: legal responsibilities



Airplane Ticket



Sending country: list of workers



Sending country: workers' life insurance

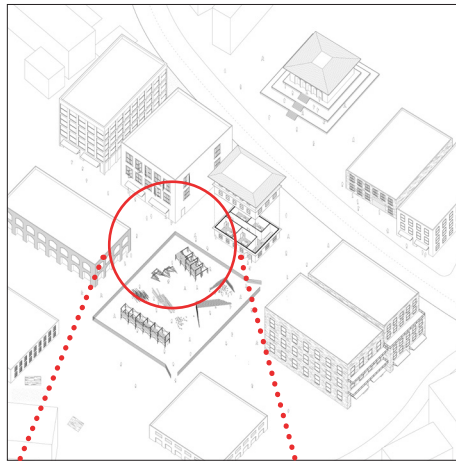


Host country: entry permit

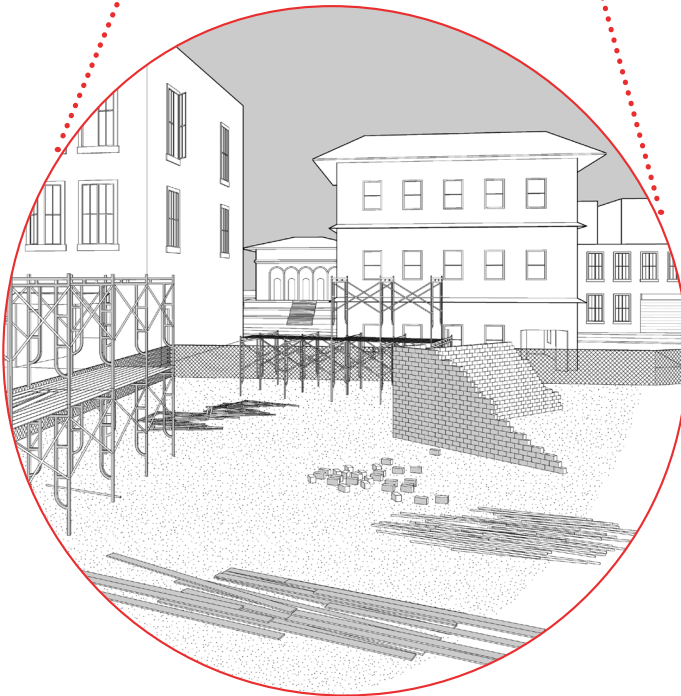
1.3 Training

WHAT TRAINING DO WORKERS RECEIVE BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE HOST COUNTRY?

Most unskilled migrant construction workers receive no vocational training before they leave a sending country. Those who do, attend private skill-based training centers to learn basic construction techniques for a period of days or months. In some of the sending countries, training orientations are mandatory before leaving for host countries, and the content of such sessions have to do with situations that migrant workers might face when abroad. The curriculum of mandatory orientation centers could be revised to include more comprehensive skill-based training.



Privately-run training site in a sending country.



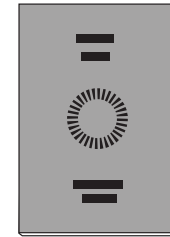
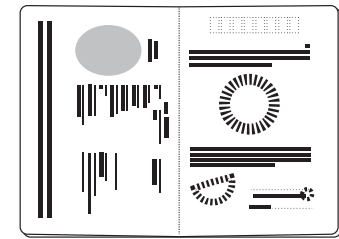
1.4 Airplanes

HOW DO WORKERS TRAVEL TO THE HOST COUNTRY?

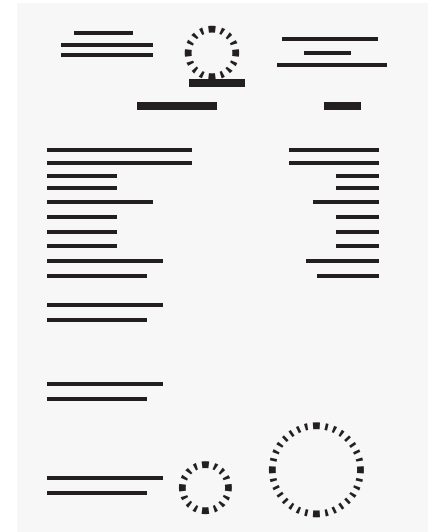
The last step in the process of migration usually involves taking a plane to the host country. This is not, however, the case for Chinese migrant construction workers who may travel within the country by train. Travel across national borders puts the migrant construction worker in a precarious legal position because protections that might be given to workers in the sending countries do not necessarily apply in host countries, since the worker has moved from one legal system to another. Upon arriving in the host country, migrant workers receive an entry permit after their papers and passports have been checked by immigration officers. Under the kafala sponsorship system common in many parts of the Middle East, worker passports and permits may be held by sponsors to prevent them from absconding.



The Himalayas from a flight leaving Nepal.
Hamad International Airport in Doha, Qatar.
Courtesy of Laura Diamond Dixit, WBVA?, 2013 and 2015.



Migrant worker passports.



Host country entry permit.

2. WHERE DO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS LIVE?

One of the most pressing issues with migrant construction labor are living conditions away from the jobsite. Many workers live in poorly maintained, substandard accommodations located in sprawling “workers’ camps” or industrial districts. Companies construct these camps at the outskirts of the city, far from jobsites and areas where amenities can be easily accessed. The camps consist of dormitory buildings of varying size and quality that provide workers with minimal spaces for socializing and rest.

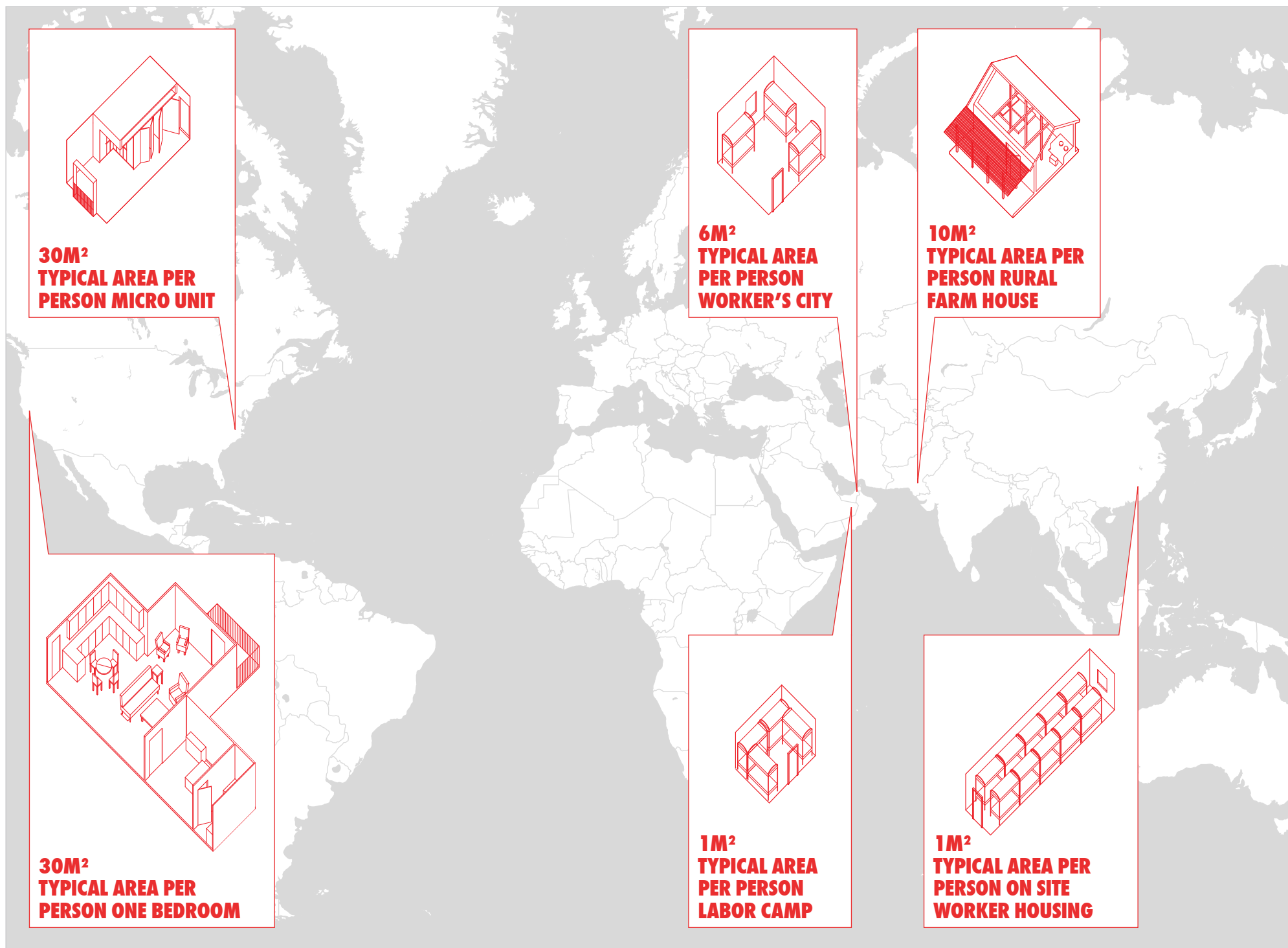
The workers’ camps result in the segregation of a large population of men outside the civic and economic life of the city that they are constructing. Transportation is typically only available via a company bus that limits access to social amenities as well as key human services such as access to embassies and consulates. This separation produces a dual effect that keeps workers from integrating into the social and cultural life of the host city/country while curtailing the establishment of migrant owned businesses that might fuel additional movement of men, women, and children to a particular city or region. This isolation and lack of political agency also stifles political reforms that would open the host nations to more immigration. It also blocks the creation of immigrant communities that would form outside the purview of the current limited employment contracts.

WBYA? makes the claim that migrant worker housing should be a design consideration when dealing with the administration of a project and site. We ask how can architects use their knowledge and skills to address worker housing rights? How can the unique position of the architect be used to help guide housing decisions, from design and construction, to logistics and implementation? Rather than thinking of housing as an offsite problem, is it something that can be thought of as an integral part of how the ‘jobsite’ is planned? By using a set of predetermined and/or modular housing units, can best practices be established to bring housing conditions within the jurisdiction of a design project?

How could the design of the unit, dormitory, cluster, and camp be thought about holistically and in relation to the jobsite and the city? How can the architect make recommendations and provide resources to help guide housing policy on site?



Worker dormitory, NYUAD. Courtesy of Gulf Labor.



2.1 Camp

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS IN MIGRANT WORKER'S HOUSING?

In host countries, labor camps house workers when they are away from their jobsites. "Worker camp" is the name given to these locations in many parts of the world. These camps can house thousands of men and are deliberately separated from areas in the city that house local families. If the jobsite is located a far distance from a major city, workers will be housed nearby.

Camps consist of dormitories that house sleeping, eating, and bathing facilities for workers. These will sometimes include recreational areas. There can be 20 - 40 dormitory buildings that house thousands of workers. Industrial City in Abu Dhabi can house up to 50,000 workers. Class and ethnic status in countries where the nationals are minorities create distinct, segregated areas within the camps.

The camps are constructed and maintained by companies that lease out dormitories according to when a contractor or subcontractor might need a group of men for a particular task. Therefore, a camp might house several different teams of construction workers who are on different long-term or short-term schedules.

Best practices for camps in the UAE, developed in 2009, list as necessary spaces for personal accommodation, ablution, catering, mess hall, medical, laundry, recreation, and traffic management. Because the camps are privately owned, maintenance of these various facilities can be sporadic to nonexistent. If the contracting company fails to pay its bills, electricity and water may be terminated, along with food service. Workers in these instances suffer from high temperatures and lack of sanitary conditions.




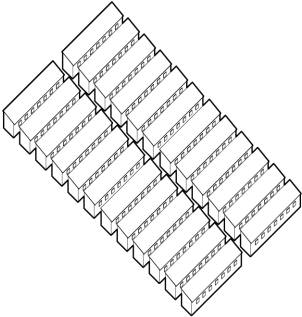
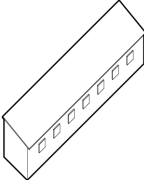
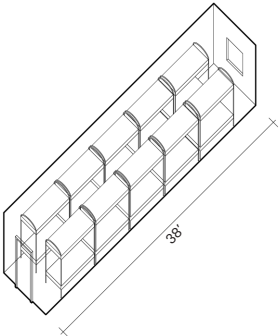

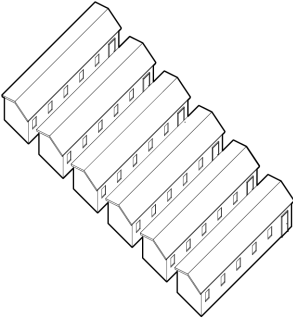
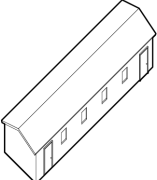
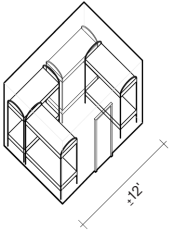
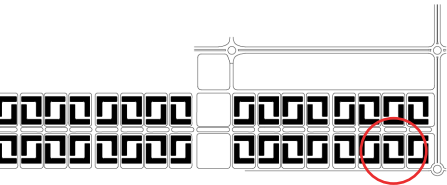
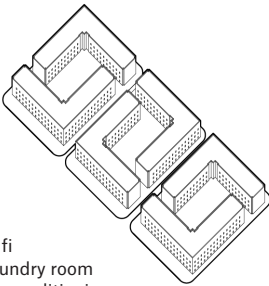
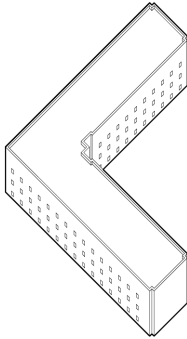
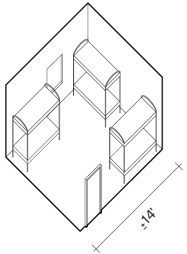
Al Khor worker camp, Qatar. Qatari officials report the camp can accommodate up to 6,000 workers. Image from Wikimapia.

HOW ARE THE HOUSING UNITS DESIGNED AND ARRANGED WITHIN THE CAMP?

The camps are designed to provide areas for the worker accommodations, which are typically dormitory-style buildings. Often these buildings are prefabricated units that are brought to the site. As human rights groups have documented, workers are subject to overcrowded accommodations with inadequate spaces to socialize, bath, or cook.

The design for the dormitories consist of several rooms along a single or double-loaded corridor. Each room will have a bunk bed that sleeps two workers. Rooms can house several bunk beds. The overcrowding of ten men with stacked bunk beds in dormitory style rooms designed for no more than four is also common practice.

Part of each dormitory are bathing facilities that include showers, sinks, and toilets. Areas for food preparation and consumption are often housed in other buildings on site. Indoor recreational areas are few and outdoor areas are shared between several dormitory buildings. Problems with accommodations range from sporadic food delivery services, unsanitary kitchens and bathrooms, and lack of maintenance and cleaning services. Electricity and water shortages, exposed sewage, and poor to nonexistent air conditioning are common problems plaguing many worker camps. Poor sewer and sanitation problems can also create unlivable conditions for workers.

Camp	Cluster	Dormitory	Room
			
Type 1. Shenzhen, China. Migrant workers living on site are not included in the total migrant worker count.		Made in china: \$40-70 / square meter.	24 men
			
Type 2. For rent: fully furnished labor camp at Al Khor, Qatar for 800 members \$1000/month.			8 men
			
Type 3. 1 Billion USD workers' city Barwa Al-Baraha in Qatar will house 53,000 migrant workers when completed.	Wifi Laundry room Air conditioning Shared TV viewing areas No alcohol No cooking	130 rooms per dormitory	6 men

2.3 Buses

HOW DO WORKERS TRAVEL FROM CAMP TO JOB SITE TO OTHER PARTS OF THE CITY?

In order to get from the camp to the job-site and to any other amenity such as shopping, offsite leisure activities, and human services (such as an embassy), workers rely on buses run by the construction company or a company subcontracted by them. These buses, because they are not a form of mass transit, leave workers at the will of the construction company's schedule. Workers can wait for hours for bus service to and from a particular location.



Workers wait for buses in Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi. Courtesy of Samer Muscati, Human Rights Watch, 2011.



Workers leaving jobsite in UAE. Courtesy of Samer Muscati, Human Rights Watch, 2011.

2.4 Human Services

HOW DO WORKERS ACCESS BASIC MEDICAL, FINANCIAL, AND LEGAL SERVICES?

Access to an embassy or to the sponsoring agent will not typically be available at the worker camp. If there are any problems with contracts or passports, workers have to leave the camp in order to access social services. Medical care is offered on site at many camps. Any legal problems and most banking needs must be handled away from the camps. Workers are typically paid in cash and send remittances through money transfer operators for a fee back to their home countries. This transaction requires that they travel to the city or an area where they can wire money to their families. In 2015, Qatar implemented electronic payment for all workers to ensure timely payment of wages. The program requires each worker have a bank account, something many of them lack.



Migrant worker living in Doha, Qatar. Courtesy of Sam Tarling, Human Rights Watch, 2012.



Money transfer operator in Doha. Courtesy of Jordan Carver, WBYA?, 2013.

CAN WORKERS PROTEST UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICES AND CONDITIONS?

As guest workers in the host country, many workers are not allowed to publicly dispute unfair work or living conditions. Their right to protest is not protected by law. Protesting workers can have their contracts terminated, be labeled as “absconders,” and be deported at any time. Without the promise of “freedom of association,” which is a right of free speech and is recognized by many nations and human rights groups, workers in places like Qatar or the Emirates cannot legally form trade unions.

Workers found violating these rules can have their contract terminated, placed in a detention center, and deported—all without being paid. Despite these prohibitions and the risks of deportation, workers do organize protests for fair treatment.



Construction workers stage protest over pay in March.
Courtesy of Dubai Media Office, 2015.

3. WHAT ARE DESIGN CONSTRUCTION NETWORKS?

From the 1932 declaration of an “International Style” by Philip Johnson and the Museum of Modern Art to the iconographic “bird’s nest” stadium of the 2008 summer Olympics, architecture has been presented and understood as an increasingly global enterprise. The so-called modern style of post-war European architecture was said to embody the universal human values of social welfare and honest materials. Modernist architecture was deployed around the world as an easily adaptable answer to housing the modern subject and building the modern city.

Contemporary practice may not make such grandiose claims, yet large architectural projects are still used to broadcast liberal ideals across the globe. Any Olympic, World Cup, or other mega-event host city knows that the construction of new and spectacular architecture is one of the primary means to showcase its entry into a hyper-connected world. When Zaha Hadid claimed “I have nothing to do with the workers” after a journalist asked her about migrant construction worker deaths in Qatar, it was the rendering of her Al Wakrah stadium design that illustrated the furor her words incited. Even if Hadid was arguably the most famous woman architect in the world, it’s the images she created and the designs of her buildings that served to construct her identity.

On the other side, the stadium-to-be was also used by the state of Qatar to project a future state connected by international trade, economics, and sport—all represented by an architectural image. The design and construction of such large architectural projects involves a highly collaborative and often widely dispersed group of clients, financiers, architects, engineers, consultants, manufacturers, contractors, and workers who construct a fully realized project. Many of these actors must coordinate and work together through efficient technological platforms, established standards, and global legal and trade agreements. Through shared software platforms, international sizing

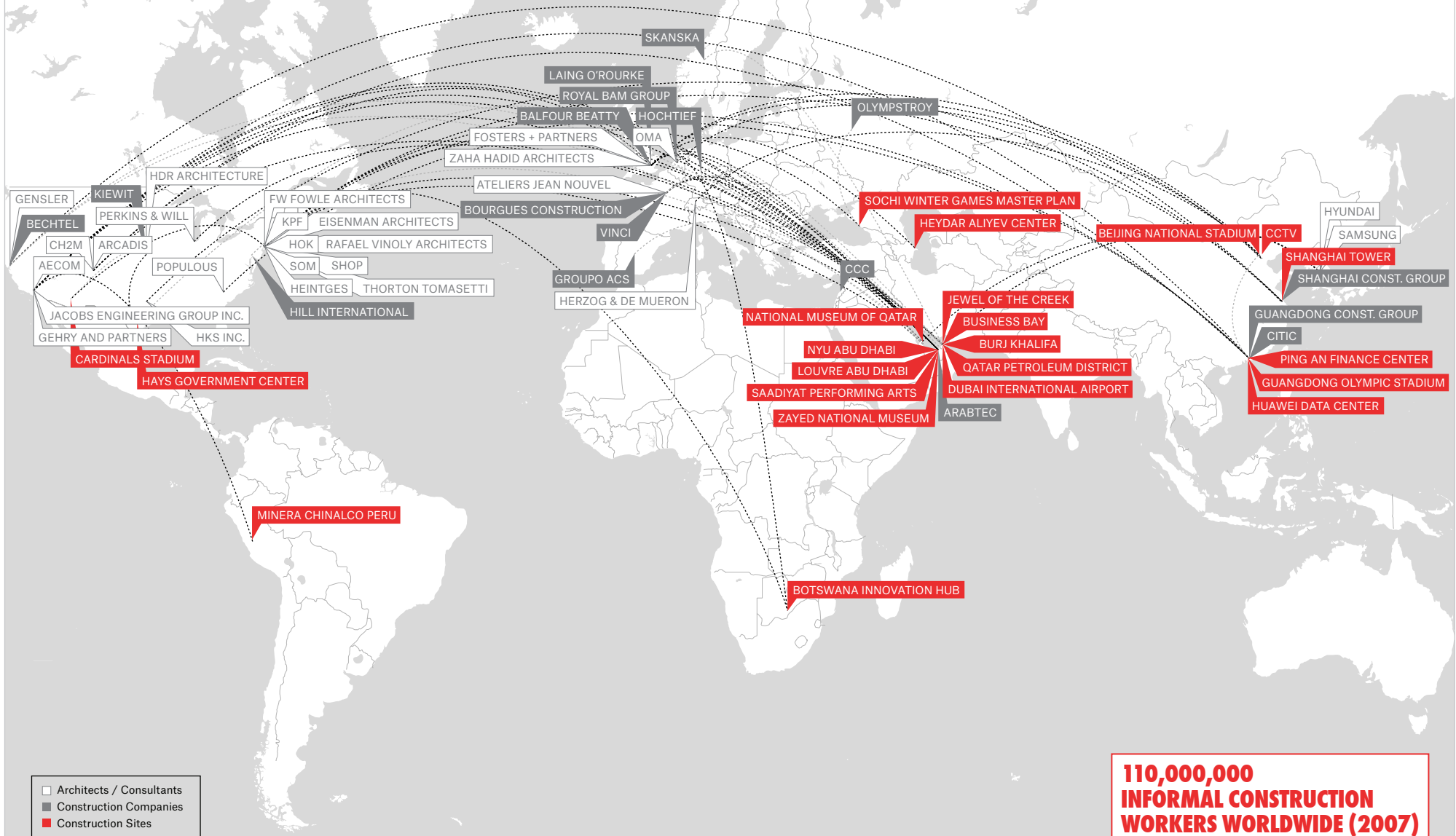
and manufacturing standards, and disciplinary frameworks nearly every aspect of the design and construction process can be quantified and organized. One area that remains shockingly unregulated is the human labor used to construct such designs of the future.

If the design and construction of building projects are understood broadly as a type of global practice, how is it that the workers who turn the building from drawings to a material form can continually be ignored? And if there are regulations, standards, and metrics to make the global process of design and construction smoother, can there similarly be standards and procedures established to safeguard the life, safety, and free movement of migrant and all construction workers?



Migrant laborers working for UrbaCon General Contracting waiting to take the bus home at the end of the day. Doha, March 12, 2014. Courtesy of Jordan Carver, WBYA?, 2014.

\$1,700,000,000
2013 GROSS BILLING FOR
INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS FOR
US BASED ARCHITECTURE FIRMS



WHAT IS THE IMAGE OF ARCHITECTURE?

2013

Zaha Hadid's design for the Al Wakrah stadium officially announced.

Reuters: Qatar unveils dhow-inspired stadium amid World Cup controversy

"Qatar on Saturday unveiled the design for a new soccer stadium, inspired by a traditional fishing boat but with a cooled pitch, as it presses ahead with plans for the 2022 World Cup despite the dispute over when it can be held due to the heat...."

The design, topped with a structure resembling the sails of a dhow, also includes a spectator area outside the ground that will be temperature controlled at 30-32C.

The plan gave no specific details how the cooling system would work, other than saying it would incorporate 'shading, aerodynamic and mechanical cooling components'."



2013

News reports published on the risks facing migrant construction workers in Qatar.

The Guardian (UK): Qatar World Cup: 185 Nepalese died in 2013 – official records

"The extent of the risks faced by migrant construction workers building the infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar has been laid bare by official documents revealing that 185 Nepalese men died last year alone. The 2013 death toll, which is expected to rise as new cases come to light, is likely to spark fresh concern over the treatment of migrant workers in Qatar and increase the pressure on FIFA to force meaningful change."

The Guardian (UK): More than 500 Indian workers have died in Qatar since 2012, figures show

"Human rights groups and politicians said the figures meant FIFA could not "look the other way", and should be leading demands for Qatar to improve conditions for the estimated 1.2 million migrant workers fueling a huge construction boom."



2013

The 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy releases stadium renderings and they go viral.

Buzzfeed: The Design For Qatar's First World Cup Stadium Looks Like a Vagina

"The World Cup in Qatar is still over eight years away, but the designs for the first stadium to be built, in Al Wakrah, have already been released. The architectural firm that designed the stadium based it on the "dhow" boat that Qataris traditionally used for pearl diving. But for those who have no clue what a dhow boat looks like, Al Wakrah stadium looks like something else entirely. A vagina."



The Guardian (UK): Qatar's Accidental Vagina Stadium Is Most Gratifying

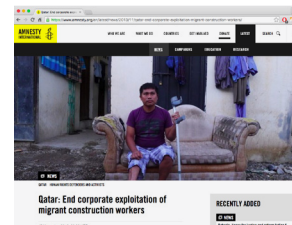
"With its shiny, pinkish tinge, its labia-like side appendages and its large opening in the middle, the supposedly innocent building was just asking for trouble."

2013

News articles begin to link the stadium design to an Amnesty International report on migrant construction worker abuse in Qatar.

METRO (UK): That awkward moment when a new stadium for the Qatar World Cup looks like a vagina

"Writing in the Guardian, Holly Baxter, co-founder and editor of The Vagenda blog, applauded the design, unintentional or not. 'Perhaps the bigwigs behind the design (no doubt all male) should embrace this so-called faux pas and rebrand it as a deliberate nod towards the increasingly liberal Qatari policies concerning women in sport,' she wrote. A new report from Amnesty International meanwhile claimed to have uncovered abuse, exploitation and even forced labour in the construction sector."



2014

Zaha Hadid claims "I have nothing to do with workers" when asked about migrant worker deaths.

The Guardian (UK): Zaha Hadid defends Qatar World Cup role following migrant worker deaths

"Hadid, a prominent London-based Iraqi architect who has designed the Al-Wakrah stadium in Qatar, said the migrant deaths were a serious problem but it was a matter for the Qatari government."

"I have nothing to do with the workers," said Hadid. "I think that's an issue the government – if there's a problem – should pick up. Hopefully, these things will be resolved."

Asked if she was concerned, Hadid added: 'Yes, but I'm more concerned about the deaths in Iraq as well, so what do I do about that? I'm not taking it lightly but I think it's for the government to look to take care of. It's not my duty as an architect to look at it."

"I cannot do anything about it because I have no power to do anything about it. I think it's a problem anywhere in the world. But, as I said, I think there are discrepancies all over the world."



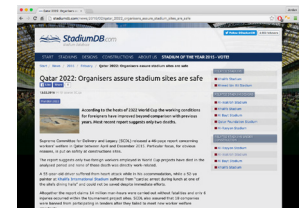
2016

Al Wakrah stadium is under construction with a 2018 scheduled completion date. Qatari officials promise constructions sites are safe.

StadiumDB.com: Qatar 2022: Organisers assure stadium sites are safe

"According to the hosts of 2022 World Cup the working conditions for foreigners have improved beyond comparison with previous years. Most recent report suggests only two deaths."

Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SCDL) released a 46-page report concerning workers' welfare in Qatar between April and December 2015. Particular focus, for obvious reasons, is put on safety at constructions sites."

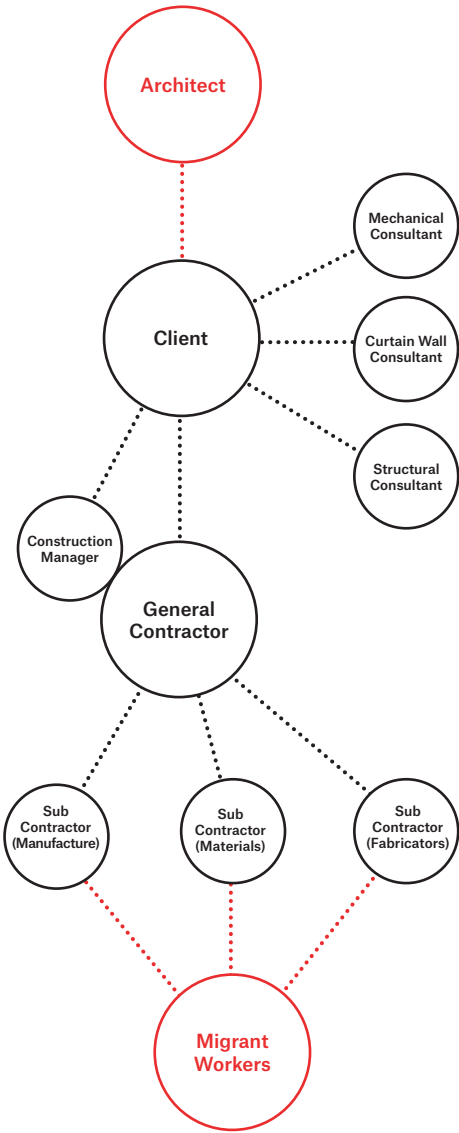


3.2 Practice

HOW IS ARCHITECTURE PRACTICED?

The main parties initiating, designing, and constructing a building project are the client, the architect, and a series of construction contractors. The typical hierarchy of construction establishes all contractual agreements through the client. In practice this means there is traditionally no contractual agreement between an architect designing a project and the contractor hired to construct it.

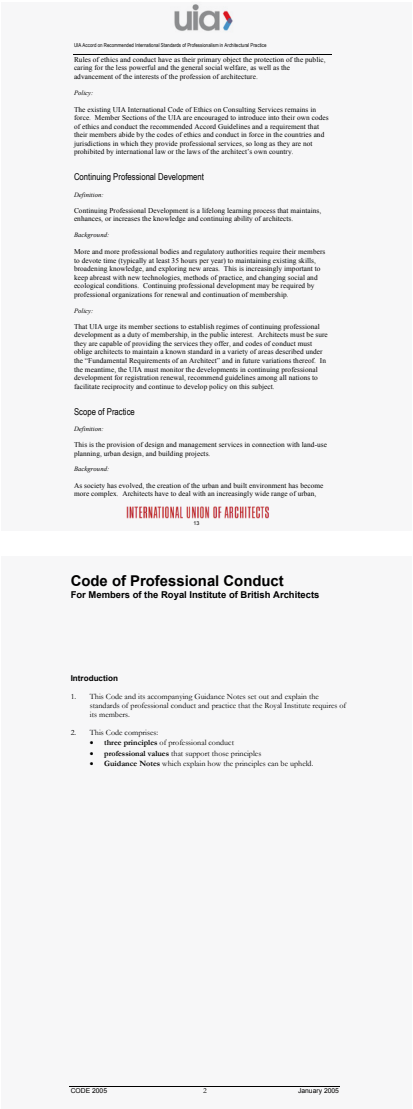
Similarly, each subcontractor (and sub-subcontractor) hired for a specific task on a large construction project—plumbing, windows, tile work, electricity, etc.—will have contracts with the main contractor, further distancing them from the architect. Low-wage, low-skill laborers are often many times removed from both the client and the design process.



3.3 Ethics

HOW IS THE DISCIPLINE OF ARCHITECTURE GOVERNED?

Architecture, as a discipline and profession, is governed by various organizations including the International Union of Architects (UIA), American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), and many other country specific groups. Organizations such as the UIA, AIA, and RIBA promote architecture as a profession and provide support to the discipline through best practices, business documents, organizational advocacy, and professional governance. But on an issue such as labor exploitation most groups have painfully little to say. The ethics clause of the AIA states, “Members should uphold human rights in all their professional endeavors.” Even more blandly, in their Code of Professional Conduct RIBA states: “Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others.” The UIA, however, acknowledges the transnational nature of architectural practice and member sections by stating that they are “encouraged to introduce into their own codes of ethics and conduct the recommended Accord Guidelines and a requirement that their members abide by the codes of ethics and conduct in force in the countries and jurisdictions in which they provide professional services, so long as they are not prohibited by international law or the laws of the architect’s own country.”

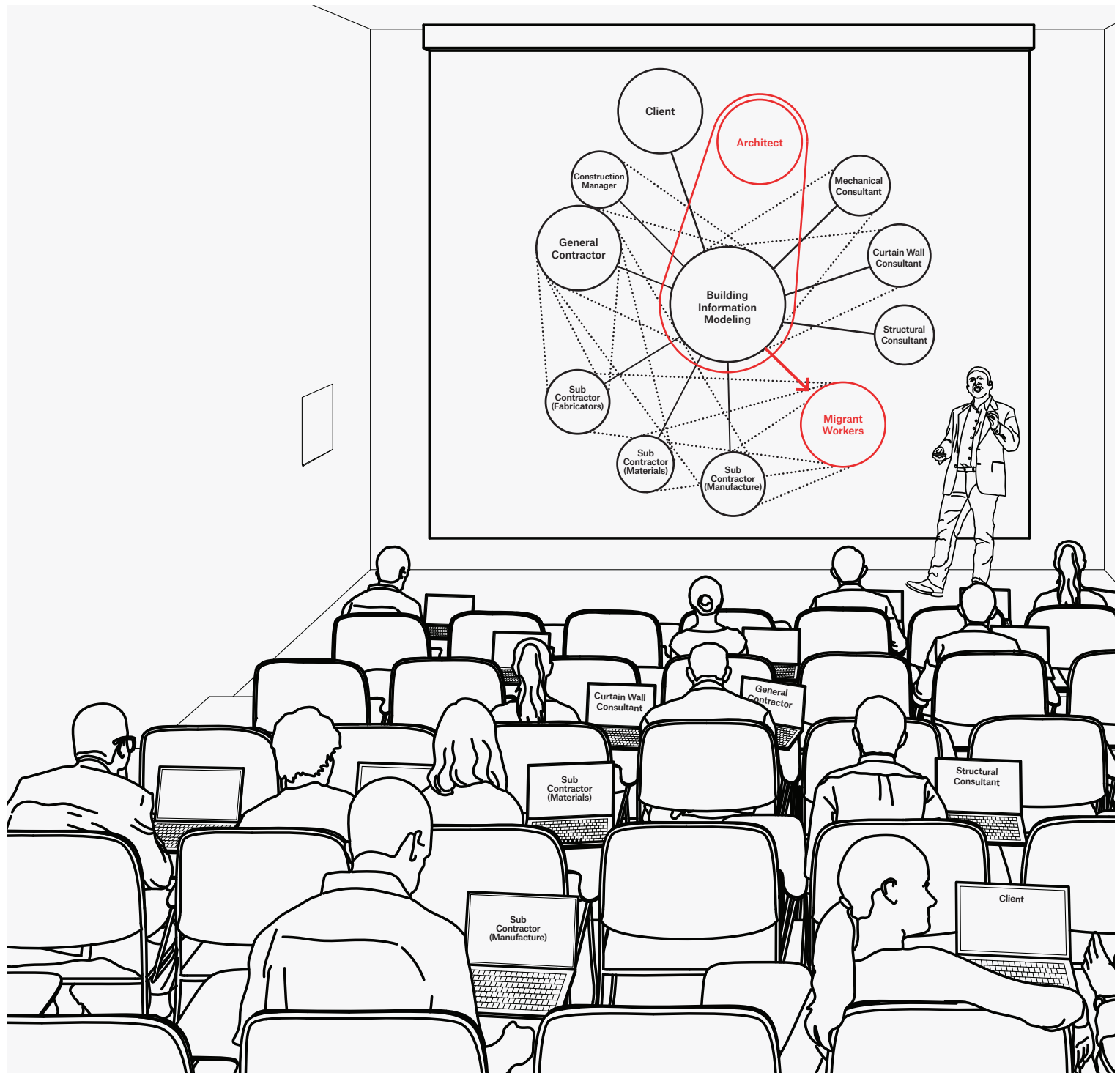


Pages from the UIA (above) and RIBA ethics standards. For the AIA recommendations see page 80.

HOW IS ARCHITECTURAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFERED?

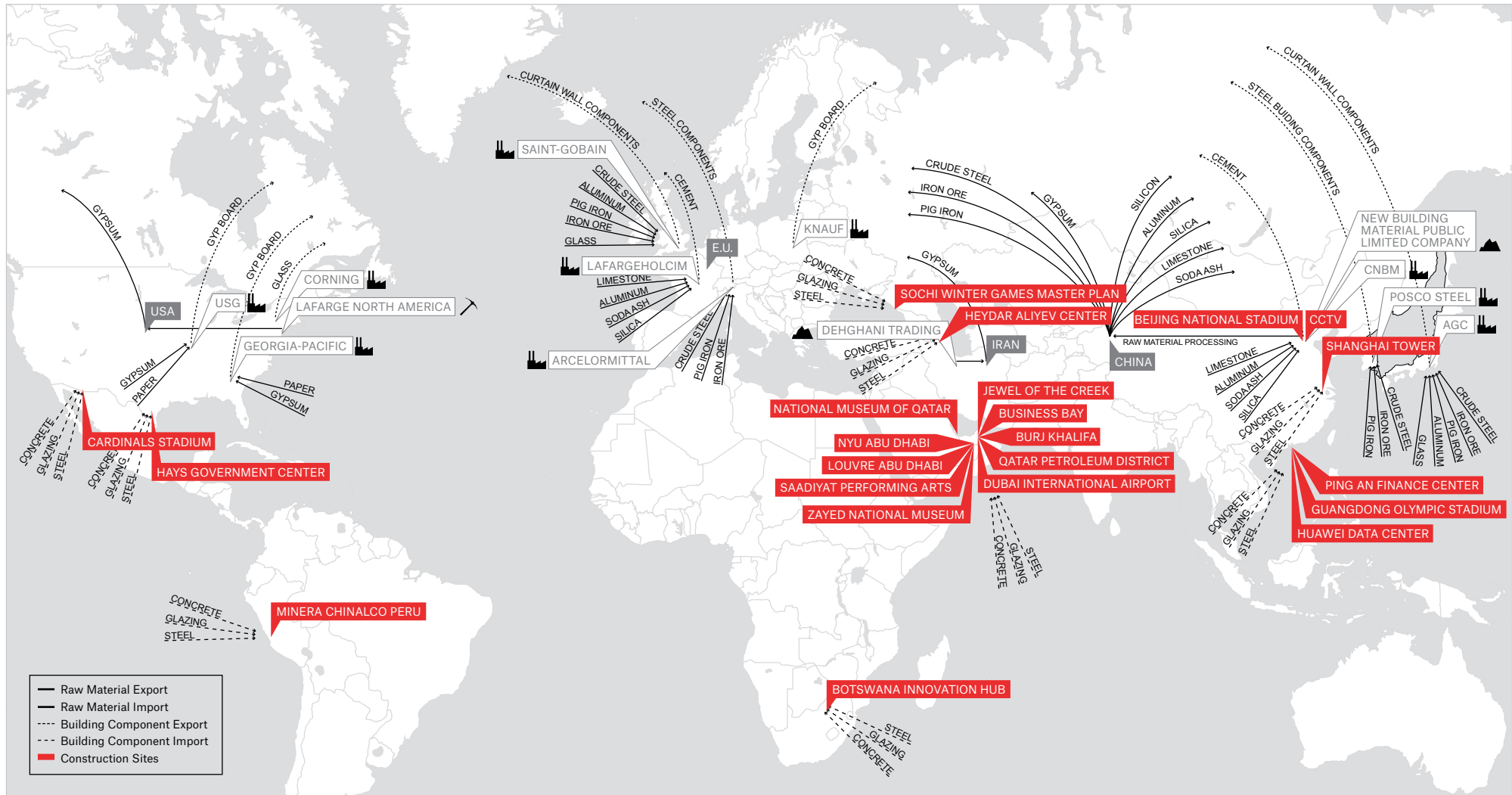
One area where the architect may have direct contact with a worker or sub-contracted laborer is through the production of architectural drawings. The measured drawing is the standard, and often only, material responsibility of the architect. The architectural drawing is not merely a design scheme and spatial organization, but also a specific set of instructions dictating the material and aesthetic desires of the architect and client. And while a laborer (or one working within the contractor hierarchy) may not necessarily take instruction directly from the architectural drawing, its production is the primary means of communication and knowledge transfer from the architect to the builder.

The advent and adoption of Building Information Modeling (BIM) technologies has allowed architects, clients, and contractors to conceive, develop, and produce buildings through the use of shared digital models. Powerful BIM platforms allow efficient design and construction methods to be developed and deployed from the beginning of a project through construction and even into the maintenance of a final built work. The typical BIM diagram accounts for many of the actors within the design and construction cycle yet all of them fail to take into account the labor required to bring the model from digital design to realized project.



WHAT ARE MATERIAL NETWORKS?

Construction materials are manufactured in many different places around the world. Globally, projects use steel from China, gypsum board from the United States, and glass from Germany. Each material needs to be accounted for and coordinated across BIM technologies and finally assembled by workers onsite.



3.6 Standards

HOW ARE MATERIALS REGULATED AND STANDARDIZED?

One of the primary vehicles allowing architectural practice to span the globe is the development and acceptance of universal material standards which govern many of the raw materials and building components used in most construction projects. Steel beams, dimensional wood, bolts and fasteners, plumbing fixtures, glass panes—to name a few materials—are governed by one or more of global standards set by large, multinational organizations. The World Standards Co-operation is the largest and is an umbrella organization for International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Other prominent standards organizations include the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Underwriters Laboratories (which marks electrical good with “UL Listed”), along with many other groups focused more narrowly on one material or building component.

The most widely acknowledged form of standards governing the design and production of a building project are the Architectural Graphics Standards, a set of guidelines and building-code specific drawing, measuring, and production techniques. While indispensable in the production of architectural drawings, the standards govern only the material and formal standardization of building drawing sets. Of the few standards governing building performance and a project’s relationship to the larger human and ecological systems architecture and construction participate in, the most prominent is the much-maligned Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). LEED certification is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (UBGBC) and

focused on largely “environmental concerns and energy consumption. Currently, LEED does not offer points toward certification based on recruiting, labor practices, worksite conditions, or any category which might be broadly described as human sustainability.

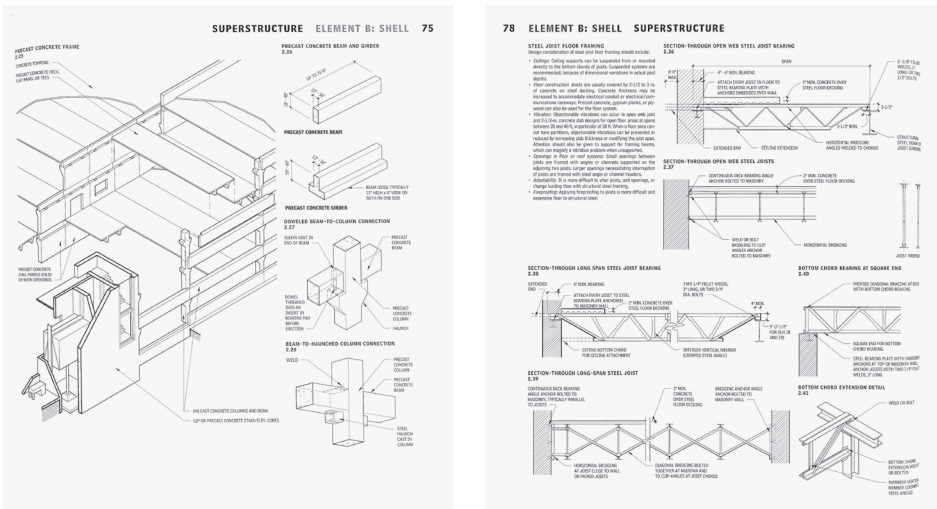
“Shell” and “Superstructure” from Architectural Graphics Standards, often referred to as the “architect’s bible,” presents thousands of AIA approved construction details and their appropriate graphic representation. According to the publisher, Wiley, the standards were first published in 1924 and the 12th edition was released in 2016. Each 1000+ page book sells for around \$250.

The International Organization for Standards (fig. 1) is an international standard-setting body based in Geneva, Switzerland and is formed from representatives of various national standards organizations. ISO published over 19,500 standards dealing with a broad array of fields from currency to sustainability to occupational safety.

The American National Standards Institute (fig. 2) is the official U.S. representative to the ISO. ANSI develops a broad array of standards including livestock regulations and demolition procedures.

ASTM International (fig. 3) is one of the largest international standard-setting organizations. They publish over 13,000 voluntary standards for steel, composite, wood, and electronic manufacturing.

The seal of the U.S. Green Building Council (fig. 4) is often used to mark the exterior of LEED certified buildings. LEED uses a points based system to earn credits in an array of construction and design criteria. There are four levels of certification from “certified” up to “Platinum.”



“Shell” and “Superstructure” from Architectural Graphics Standards.



1. The International Organization for Standards



2. The American National Standards Institute



3. ASTM International (formerly American Society of the International Association for Testing and Materials)



4. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification from the U.S. The Green Building Council

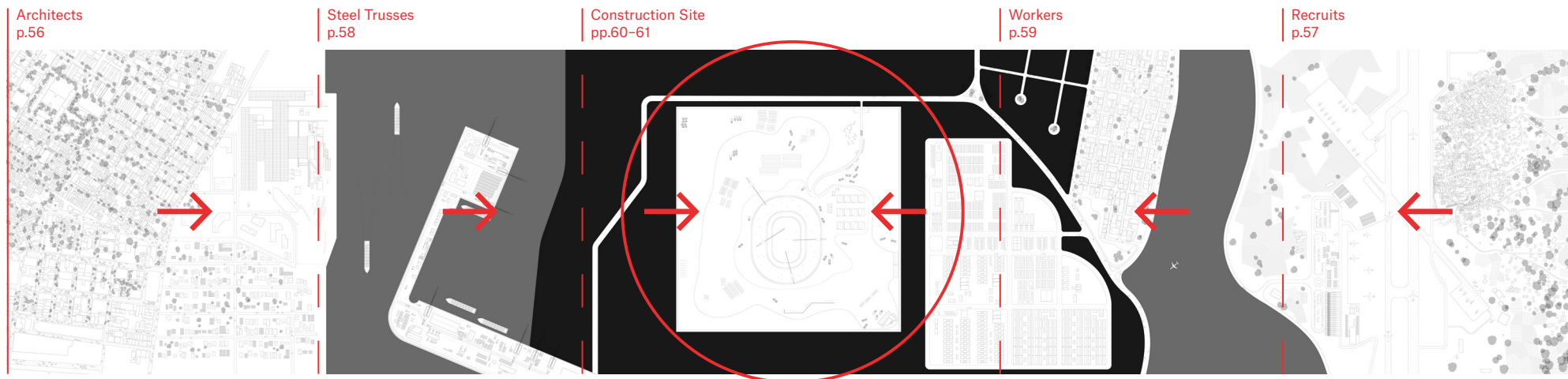
4. HOW DO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, ARCHITECTS, AND BUILDING MATERIALS ARRIVE TO CONSTRUCTION SITES?

After countless hours of cross-platform coordination, drawings produced by architecture firms, materials from manufacturing facilities located around the globe, and migrant workers all come together on the job site. The direct line from architect to worker is formalized on the construction site through the transmission of building designs, construction documents, and best practices.

The job site is also the place where increasingly ephemeral drawings and abstract forms of labor become identifiable and concrete. Regardless of the location, the job site remains an interface between worker and architect, if not directly, than through contractors and site foremen.

Architects can directly interact and intervene in the lives of the workers building their designs by understanding how various materials and workers arrive at construction sites—and how the site is governed to maintain safe and humane working conditions.

The job site presented here is an amalgam of many from across the world. The project specifics—the material and labor necessities—will be different for each project, of course, but this site can serve as a congruent timeline of design, manufacturing, and training, intimately tying the various parties of a building together, not just at the location of construction, but from the beginning of the design process.



Architects and designers work in global firms to design projects around the world. Depending on the project, nearly all design and detail work can take place far from where it is being constructed. Architects, structural engineers, and other consultants will work together with material manufacturers, often in a third location, for large-scale projects such as global sporting events. The complex design process can be managed through Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology that allows all parties to work on and contribute to a model of the building. From the BIM model, individual drawings and manufacturing details can be exported for their intended audience.

Manufacturing sites around the world coordinate the production of building materials such as glass and curtain wall details from Germany, steel trusses from China, and wood from South America and Africa. A factory near a major shipping port can receive construction documents, fabricate, and then ship a final product to construction sites across the world for less cost than producing materials locally.

Building design details and construction documents arrive at a job site from

a network of architects, designers, and consultants via BIM models. At the same time, globally produced materials arrive on site where they are sorted and organized according to the BIM model and construction preferences from the contractor and subcontractors on site.

At the jobsite, instructions from the architects, raw building materials, and the workers who put them together connect for the first time. Often this is through a project foreman who can translate the architectural details and drawings into a dozen or more languages, depending on the languages spoken by workers involved in particular aspects of the job.

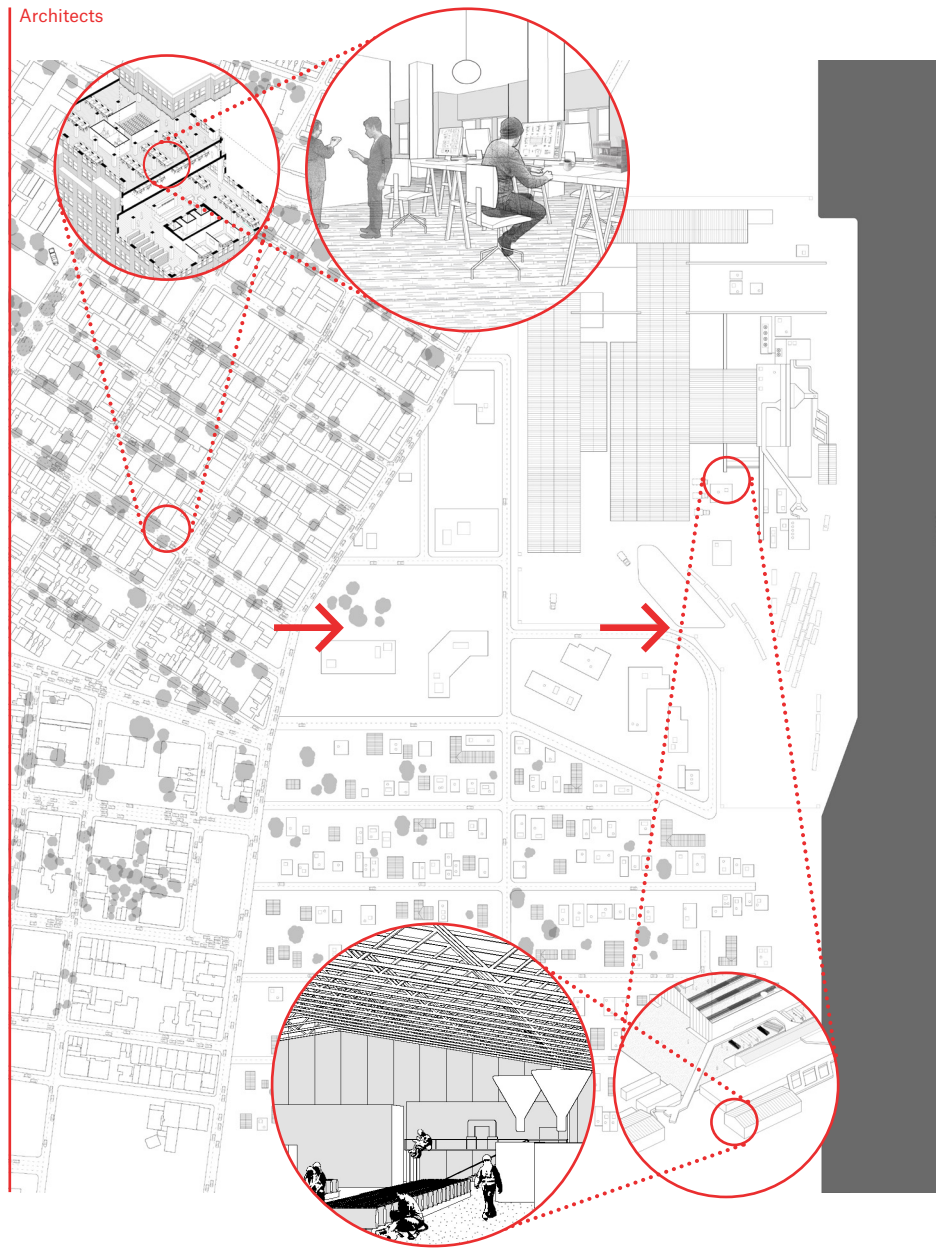
Migrant workers arrive on site each workday. Workers are granted temporary visitor status through work visas, usually held by labor brokers or contracting companies. Workers live on site or at worker camps, which can be near the construction site or up to several hours bus ride away. Often they are patrolled sites with entry and exit severely limited. Conditions vary but are usually defined by overcrowding, hot and/or cold temperatures, and substandard bathing, cooking, and communal facilities.

Travel to the worker's host country is arranged for and paid by a labor broker, after receiving money from a migrant worker. Often it is the first time workers have traveled both abroad and in an airplane. At the airport, worker passports are often confiscated and the workers are given identification papers tied to specific jobs, employers, and projects.

Workers living in rural areas leave for construction projects abroad, seeking higher wages than they could earn at home. Workers can earn many times their annual wage by traveling abroad. In the Gulf region, migrants come from South and South East Asia. While in their home countries, workers are sometimes taught

basic construction techniques including concrete pouring and bricklaying in nearby cities before leaving to work abroad.

Architects

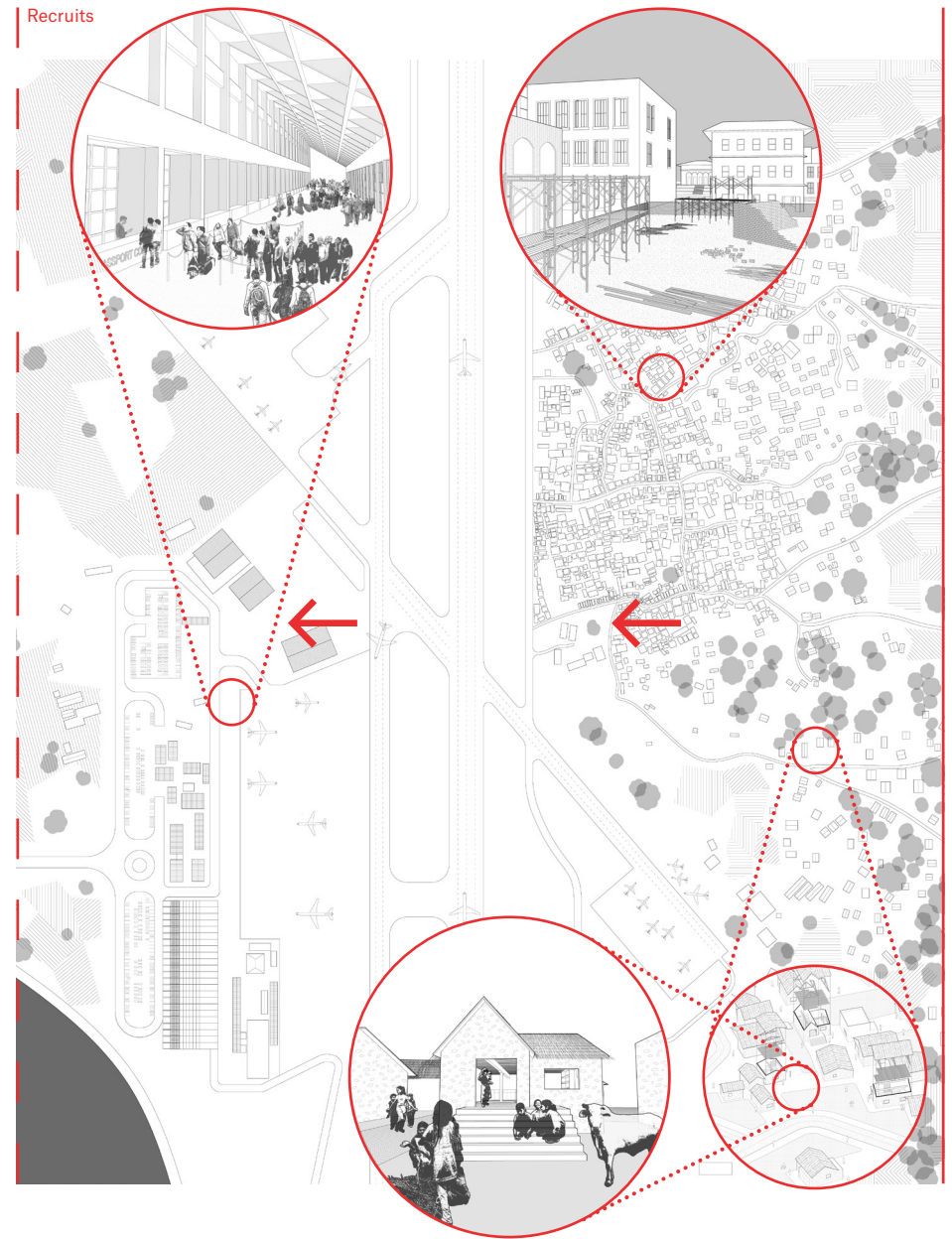


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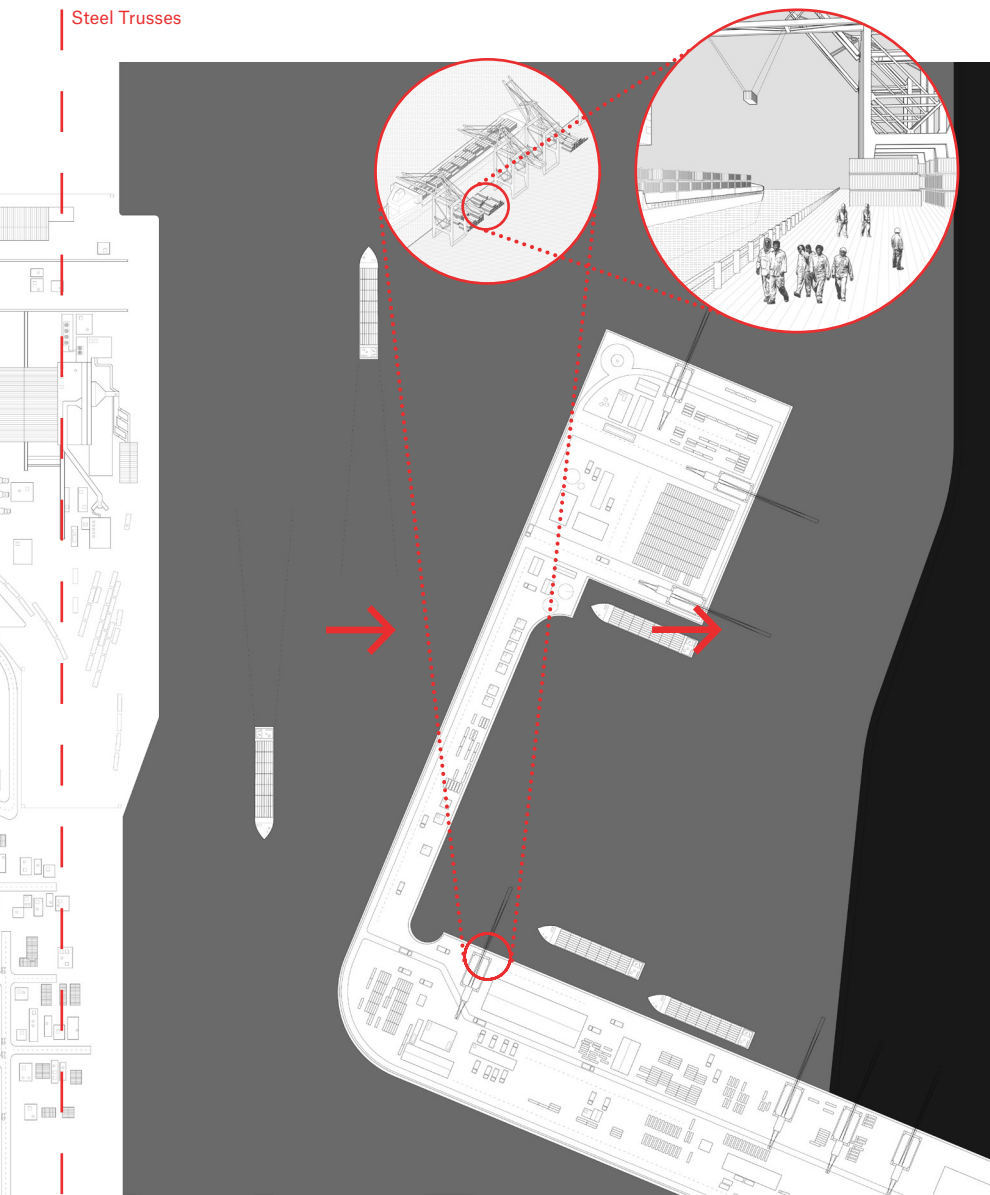
ing. From the BIM model, individual drawings and manufacturing details can be exported for their intended audience.

Recruits



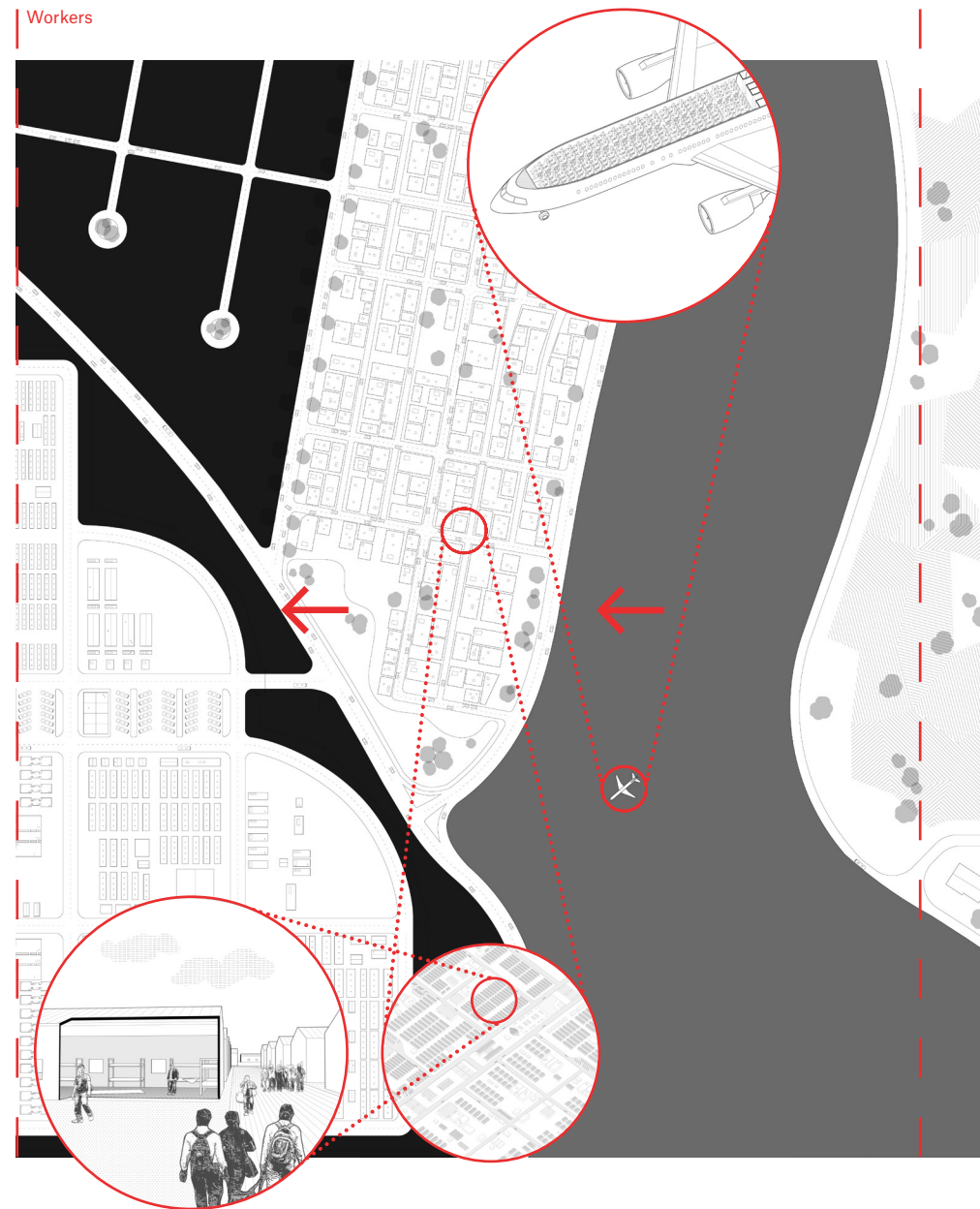
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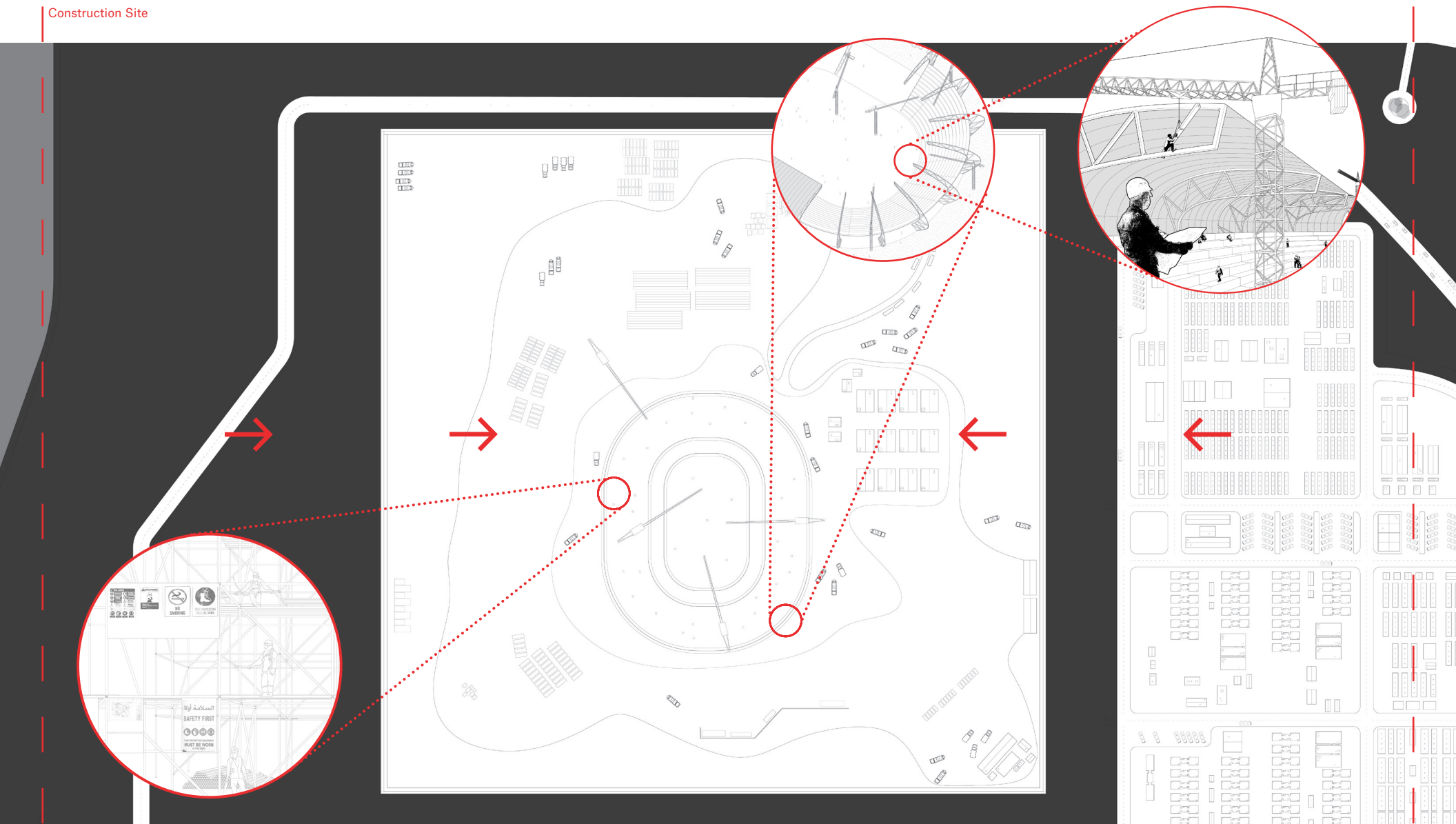
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Building design details and construction documents arrive at a job site from a network of architects, designers, and consultants via BIM models. At the same time, globally produced materials arrive on site where they are sorted and organized according to the BIM model

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depending on the languages spoken by workers involved in particular aspects of the job.

5. HOW CAN WE PROMOTE FAIR LABOR?

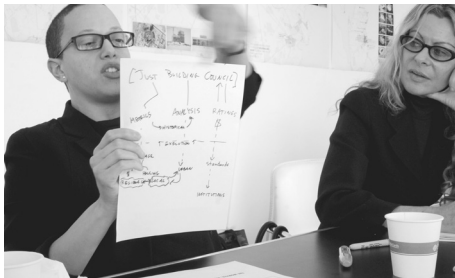
Addressing the problem of fair labor practices at construction sites requires a range of approaches that engage the ethical, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of the issue. WBYA? began its advocacy project to initiate dialogues in various educational and professional arenas. In asking the question “who builds your architecture?” we discovered the myriad of ways that architects are linked to construction workers at job sites around the world.

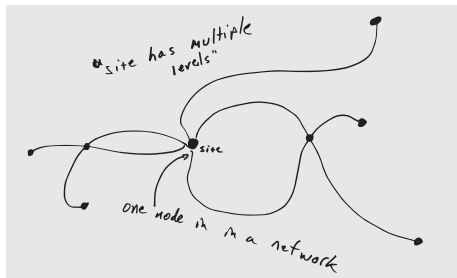
To identify the networks that link architects and construction workers, WBYA? hosted a series of public panels, closed-door discussions, and workshops. Architects, human rights activists, artists, educators, students, and the public attended these events held at venues such as The Vera List Center for Art and Politics, the Architectural League, and Studio-X New York. As an ongoing dialogue about the issues facing migrant construction workers we have also presented our findings at conferences on labor, architecture, and human rights in Sweden, Italy, India, Abu Dhabi, Canada, and around the United States.

The Critical Field Guide collects these findings together as a call to action to address problems that can be found in varying degrees on construction sites worldwide. There is no one solution to this problem. Improvement in international labor laws brokered between nations who send workers and nations who host them is one area where activists have been lobbying for change. Many of the problems such as worker access to transportation and decent housing are ones where the architectural expertise could lead to innovative design approaches. Architects do have leverage from within the construction process to transform how buildings are made and to improve the conditions for those who build their architecture. The actions we propose are provocations that creatively engage various facets practice and education.

WBYA? Panels and Workshops
Participants:

Amale Andraos, James Andrews, Gunilla Bandolin, Sabrina Barker, Judith Barry, Michael Bell, Ragna Berlin, Andrew Bernheimer, Phil Bernstein, John Buonocore, Gregorio Maaestri Carboni, Barrie Cline, Benedict Clouette, Maureen Connor, Annelis Danielsson, Peggy Deamer, Miku Dixit, Kate Dunham, Karin Englund, Taraneh Fazeli, Pedro Arantes Fiori, Mariana Fix, Ann Fixsen, Sean Flynn, Carl Folshot, Rosalie Geneviro, Leslie Gill, Elisabeth Grantelius, Sanna Sevika Hansson, Karin Hammarskiöld, Malin Herlitz, Ramia Mazé, Lina Färje, Amanda Fröler, Boel Hellman, Kyle Hovenkotter, Tatjana Joksimovic, Janette Kim, Sofia Krimizi, Kitty Krupat, Carin Kuoni, Laura Kurgan, Andreas Lang, Annika Lennman, Fred Levrat, Brian Loughlin, Scott Marble, Reinhold Martin, Diana Martinez, Ed Mayer, Mitch McEwen, Leah Meisterlin, Jacob Moore, Tanja Pérska, Walid Raad, Anupama Rao, Erik Revellé, Andrew Ross, Zeinab Yusef Saiwalla, Brad Samuels, Sara Saxt, Meike Schalk, Robert Sember, William Sharples, David Smiley, Smita Srinivas, Beth Stryker, Sumner Sasha, Will Thomsen, Susan Turner-Meiklejohn, Bill Van Esveld, Michael Vann, Nisha Varia, Sophie Wehtje, Sarah Leah Whitson, June Williamson, Uddén Sofia, Malin Zimm.





"Just Say No!!"

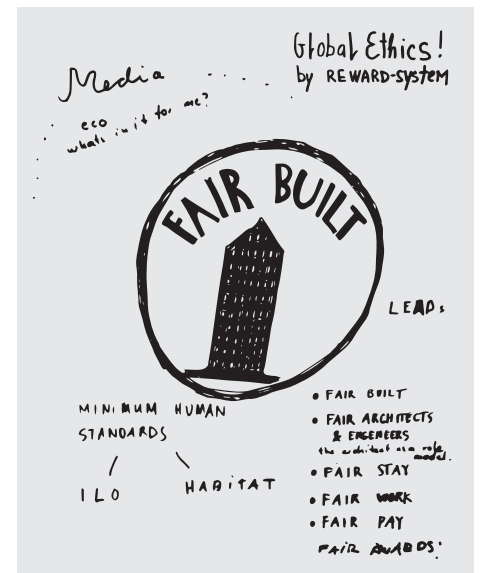
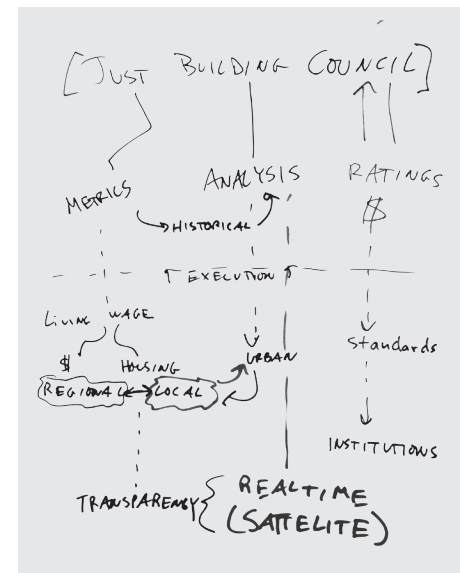
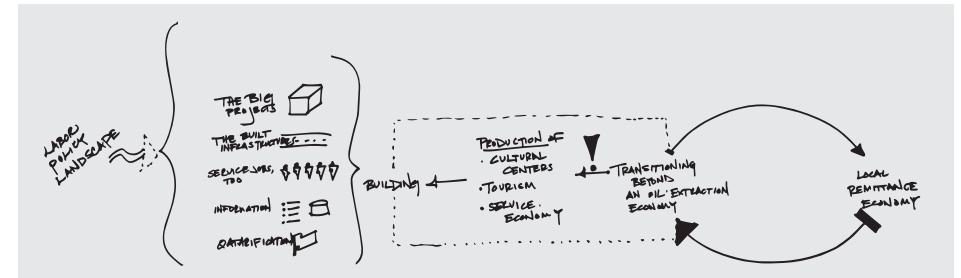
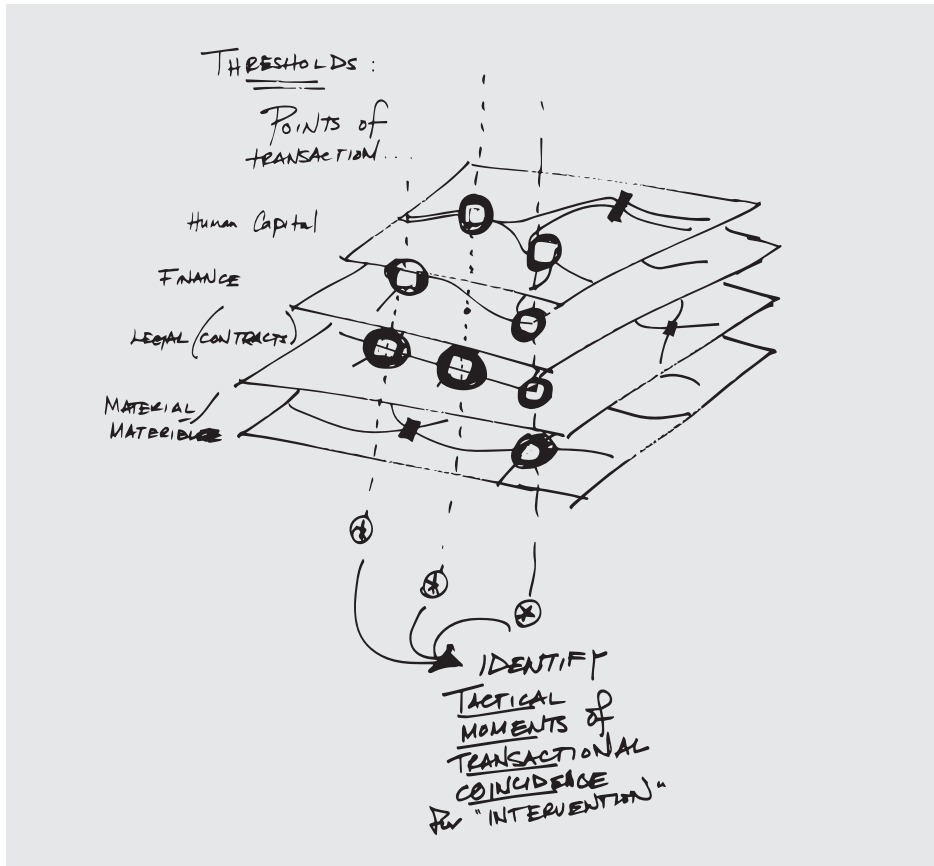
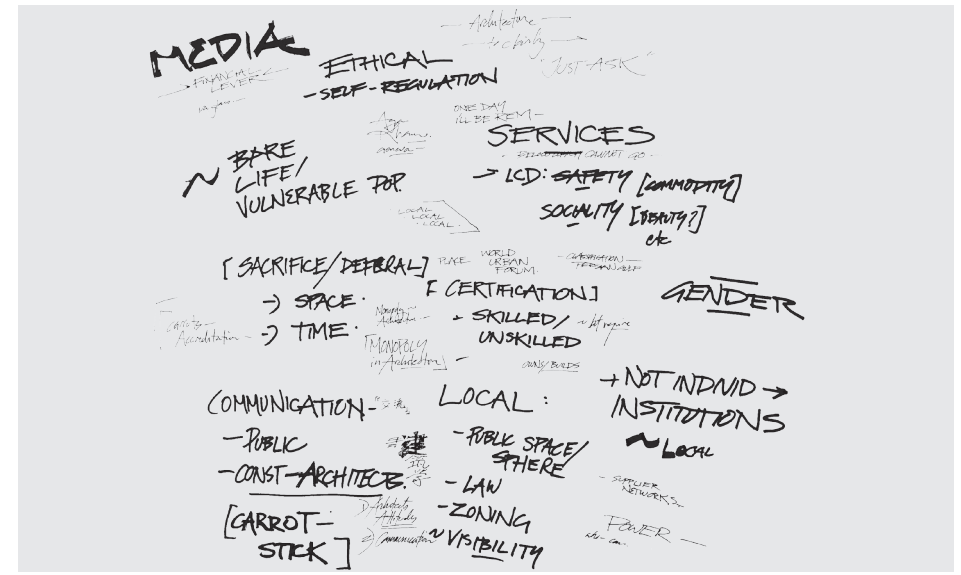
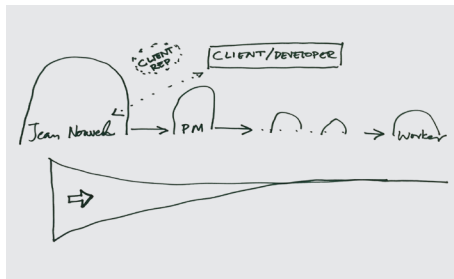
"I will Not Do AN ICON"

Follow DWGs

Follow \$

language

commands





Who Builds Your Architecture? at the Istanbul Design Biennial. Courtesy of Tiffany Rattray, WBYA?, 2014.

REDEFINE DESIGN

Expand design from form making to include all that it requires: managing resources, procurement, and performance. Expand the label of “designers” to include all those who contribute to building.

Architects are not at the table [discussing abusive labor practices] for many reasons at many different levels: conceptual notions of practice—we don’t think we work or labor, and hence don’t identify or care about those who do; class differences that we don’t acknowledge but are always there; an idea about design that is totally disconnected from fabrication and construction; and contracts that connect architects to owners but not to contractors, leaving us indifferent and powerless to construction labor practices.

If we concentrate on the latter, it is the case: all of the responsibilities that we are asking about here are the owners’ and that is why we are technically, contractually not at the table. We need to change our contracts and shift the relationship architects have with the owner and the contractors. The discourse that is going on right now aims to change this: we should share risks, share responsibilities, and share rewards. Contractually, the constructor and their labor practices can and should come into the architect’s purview.

And conceptually, we can redefine design. In one direction, we can admit we are all designing; we are all contributing to decisions that make the building be its best. Every single person in the construction industry is a designer. Fabricators are designers, contractors are designers. In the other direction, it means that how architects have always defined design—form-making—is only part of what design really requires. It includes managing resources, procurement, and performance as well.

This all suggests that the architect might get at the table and be able to influence construction labor practices if we are able to simultaneously share and grab power, things we are now too fearful to do.

Peggy Deamer, transcribed from WBYA? panel: “Who Builds Your Architecture?” at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, May 2012.

MAKE NEW DIAGRAMS OF LINKAGES AND POWER RELATIONS AMONGST ALL ACTORS

Understand how decisions are made from design to construction and understand who benefits and at what costs.

Since construction is a transformative industry, what determines the outcome of work is not the simple presence of options and opportunities but rather the actual linkages established behind their selection and the relationship of power among the actors making these determinations.

Paolo Tombesi, “What do we mean by Building Design,” in *Digital Workflows in Architecture*, edited by Scott Marble (Basel: Birkhauser, 2012).

DEPLOY ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENTS AS TOOL-KITS

Use architectural drawings and documents as a vehicle to raise labor standards and improve construction practices.

Architects produce documents. In any office, and especially in the big corporate firms, architects produce several types of documents that function as technical instruments, and specifically, as devices for the redistribution of risks. These documents range from contracts, construction specifications, correspondence of various kinds, to the drawing themselves, all of which have legal implications and legal consequences. . .

The one and only answer that we maybe can agree on, vis-a-vis [the question of] who builds your architecture, is that it’s definitely not the architects who build those buildings. The definition of the architect is somebody who doesn’t build. Architects make drawings, write contracts, sign documents, etc. . . .

And, so it seems to me, if one redefines the labor of the architect as that of making these documents, then these documents can also be lined up next to human rights reports as tool-kits, to leverage [architects’ roles in raising human rights standards].

Reinhold Martin, transcribed from WBYA? panel: “Who Builds Your Architecture?” at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, May 2012.

USE YOUR LEVERAGE AS AN ARCHITECT

Architects must capitalize on their key role in the building process to ensure human rights and stop labor abuse.

There are two forms of leverage here. There are the institutions themselves. And there are the super-star architects that have been gathered to build them. And what is going on is an incredible branding of an empty space. It's not just the Louvre, it's Jean Nouvel's Louvre. It's not just the museum, it's Zaha Hadid's museum. It's just not the Guggenheim, it's the Frank Gehry Guggenheim. It is turning this into a place on the cultural map... And it is this kind of branding that is going on and that is where the influence and leverage comes from.

And that is an incredible opportunity to really push the authorities to raise the labor standards in a way that we have never seen before in that region. In the UAE, 90% of the population is foreign and will never be able to get citizenship. And many of them are construction workers who have very little ability to advocate for their rights. And really, an awareness [is needed] of the entire context of who is involved in this activity that you as an architect are trying to get off the ground.

Bill Van Esveld, transcribed from WBYA? panel: "Who Builds Your Architecture?" at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, May 2012.

EXPAND SITE OBSERVATION

Broaden scope of site observation to include the detection of poor labor practices and abuse of building construction sites.

What the tourists, sports fans, and business travelers jetting in to the Gulf states may not see are the millions of migrant workers whose toil continues to build the new towers, shopping centres, hotels, stadiums, and museums sprouting across Arabian boomtowns.

International Trade Union Confederation, Hidden Faces of the Gulf Miracle (Brussels: ITUC, 2011), 2.

IMPROVE BASIC STANDARDS

Architects should use design expertise to improve living and working conditions of migrant construction workers in host countries.

Every accommodation facility for Workers shall be designed on the basis of the following attributes:

- Privacy: screened and dedicated personal space
- Security: dedicated and secure place to store personal belongings
- Comfort: provided with necessary amenities and conveniences for each Worker
- Utility: designed and equipped for efficiency and practicality
- Safety: designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with international best practices to ensure personal safety
- Health: designed, constructed, and maintained in accordance with international best practices to ensure the highest level of health and hygiene
- Spatial hierarchy: variety and choice that enrich personal living experience
- Sense of family: emulating a family home that creates a sense of well-being
- Sense of community: emulating a natural community that creates a sense of belonging

Qatar Foundation, QF Mandatory Standards of Migrant Workers' Welfare for Contractors and Sub-Contractors (Doha: Qatar Foundation Publications, 2013), 23.

REDEFINE LEXICON

Architects should redefine the construction and policy lexicon to educate clients, consultants, and colleagues to advocate for fair and sustainable building practices.

Indentured Labor	Workers' Rights
Recruitment Fees	Reimbursement Fees
Kafala	International Laws
Guest Worker Permit	Free Mobility
Labor Camps	Workers' Housing
Abscending	Migrant Worker Courts
Exploitation	Equal Access To Resources

REALIGN NEW TECHNOLOGIES, RETHINK SUPPLY CHAINS

Architects should use new technologies for linking design, construction, and global supply chains.

—
Architects are not interested in what used to be called 'means and methods of construction.' Architects are interested in intent and we delegate the problem of execution to someone else. This is where the technology question enters the issue. Because the digital technologies that are starting to emerge today, things like BIM or simulation or digital fabrication strategies, are inserting themselves into the global supply chain. In a sense, they refactor the relationship between the act of design and the act of construction. The intent of the architect and the architect's ability to manifest the physical result of the design problem... because these kind of technologies do bridge that gap create a new set of obligations for architects to involve themselves in the means and methods of construction. Because that barrier condition that used to exist that was both constructional and informational, in which the delivery methods are structural and information was transmitted through two-dimensional drawings is starting to disappear. And the opportunity there is not about mechanizing construction by some kind of magical thinking, and by replacing workers on the job site with their electronic doppelgangers by using digital models to control robots, but rather to rethink the problem of what the construction supply chain actually looks like.

Phil Bernstein, transcribed from WBYA? panel 2.0: "Who Builds Your Architecture?" at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, April 2013.

REMOVE BARRIERS BETWEEN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Architects should design a process that removes barrier conditions between design intent and execution.

—
If we take down the barrier between intent and execution, as a kind of information that is created in the act of design, you'll see the western construction world models move from hand built stick assembled construction strategies to manufactured off-site, mass customized, construction strategies. And components of buildings will be largely pre-fabricated and installed. As opportunities to redesign the global supply chain, it seems to me, that is where the architects can reinstate themselves. Because the manufacture of things that go into buildings is already a globalized business. So the question becomes, as we see more and more construction in these emerging economies, do you solve the lowest labor cost models and re-instantiate western delivery models, i.e. lowest production costs, or do you rethink the design of the supply chain in it's entirety and begin to create a sustainable, on the ground, manufacturing based construction support systems where people can actually work, keep a job, work in a safe environment, and learn a skill that doesn't involve simply being exploited, deposited to a site to be un-skilled source of labor.

Phil Bernstein, transcribed from WBYA? panel 2.0: "Who Builds Your Architecture?" at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, April 2013.

BOYCOTT CONTRACTORS OR SUBCONTRACTS USING ABUSIVE LABOR PRACTICES

Determine where abusive practices occur and refuse to work with contractors who mistreat construction workers.

—
Human Rights Watch Recommendations To the Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) of Abu Dhabi:
— *Ensure that all contractors and subcontractors on TDIC worksites;*
— *Immediately return all confiscated passports to workers and cease this illegal practice;*
— *Identify and cease working with any labor supply agencies in labor-sending countries or the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that engage in deception regarding contracts;*
— *Translate and explain UAE contracts into workers' native languages and give workers a meaningful opportunity to review their contracts before signing them, and provide workers with copies of contracts;*
— *Pay their workers promptly upon starting work, and regularly thereafter, including by complying with UAE legal requirements to set up and pay into workers' bank accounts;*
— *Provide adequate healthcare to all workers as required by law, including opportunities to seek medical advice and treatment from medical staff not employed by the companies, and inform workers of their rights.*

Human Rights Watch, "The Island of Happiness": *Exploitation of Migrant Workers On Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi* (Human Rights Watch, 2009), 14.

GIVE CREDIT TO ALL WORKERS

There should be a roster of all workers involved in constructing a building.

—
Other firms view labor as a serious consideration in how they conduct business. Bill Sharples, principal at SHoP Architects, says labor practices factor into the choice of where the firm takes on projects.... 'Two of our guys will be working with the local laborers on the site,' he says. 'When issues come up, you work them out. You don't sit there and use the excuse that it's a long-distance relationship. You really engage. For someone to say 'that's not my problem' is nonsense,' says Sharples. 'For us, making the building is as much a part of the process as designing it.'

Anne Fixsen, "Site Unseen," *Architectural Record*, June 2014.

REVISE DESIGN COMPETITION BRIEFS

Launch design competitions that encourage innovative ideas on sustainable building practices, improved worker housing, site logistics, and other related areas.

—
What if there was an alternative call for ideas—open to all—to rise to the challenge of imagining a richer future for the whole city? A ‘competition’ that takes as its starting points the existing structures and needs of the city itself? What if it could help Helsinki evolve as a more accessible, equitable, sustainable, and beautiful place? What if it could help develop beneficial cultural strategies that grow from the specifics of the local scene and from the needs of contemporary art practices? What if there were realizable alternatives to the trends of luxury branding, monoculturization, top-down decision-making processes and privatization of common goods?

Call for Proposals, *Next Helsinki Competition* (2014).

EMPLOY HUMAN RIGHTS & SOCIAL SERVICES EXPERTS AS CONSULTANTS IN ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT TEAMS

The project teams for global architectural projects should include regional experts that can advise on regional human rights and labor issues.

—
The responsibility to respect human rights requires that business enterprises:

- (a) *Avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and address such impacts when they occur;*
 - (b) *Seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.*
- In order to meet their responsibility to respect human rights, business enterprises should have in place policies and processes appropriate to their size and circumstances, including:*
- (a) *A policy commitment to meet their responsibility to respect human rights;*
 - (b) *A human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights;*
 - (c) *Processes to enable the remediation of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or to which they contribute.*

United Nations Human Rights, *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2011), 13–15.

EXPAND CODE OF ETHICS

National and International professional institutes should develop codes of ethics that promote human rights.

—
It is worth noting that the AIA ethics code calls on architects to uphold human rights but doesn’t actually include any enforceable language about what to do if architects discover violations of commonly accepted international human rights. Labor rights are, in one context, a subset of international human rights. Because labor rights are actually included in and enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Raphael Sperry, transcribed from WBYA? panel 2.0: “Who Builds Your Architecture?” at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, April 2013.

EQUALITY IS SUSTAINABILITY

The environmental aspects of architecture should remember that environmental sustainability requires economic equality.

—
I think lot of people, in the marketization of the rapid growth of the green movement, have lost track of the fact that when sustainability movement was founded, back in the early 1990s (with events like the Rio Summit, Al Gore, etc.), there was a definition of sustainability as consisting of three co-equal spheres, sometimes called the three ‘e’s’: economy, environment, and social equity. And it was clearly understood by all the participants that there was no point in so-to-speak ‘saving the planet’ only for the wealthy world. And that environment degradation and economic inequity were inextricably linked to social inequities. And in order to improve all those conditions, you had to also improve social equity at the same time. And labor rights are certainly, if nothing else, a question of social equities.

That gives us a good leg to stand on when talking to the broader sustainability movement reminding people to get back to their roots. And asking what’s the point of building all these beautiful buildings, especially green buildings, if the workers that are putting them up are getting treated like dirt and cannot even have the most basic human rights respected?

Raphael Sperry, transcribed from WBYA? panel 2.0: “Who Builds Your Architecture?” at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, April 2013.

EXPAND US GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL AND LEED RATING SYSTEM

Propose that labor rights and human sustainability are included in project ratings.

—
One strategy I want to mention: I thought the US Green Building Council and the LEED rating system would be good venues in which to open this conversation. And to propose to them that in international projects, and in all their projects, if a project did not occur in a country where minimum standards of labor rights were guaranteed by law and practice, that the project would take it upon itself in order to demonstrate that they had an acceptable level of standard. For instance, by hiring international certified inspectors and so on... Or else the project would not be eligible for LEED. And of course, that's only going to get some of the market participants, not everyone goes for LEED, as it's a purely voluntary system. But it would do a number of things: it would create positive examples that it's possible to build successful projects in all these countries while respecting labor rights. It also invests the owner in the process of respecting labor rights. LEED is something that the owner has to buy into as well as the architects as partners.

Raphael Sperry, transcribed from WBYA? panel 2.0: "Who Builds Your Architecture?" at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, April 2013.

ADVOCATE WITH MANIFESTOS, CHARTERS, PLEDGES, MISSIONS

Publicize commitment and educate the public on human rights standards through activist strategies.

—
We, the undersigned, pledge to use our professional standing and practice to advance workers' rights and protections in the construction of buildings that utilize our designs.

WBYA?, "The Architect's Pledge for Fair Labor."

REDEFINE SUSTAINABILITY

Expand scope of sustainability discourse to include human rights.

—
Workers' rights and safety should be a pivotal point for any sustainability discussion: the environment is not just the air, ground, and water, but the people with whom we work and live.

Ann Lui, "Sustainability of Workers' Rights," *Archinect*, May 23, 2011, <http://archinect.com/features/article/7370136/sustainability-of-workers-rights>.

REFUSE COMMISSIONS

Refuse commissions that might lead to unfair and exploitive labor practices.

—
I want to cite the example—the wonderful sacrificial example in many ways—of the artists in Gulf Labor Coalition, especially the regional artists, many of whose work was on the verge of being acquired by the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, and for sums of money that were unheard of in their careers. And they showed an extraordinary act not just of sacrifice but also of solidarity. They said they were going to boycott this and refuse to be bought by the museum. In terms of their livelihood this was a huge sacrifice given how much money was involved. So, here is an example of artisanal, relatively free-standing, relatively entrepreneurial professionals who do exist in a circuit but who do also have a history of professional self-reliance and who said 'No.' We are in a position of being regional stars but we would rather—not unlike Bartleby—we would prefer not to... There is a parallel there. There are differences in the architectural profession but there are similar histories there that at least run parallel.

Andrew Ross, transcribed from WBYA? panel: "Who Builds Your Architecture?" at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, Parsons School of Design, the New School, May 2012.



THE AMERICAN
INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS



2007 Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct

Preamble

Members of The American Institute of Architects are committed to the highest standards of competence. This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct provides guidelines for the obligations, standards, and rules of conduct that govern the profession.

- Canons (the broad principles of conduct) are mandatory; they are the standards to which Members should aspire in their professional and personal lives.
- Rules of Conduct (the specific rules of conduct) are mandatory; they are the standards to which Members should aspire in their professional and personal lives.

The Code applies to the professional activities of all classes of Members, whether they are active or inactive. It addresses the obligations of Members to the public, to the profession, to their clients and users, to the built environment, to the science of architecture, to the heritage and legacy of the profession.

CANON I

General Obligations

Members should maintain and advance their knowledge and skill, respect the body of architectural accomplishment, contribute to its growth, thoughtfully consider the social and environmental impact of their professional activities, and exercise learned and uncompromised professional judgment.

E.S. 1.1 Knowledge and Skill:
Members should strive to improve their professional knowledge and skill.

Rule 1.101 In practicing architecture, Members shall demonstrate a

WBYA? PROPOSES EXPANDING STANDARDS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND OBLIGATION TO THE WORKERS WHO BUILD OUR ARCHITECTURE

How can architects:

- E.S. 1.4** uphold human rights at job sites where migrant workers are being employed?
- E.S. 1.5** perform design work that should be socially responsible and advocate for sustainable building practices that improve the lives of workers?
- E.S. 1.6** perform professional services that advocates for the design, construction and operation of job sites that sustain the human lives those who build our architecture?

E.S. 1.7 use humane and sustainable practices in all facets within their firms and on job sites and encourage their clients to do the same?

Commentary: By recognizing a "consistent pattern" of adherence to this rule as a standard of competence, this rule can be used for disciplinary purposes.

EXPAND HUMAN RIGHTS

E.S. 1.2 Standards of Excellence:
Members should continually seek to raise the standards of aesthetic excellence, archi-

E.S. 1.4 Human Rights:
Members should uphold human rights in all their professional endeavors.

Rule 1.401 Members shall not discriminate in their professional activities on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Commentary is provided for some of the provisions. That commentary is meant to clarify or elaborate on the intent of the rule. The commentary is not part of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct alone; the commentary will assist those who are seeking to conform their conduct

architect exercises supervision be made generally aware of the Code, it can also make sense to bring a particular provision to the attention of a particular employee when a situation is present which might give rise to violation.

CANON V

Obligations to Colleagues

Members should respect the rights and acknowledge the professional aspirations and contributions of their colleagues.

E.S. 5.1 Professional Environment:
Members should provide their associates and employees with a suitable working environment, compensate them fairly, and facilitate their professional development.

E.S. 5.2 Intern and Professional Development:
Members should recognize and nurture fellow professionals as they progress through all stages of their career, beginning with professional education in the academy, progressing through internship and continuing throughout their career.

E.S. 5.3 Professional Recognition:
Members should build their professional reputation on the merits of their own service and performance and should recognize and give credit to others for the professional work they have performed.

Rule 5.301 Members shall recognize and respect the professional contributions of their employees, employers, professional colleagues, and business associates.

Rule 5.302 Members leaving a firm shall not, without the permission of their employer or partner, take designs, drawings, data, reports, notes, or other materials relating to the firm's work, whether or not performed by the Member.

Rule 5.303 A Member shall not unreasonably withhold permission from a departing

employee or partner to take copies of designs, drawings, data, reports, notes, or other materials relating to work performed by the employee or partner that are not confidential.

Commentary: A Member may impose reasonable conditions, such as the payment of copying costs, on the right of departing persons to take copies of their work.

CANON VI

Obligations to the Environment

Members should promote sustainable design and development principles in their professional activities.

E.S. 6.1 Sustainable Design:
In performing design work, Members should be environmentally responsible and advocate sustainable building and site design.

E.S. 6.2 Sustainable Development:
In performing professional services, Members should advocate the design, construction, and operation of sustainable buildings and communities.

E.S. 6.3 Sustainable Practices:
Members should use sustainable practices within their firms and professional organizations, and they should encourage their clients to do the same.

RULES OF APPLICATION, ENFORCEMENT, AND AMENDMENT

Application

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applies to the professional activities of all members of the AIA.

Enforcement

The Bylaws of the Institute state procedures for the enforcement of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Such procedures provide that:

WWW.WHOBUILDS.ORG
administered through a National Ethics

Council, appointed by the AIA Board of Directors.

(2) Formal charges are filed directly with the National Ethics Council by Members, components, or anyone directly aggrieved by the conduct of the Members.

(3) Penalties that may be imposed by the National Ethics Council are:

- Admonition
- Censure
- Suspension of membership for a period of time
- Termination of membership.

(4) Appeal procedures are available.

(5) All proceedings are confidential, as is the imposition of an admonishment; however, all other penalties shall be made public.

Enforcement of Rules 4.101 and 4.202
refer to and support enforcement of other Rules. A violation of Rules 4.101 or 4.202 cannot be established without proof of a pertinent violation of at least one other Rule.

Amendment

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct may be amended by the convention of the Institute under the same procedures as are necessary to amend the Institute's Bylaws. The Code may also be amended by the AIA Board of Directors upon a two-thirds vote of the entire Board.

2007 Edition. This copy of the Code of Ethics is current as of December 2007. Contact the General Counsel's Office for further information at (202) 626-7311.

WBYA?, "WBYA? Proposes Expanding Standards for Human Rights and Obligation to the Workers Who Build Our Architecture," contribution to Gulf Labor's 52 Weeks campaign, 2013-14.

A CALL TO ACTION

Keller Easterling

Within the architect's customary fee-for-service practice, requiring clients and their contractors to treat and compensate labor fairly requires some solidarity within a global set of professionals. And while that is difficult enough, even within a single professional organization like the AIA, there is little leadership. Perhaps more importantly, even at the national level, there are no binding global compacts to which the US and many other powerful nations are signatories. As environmental lawyer Judith Kimerling has written "there is a meaningful legal mechanism to hold a company accountable for pirating a Madonna video, but not for contaminating the environment or using forced or child labor." There are organizations like Social Accountability International that, in the absence of law, try to build consensus and peer pressure by certifying compliance to a raft of principles to do with labor, environment, and human rights. But do these certifications only join the self-certifying habits of many global corporations who are plastered with seals of approval like those from ISO Quality management—badges that perhaps only inoculate them against more intrusive environmental or labor regulation? The loop closes around powerful corporations. The house always wins. But then anyone who knows how to get things done never relies on proper declarations, laws, and standards alone. Architects are designers who can create irrational desires for things like the value of their signature form. Architects argue that they have no leverage and have more to lose by withholding that signature like the artists who boycotted participation in the Saadiyat Island Guggenheim. Yet if only a bit of the political craft that is applied to career construction were applied to the problem of creating symbolic capital around fair labor, the cleverest architects would get some traction. Scripts about green architecture are remarkably contagious in part because of a confluence of sentiment and celebrity. Even corporate power will pay anything for what it is made to want. If professional organizations will not lead, the academy can provide research and leadership to support the architects who are brave enough to step out and carve a different profile. It would arguably be a savvy move that raises the status of architectural labor in

the process.

More importantly, the academy might help the next generations of architects rehearse modes of practice outside the conventional fee-for-service convention. Practices that work at many scales inventing everything from details to urban protocols do not necessarily need conventional building clients and so need not abdicate the oversight of labor to clients and their contractors. These are businesses that could create value through the proper treatment of labor. Going further, given that existing laws, declarations and standards to address the problems related to labor migrations are completely inadequate, perhaps spatial variables should have more authority as instruments of global governance.

Andrew Ross

According to a 2012 AIAS survey, architecture students were graduating with a far higher student debt burden—\$40,000 on average – than the national figure of \$25,000. The numbers have only gotten worse since then, and, what’s worse, these beginners are trying to enter a profession whose fealty to the atelier tradition is an anachronistic fit with the industrialized labor process of most of its leading firms. This disjunct results in a clear pattern of apprentice exploitation, most explicitly in the use of internships, paid or unpaid. While most of the latter are illegal, and are proscribed by professional codes of conduct, the use of unpaid interns is still customary in the design disciplines. In some regards, the demands made on the time or resources of paid interns or junior employees are even more severe. It is not uncommon to hear former employees describe an office of a well-known architect as being “run like a sweatshop.”

While professional organizations like the AIA have launched some initiatives against unpaid internships and student indebtedness, there has been little or no movement in addressing architects’ accountability for violations incurred in constructing their building designs. The AIA’s Code of Ethics contains a passing reference to the upholding of human rights, but professional attention to the latter has not strayed very far from the “Albert Speer question,” relating to design in the directly complicit service of a totalitarian regime. Engineers and architects are routinely insulated against any fallout from the exposure of labor abuse on the construction site or the materials supply chain. Legal accountability for these abuses generally lies with the contractor, and it is widely held that the designer carries no moral responsibility.

Yet public perceptions have shifted in the wake of Zaha Hadid’s seemingly unsympathetic comments about labor abuse in Qatar. The affair became a cause célèbre for campaigners against exploitation of South Asian migrant workers in the Gulf states. Top brand names in the field of arts, education, and sports—the Louvre, Guggenheim, British Museum, NYU, FIFA—have all been tarnished by association with this ill-treatment of workers. It was only a matter

of time before the value invested in starchitects' names was similarly tainted. Of course, brand-cleansing is not the optimum motivation for taking steps to introduce pro-labor measures into architectural contracts, but the longstanding experience of the anti-sweatshop movement has shown that shaming the brand of "industry leaders" goes a long way.

Ultimately, architects cannot resolve the problems on their own. A coalition of trade or professional groups needs to work on a master agreement that governs the entire contracting chain to ensure there are no gaps. Some of these organizations—like Engineers Against Poverty—already exist. Others, especially those focused on occupational health and safety, should be encouraged to re-direct their reach toward a broader range of worker protections: the recent garment industry Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety is a good example. Worker organizations like the Building and Woodworkers International have a key role to play. And there are many international human rights groups who can lend their expertise to crafting such a process. Sometimes it takes a mass worker tragedy, like Triangle Shirtwaist or Rana Plaza, to jumpstart industry-wide reforms. But routine exploitation of migrant workforces does not have the same media prominence. Nevertheless, architects of good conscience can take their place on the right side of history by stepping out on this issue now. Who wants to be the anti-Hadid?

Amale Andraos

In 2002, MIT launched the first Fabrication Laboratories. After decades of digital research and development, this re-investment into making enabled by a grant from the National Science Foundation, was intended to help technology institutes in developing countries acquire the tools and knowledge to build their own products and design small scale interventions with the power to have large-scale impact. For architects, and architecture students across the United States in particular, this signaled the end of the seminal "paperless studios," which started at Columbia's GSAPP in early 1990s and threw the field into a swirl of conceptual practices, formal experiments, and exquisite virtual representations. These constructed worlds had been continuous, fluid, smooth, topological, scale-less, infinite, and immaterial. As "Fab Labs" took off within architecture schools, material assemblies, construction methods, tools, and tooling were ushered back: surfaces were now visibly saccadic and made of individual pieces and parts, gradually morphing into an infinite number of connections and interruptions constructing incomplete and finite wholes. The architect was reconnected to her craft, with no middleman standing between the virtual and the material except for the perfectly human-less printers and robots.

In 2016, the 15th Venice Architecture Biennale curated by Alejandro Aravena and titled "Reporting from the Front," presented an unfettered celebration of this material (re)turn as it assembled architects and architecture responding to the call to engage the world and the urgent issues of our time. Against the technologically driven machine-aesthetic of the "Global-North"—and the metal studs and sheetrock panels that were enlisted to build the prior Biennale—an uncomfortable aestheticization of the "Global-South" emerged, as careful brick-laying, primitive hut-making, and precious earth-casting techniques were deployed throughout the exhibition. Undermining the Biennale's important and welcome call, this renewed engagement with the real instead soon became an alibi for a renewed fetishization of the "local," of "authenticity and tradition" and of "craft and materiality." While re-constructing the romantic narrative of architecture as unmediated building experience and

practice, the Biennale re-instated, not unlike the promise of the Fab Lab, the same nostalgic longing for a long ago disappeared architect-as-craftsman, finally reconnected with his poetic object.

In 2012, WBYA? launched an ongoing research project into the design and building of global architectural icons. Neither nostalgic nor romantic, WBYA? firmly grounded its inquiries within the realities and demands of scale, even as it also underscored the importance of reconnecting architecture to its material realities. Like the Fab Lab or the Architect-Craftsman, the resulting WBYA? Critical Field Guide enlists the same fundamental attachment architects have to the making of their objects, but instead blows-up and expands the space in between, rendering visible the vectors of interconnected actors—human and material—that constitute the complex web of global architectural practice and discourse today. Simultaneously zooming out and away from the architect’s abstracted object and zooming in to the realities of its making, the WBYA? Critical Field Guide registers through drawing and writing the infinitely complex and invisible journey of the architect’s alter-ego: the “other” maker, living and working on the other side of that same object, and with his/her own story and aspirations for the transformations it effect upon his/her life. Drawing connections across scale and site as it projects symmetries where there are none, the WBYA? Critical Field Guide is a critically important and urgent contribution to the future of architectural thinking, practice and education, as it invests the lines we draw—as educators, scholars, students, and practitioners—with the power to represent the realities we engage and are part of, and thus, with equal power to change them.

Nicholas McGeehan

In December 2010, hours after FIFA declared that the 2022 World Cup would be held in Qatar, the head of its bid committee, Hassan Al Thawadi, called the decision “a bold gamble” but one that involved “no risk.” I suspect that – similar to human rights researchers like me – construction industry professionals agreed with Al Thawadi’s first assertion, but not his second.

The Gulf states’ intransigence on implementing and enforcing labor reforms means that the migrant workers on whom their economies depend are acutely vulnerable to trafficking and forced labor. Qatar has refused to reform its *kafala* system of sponsorship-based employment and won’t even part with an exit visa requirement that serves no obvious purpose other than to exert maximum control over workers trying to leave abusive workplaces.

The risks for construction firms are, therefore, significant, and no company will be more aware of this than the French construction giant Vinci.

In March 2015, a French nongovernmental organization, Sherpa, filed a complaint against Vinci with a French prosecutor alleging that workers on Vinci projects in Qatar have been subjected to forced labor and servitude. Vinci filed lawsuits for defamation, saying that Sherpa’s allegations “constitute a serious attack on our image.” Vinci is seeking substantial financial damages from three Sherpa employees as well as from the organization itself. The defamation lawsuits will be heard in a court in Paris on June 23.

Human Rights Watch cannot comment on Sherpa’s complaint because we have never visited a Vinci site in Qatar nor spoken to workers in its labor supply chain, although we have spoken to both Vinci and Sherpa. But what is clear is that this case highlights the serious challenges facing the construction sector in the Gulf. How can companies raise standards without upsetting their clients, who more often than not are the very governments that are dragging their heels on labor reform, and how can firms guarantee that their subcontractors won’t abuse their employees?

In December 2015, Human Rights Watch issued its “Guide to Doing Ethical Business in the Gulf.” These guidelines are based on over a decade of our research in this

area. They cover issues such as recruitment fees, timely payment of wages, passport confiscation, accommodation, and health and safety, and they recommend independent third-party monitoring to ensure the effective implementation that is key to success.

Industry codes of conduct can't replace the state-led labor reform that is so badly needed in the Gulf. But they can provide companies with region- and sector-specific advice. The construction industry doesn't need to wait for new laws and regulations, which have been slow in coming and are rarely enforced in the Gulf. Elsewhere, many corporations in industries from garment manufacturing to electronics have agreed upon standards, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, that improve the treatment of their workers and enable the corporations to respect human rights.

To Vinci's credit, it has been one of the construction companies that has embraced the need for more active regulation of its labor supply chains other companies should do the same. Quasi-governmental developers like the Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) in the United Arab Emirates and the Qatar Foundation and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy in Qatar have also agreed to codes of self-regulation that bind their contractors to standards that in some cases involve third-party monitoring.

A recent Amnesty International report revealed that a group of workers building football stadiums in Qatar had been subject to serious abuses despite the Supreme Committee's worker welfare code. These failures shouldn't lead anyone to the conclusion that industry codes are a waste of time. Rather they point to the fact that it is difficult for individual projects to fully insulate themselves from the abuses that all too often characterize large swathes of the industry, particularly at the lower end of labor supply chains. The success of worker welfare codes hinges on the extent to which companies can enforce them.

The abuse of migrant workers in the Gulf is a problem that can be fixed, and the construction industry can play an important role in ensuring that workers' rights are protected in the absence of proper government regulation.

Construction firms can best protect themselves by ensuring that their codes of conduct effectively protect workers' rights. Without the criticism of independent organizations and the scrutiny of the media, there would be no pressure for much-needed reforms.

An earlier version of this text appeared in *L'Obs*.

APPENDIX

Human Rights Organizations

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global movement of people fighting injustice and promoting human rights. We work to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth, and dignity are denied. Currently the world's largest grassroots human rights organization, we investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilize the public, and help transform societies to create a safer, more just world. We received the Nobel Peace Prize for our life-saving work.

Reports:

- *The Ugly Side of the Beautiful Game: Exploitation of Migrant Workers on a Qatar 2022 World Cup Site*, March 2016
- *Promising Little, Delivering Less: Qatar and Migrant Worker Abuse Ahead of the 2022 Football World Cup*, 20 May 2015
- *The Dark Side of Migration: Spotlight on Qatar's Construction Sector Ahead of the World Cup*, 17 November 2013
- *False Promises: Exploitation and Forced Labour of Nepalese Migrant Workers*, 12 December 2011

Building and Woodworkers International

The BWI is the Global Union Federation grouping free and democratic unions with members in the Building, Building Materials, Wood, Forestry, and Allied sectors. Our mission is to promote the development of trade unions in our sectors throughout the world and to promote and enforce workers rights in the context of sustainable development.

Documents:

- *Decent Work: Fair Play for All Teams*, 11 June 2015

Centre For The Study Of Labour And Mobility (CESLAM)

CESLAM aims to contribute to the understanding of labour and movement by pursuing four broad objectives: Contribute to broader theories and understandings on labour and mobility by cultivating new insights through interdisciplinary research; Conduct reliable, policy-relevant research on critical issues affecting working people and develop policy alternatives; Serve as a forum to foster academic, policy and public debates about labour and mobility through an open interchange of ideas and Disseminate knowledge to a broad range of audience using a variety of academic, policy and

media outlets.

Documents:

- *Overseas Assistance for Nepali Migrant Workers Seeking Justice Abroad*, December 2015
- *State of Migration in Nepal*, July 2014
- *Labor Migration Agents: Regulation, Accountability and Alternatives*, June 2014
- *A Risky Business: Accountability of Manpower Agencies in Nepal*, June 2014
- *Migrant Workers' Access to Justice at Home: Nepal*, June 2014
- *Kamaune: The Cultural and Economic Imaginaries of Migration*, June 2014
- *Migration for Labour and Its Impact on Farm Production in Nepal*, June 2013
- *The Mobility of Permanence: The Process of Relocating to Kathmandu*, March 2013
- *Governing Labour Migration in Nepal: An Analysis of Existing Policies and Institutional Mechanisms*, June 2012

Engineers Against Poverty

Improve infrastructure policy and engineering practice in order to help reduce and eventually eliminate poverty.

Documents:

- *Improving employment standards in construction in Qatar*, July 2014

Gulf Labor Artist Coalition

A coalition of international artists working to ensure that migrant worker rights are protected during the construction of museums on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi.

Reports:

- *Gulf Labor Report*, July 2015

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch is a nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organization made up of roughly 400 staff members around the globe. Its staff consists of human rights professionals including country experts, lawyers, journalists, and academics of diverse backgrounds and nationalities.

Documents:

- *Race to the Bottom: Exploitation of Migrant Workers Ahead of Russia's 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi*, 6 February 2013
- *Migrant Workers Rights on Saadiyat Island in the United Arab Emirates*, 10 February 2015
- *Island of Happiness Revisited*, 21 March 2012
- *Building a Better World Cup*, 12 June 2012
- *The Island of Happiness: Exploitation of Migrant Workers on Saadiyat Island Abu Dhabi*, 19 May

2009

- *"Are you Happy to Cheat Us?" Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Russia*, 10 February 2009
- *"One Year of My Blood" Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in Beijing*, 11 March 2008
- *Building Towers Cheating Workers*, 11 November 2006

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is the global voice of the world's working people. The ITUC's primary mission is the promotion and defence of workers' rights and interests, through international cooperation between trade unions, global campaigning, and advocacy within the major global institutions.

Documents:

- *Hidden Faces of the Gulf Miracle*, 27 May 2011

International Labor Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity.

Documents:

- *Travel Smart - Work Smart: A Guide for Nepali Migrant Workers in the United Arab Emirates*, June 2015
- *Workers' Housing*, 29 October 2009

United Nations Business and Human Rights

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights were proposed by UN Special Representative on business and human rights John Ruggie, and endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011. In the same resolution, the UN Human Rights Council established the UN Working Group on business and human rights.

Documents:

- *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, April 2011

Professional Associations

Architecture Lobby

The Architecture Lobby is an organization of architectural workers advocating for the value of architecture in the general public and for architectural work within the discipline.

Business And Human Rights Resource Center

We work with everyone to advance human rights in business and eradicate abuse. We track the human rights policy and performance of over 6000 companies in over 180 countries, making information publicly available. We engage with companies and governments to urge them to share information publicly.

International Union Of Architects (UIA)

The International Union of Architects (UIA), is a non-governmental organisation and global federation of national associations of architects.

Architects/Designers/Planners For Social Responsibility

Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility works for peace, environmental protection, ecological building, social justice, and the development of healthy communities. ADPSR programs aim to raise professional and public awareness of critical social and environmental issues, further responsive design and planning, and honor persons and organizations whose work exemplifies social responsibility.

Migrant Rights Organizations

Migrant Forum Asia

Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) believes that migrants' rights are human rights. Documented or undocumented, irrespective of race, gender, class, age, and religious belief, migrant workers' rights are guaranteed by the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and other international conventions.

Migrant-Rights.org

Migrant-Rights.org aims to raise awareness about the plight of migrant workers in the Middle East and amplify the voices of the disempowered.

Solidarity Center

The Solidarity Center stands with workers as they defend their right to freedom of association, supporting them as they organize, advocate and build worker voice.

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Design by MTWTF, New York

Michela Povoleri, Aliza Dzik, and Glen Cummings

We would like to thank Dean Amale Andraos and Columbia University GSAPP for their support. Our comrades in GulfLabor have been indispensable allies. We are grateful to Carin Kuoni at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at Parsons the New School and Rosalie Geneviro at the Architectural League for providing forums for our early discussions on architecture and migrant construction labor.

