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Youth and the Mediterranean: Exploring New Approaches to Dialogue and Cooperation

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*Edited by
Andrea Dessì
Lorenzo Kamel*

Youth and the Mediterranean: Exploring New Approaches to Dialogue and Cooperation

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This edited volume collects the revised and updated versions of eight policy papers produced by outstanding young scholars and activists from the Middle East and North Africa. Their works, focused on topics such as climate change and environmental degradation, state-society relations, radicalization and the migrant and refugee crisis, were presented during an international conference held at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on 19 January 2017. The authors, coming from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia, were selected through a rigorous and highly competitive application process.

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The study does not represent the position of the OSCE, its participating States or the institutional partners of the New-Med Research Network and exclusively reflects the research and opinions of the authors.



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Via Angelo Brunetti, 9 – I-00186 Roma

T +39 06 3224360

F + 39 06 3224363

iai@iai.it

www.iai.it

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	p. 4
<i>Andrea Dessì, Lorenzo Kamel</i>	
Contributors	8
I Environmental Challenges and Climate Change	
1. Sustainable Consumption for Food and Nutrition Security in the MENA Region	10
<i>Sibelle El Labban</i>	
2. Water Scarcity in Jordan: Roots of the Issue and Policy Recommendations	40
<i>Hussam Hussein</i>	
II Citizenship and the Weakening of the State System	
3. Youth Empowerment as a Cornerstone of Stability in the MENA Region	56
<i>Abdelrahman Aldaqqah</i>	
4. The Square's Spatiality and Women's Access to Public Space. Tahrir Square: The 18 Days	68
<i>Marwa Wasfy</i>	
III Radicalization and the ISIS Threat	
5. A More Diplomatic Approach to ISIS? A Clan-Based Negotiation and Youth Employment Approach to Counter Radical Extremism in Iraq	87
<i>Khader Abualhayjaa</i>	
6. Radicalization and the ISIS Threat	101
<i>Hamid Ait El Caid</i>	
IV Migration and the Refugee Crisis	
7. Activating the Potential of Maghreb Countries in Reducing Current Refugee Flows to Europe: Redirecting the Waves	117
<i>Haifa Ben Cheikha</i>	
8. Can the EU's Recurrent Regional Migration Crises Be Transformed from a Challenge into an Opportunity for both the EU and Its Neighbouring Countries?	130
<i>Zied Touzani</i>	

INTRODUCTION

Youth between the ages of 15 and 29 are the single largest and fastest expanding demographic group in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Their role in putting dominant societal norms to a test and fuelling new social, political and cultural processes can hardly be overestimated. Youth are among the most active demographic group to have challenged the authoritarianism of the state before, during and after the 2010-12 Arab uprisings. Over six years since the outbreak of what in the region is often called “*al-marar al-Arabi*” (“the Arab bitterness”), youth in the MENA still suffer from the highest unemployment rates in the world and the chronic lack of jobs and opportunities are widely considered a significant factor fuelling radical ideologies in the area.

While many studies have focused on the category of “youth” in the Arab world, it is still rare to hear how young people themselves view and interpret developments unfolding in their societies. Rarer still is to have these voices contribute to ongoing policy debates on the future of the Mediterranean. Indeed, the very concept of “Arab youth” or “MENA youth” has emerged in Western discourse in recent years as a tool to approach the “Arab Spring”. It was born out of the necessity to rely on an interpretative framework that, however, does not necessarily respond to the needs and claims of the populations in the region.¹ As argued by Pierre Bourdieu, youth is “nothing but a word”, implying that referring to youth as a social category is itself a manipulation of the young.² Rabab El-Mahdi noted soon after the Egyptian uprising of January 2011 that the underlying message in the widespread use of the concept is that “these ‘middle-class’ educated youth (read: modern) are not ‘terrorists’, they hold the same values as ‘us’ (the democratic West), and finally use the same tools (Facebook and Twitter) that ‘we’ invented and use in our daily-lives. They are just like ‘us’ and hence they deserve celebration.”³

Aware of these problems relating to the categorization of “youth”, the New-Med Research Network decided to provide a platform for a select number of “MENA youth” to articulate their thoughts and individually present their views on a number of socio-cultural and security-related themes in the Mediterranean. The

¹ Lorenzo Kamel and Daniela Huber, “Arab Spring: The Role of the Peripheries”, in Lorenzo Kamel and Daniela Huber (eds.), *Arab Spring and Peripheries. A Decentring Research Agenda*, London and New York, Routledge, 2016, p. 2.

² Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, London, Sage, 1993, p. 94-102.

³ Rabab El-Mahdi, “Orientalising the Egyptian Uprising”, in *Jadaliyya*, 11 April 2011, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1214>.

main purpose is to “de-simplify” the category of “youth” and the reading of what millions of them are currently experiencing, but also a way to challenge the paradigmatic schemes through which Western policymakers tend to approach this part of the world by superimposing frameworks and lessons derived from the European or Western experiences.

Against this backdrop, the New-Med Research Network issued an international call for papers in the Summer of 2016 targeting candidates under the age of 30 from countries of the MENA region.⁴ The selected applicants were asked to draft a policy paper to be presented during an international conference at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) in the presence of diplomats, policymakers and academics involved in policy debates on the MENA region.

Prospective candidates were provided with a list of sub-themes to be addressed in their policy papers, while each was also encouraged to propose topics that went beyond the provided list. Themes ranged from climate change and environmental degradation, to state-society relations, youth activism and gender equality, radicalization and the migrant and refugee crisis.

Reviewed by the New-Med Steering Committee through a rigorous and highly competitive selection process, the call for papers led to the selection of eight outstanding young scholars and activists from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. The present publication collects the revised versions of the policy papers written and presented for the occasion.

Entitled “Youth and the Mediterranean: Exploring New Approaches to Dialogue and Cooperation”, the conference, opened by a keynote speech by Italy’s Permanent Representative to the OSCE, Alessandro Azzoni,⁵ was structured around four panel sessions. Participants included a number of speakers from academia, civil society, research centres, youth movements and representatives from the Italian and European policymaking community, the private sector and the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna.

The success of the conference and the high quality of the research papers received, led New-Med partners – IAI, MAECI, the OSCE, Compagnia di San Paolo, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) – to renew their commitment to including youth as a key dimension of the future research agenda of the Network.

⁴ Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Applicants from Turkey were also eligible.

⁵ More information on the conference and the full text of Ambassador Alessandro Azzoni’s talk are available from IAI’s website, <http://www.iai.it/en/node/7215>.

YOUTH AND THE MEDITERRANEAN:
EXPLORING NEW APPROACHES TO DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

New initiatives are planned for 2017-18, including a further call for papers specifically targeting young and emerging scholars from the MENA region.

Andrea Dessì, Lorenzo Kamel
26 April 2017



Launched in June 2014, the New-Med Research Network is a network of Mediterranean experts and policy analysts focused on the complex social, political, cultural and security-related dynamics that are unfolding in the Mediterranean region. Coordinated by Lorenzo Kamel, Scientific Director of the Network, the project is run by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and the Compagnia di San Paolo of Turin.

Since its inception, the New-Med Research Network has organized seventeen international conferences and published 31 policy papers, reports and edited volumes on various themes tied to Euro-Mediterranean relations. Most recently, the Network has published an edited volume entitled *The Frailty of Authority. Borders, Non-State Actors and Power Vacuums in a Changing Middle East* containing a number of studies by members of the research network.

A priority of the New-Med Research Network is to promote non-Eurocentric debates of the region, featuring views from the South and other areas of the Mediterranean. The network also seeks to provide a platform where emerging researchers can put forward new perspectives about regional cooperation. By undertaking research and outreach activities, this “track II” initiative aims to foster a scholarly reflection on the changing scenarios in and around the Mediterranean and provide key input to the political dialogue taking place in international fora, including in the context of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership.

More information about the New-Med Research Network, including access to past events and publications is available from the IAI and OSCE websites.⁶

⁶ See the IAI website: *New-Med Research Network: The Future of Cooperation in the Mediterranean*, <http://www.iai.it/en/node/2004>. OSCE website: *The New-Med Track II Network*, <http://www.osce.org/networks/newmedtrackII>.

CONTRIBUTORS

KHADER ABUALHAYJAA resides in Amman, where he runs a freelance office providing Arabic lessons, translation, interpretation and assistance for employees in government institutions, NGOs and in journalism and academic research. He holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Florida, and an MA in Global Diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London.

HAMID AIT EL CAID holds a MA in Political Analysis and Public Policy from the Higher School of Economics in Moscow and is presently applying for PhD programmes. Prior to his graduate studies, he earned his BA in English and Linguistics from the School of Arts and Humanities at Moulay Ismail University in Meknes. Hamid hopes to become a professor, policy expert or advisor.

ABDELRAHMAN ALDAQQAH is a Board Member of Horizons International and a Doctor at the Palestinian Ministry of Health. Abdelrahman has a diploma from the Global Business Institute at Indiana University, during which time he represented Palestine at the US Chamber of Commerce in Washington. He holds a Doctor of Medicine degree from An-Najah National University, Nablus.

HAÏFA BEN CHEIKHA is a Researcher at the Arab Institute of Human Rights of Tunis. She is a Doctoral Candidate in Political Science at the Faculty of Legal, Political and Social Sciences of the University of Carthage in Tunis. She holds a bachelor degree in law, and a master's degree in Environmental Law from the University of Carthage in Tunis. She is the president of the Mediterranean Association for the Promotion of Peace and Humanitarian Rights.

SIBELLE EL LABBAN is an Associate Researcher in Public Health Nutrition at the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanon. She holds a BS in Nutrition and Dietetics (2008) and an MS in Food Technology (2012) from AUB. Sibelle has recently focused her research on food and nutrition security, sustainable diets and sustainable food consumption in the MENA region. She aspires to pursue her career in research on food and nutrition policies.

HUSSAM HUSSEIN is currently an Associate Tutor and Research Associate at the University of East Anglia and a member of the Water Security Research Centre at the London Water Research Group at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. He has completed his PhD at the School of International Development at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. Before his PhD, Hussam studied

YOUTH AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: EXPLORING NEW APPROACHES TO DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

International Relations and Diplomacy at the University of Trieste, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and the College of Europe, Natolin Campus.

ZIED TOUZANI is a Tunisian civil society activist and founder of Tun'Act, an NGO working on youth citizenship awareness and inclusion in the decision-making process in Tunisia. After graduating as an IT engineer in Tunisia, he obtained a scholarship to study Political Science at Science Po University in Paris.

MARWA WASFY is currently working as an Assistant Lecturer in Political Science at Cairo University where she is a PhD candidate in International Relations, while also studying Middle East Politics at the American University in Cairo. She received her BSc in Political Science in 2006 and holds her MA degree since 2012.



1. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN THE MENA REGION

Sibelle El Labban

Food security embodies the four dimensions of food availability; physical, social and economic access to food, as well as food utilization and the stability of these dimensions over time; all four must be fulfilled simultaneously to achieve food security.¹ *Nutrition security* relates to the “utilization” dimension of *food security*, focusing in particular on how food is utilized or consumed by the household and how specific food nutrients are utilized by the body.² Hence, *nutrition security* is an essential component of *food security*, as sound nutrition requires more than just enough energy for every man, woman and child. Human needs can only be satisfied through a diversity of nutrients to ensure good health and the prevention of disease. Experts have recognized this fundamental connection and are increasingly using the term *food and nutrition security*, which merges both concepts with an overall objective to achieve both, hence emphasizing the food and health requirements of populations.³ By definition, *food and nutrition security* exists “when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food of sufficient quantity and quality in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care”.⁴ The term also highlights the need for greater integration of nutrition in food security policies and programmes, thereby underlining the pivotal role of nutrition across the food chain.⁵

The MENA is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world in terms of food insecurity, with most countries experiencing “serious” or “alarming” levels (Figure

¹ Committee on World Food Security (CFS), *Coming to Terms with Terminology* (CFS 2012/39/4), Rome, September 2012, section IV, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/026/MD776E.pdf>.

² Ibid.

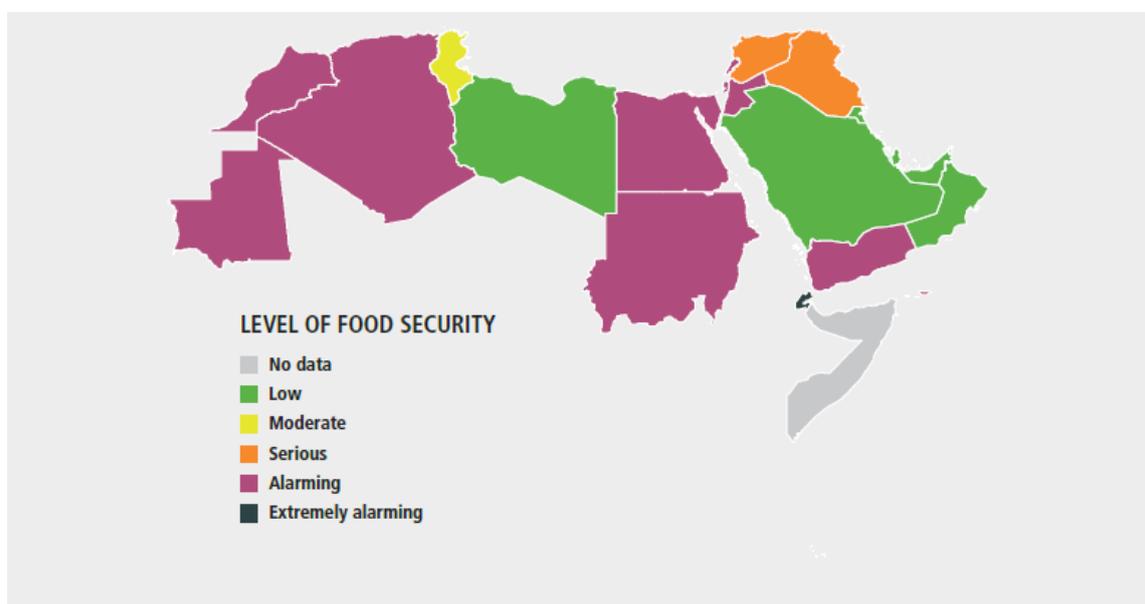
³ Lioba Weingärtner, “The Concept of Food and Nutrition Security”, in Klaus Klennert (ed.), *Achieving Food and Nutrition Security. Actions to Meet the Global Challenge. A Training Course Reader*, 2nd revised ed., Feldafing, InWEnt, 2005, p. 1-28, <http://www.eldis.org/go/home&id=22376&type=Document>.

⁴ Committee on World Food Security (CFS), *Coming to Terms with Terminology*, cit., p. 7.

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Evaluation of FAO’s Role and Work in Nutrition. Final Report* (PC 108/6), June 2011, <http://www.fao.org/bodies/pc/pc108/en>.

1). Food insecurity is low in Gulf countries, which have the financial resources to procure food through imports and are therefore considered more food secure than countries with limited agricultural production, poor infrastructure and weak economic development.⁶ However, even in these affluent countries, ensuring adequate energy availability and intake has not been sufficient to achieve total food *and* nutrition security, as micronutrient deficiencies remain problematic in these countries.⁷

Figure 1 | Level of food insecurity, MENA region



Source: Arab Spatial, National Food Security, <http://bit.ly/1ST6ECv>. Food import data: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Statistics Division database, <http://faostat.fao.org>, accessed on November 11, 2015; Total export and remittance data: World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI) Databank, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>, accessed on November 2, 2015.

Note: A country's macro-level food security is defined as food imports divided by total exports plus net remittance inflows (food imports / [total exports + net remittance inflows]). All indicator values are generally computed as three-year averages over the period 2010–2012. For more information, see C. Breisinger, O. Ecker, P. Al-Riffai, and B. Yu, *Beyond the Arab Awakening: Policies and Investments for Poverty Reduction and Food Security*, IFPRI Food Policy Report 25 (Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2015).

Source: Nadim Khouri and Clemens Breisinger, "Middle East and North Africa", in International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), *2016 Global Food Policy Report*, 2016, p. 89, <http://www.ifpri.org/node/15702>.

⁶ Clemens Breisinger et al., "Food Security and Economic Development in the Middle East and North Africa. Current State and Future Perspectives", in *IFPRI Discussion Papers*, No. 985 (May 2010), <https://www.ifpri.org/node/5020>; Ghada Ahmed et al., *Wheat Value Chains and Food Security in the Middle East and North Africa Region*, Durham, Duke University Center on Globalization, Governance and Competitiveness (CGGC), August 2013, http://www.cggc.duke.edu/pdfs/2013-08-28_CGGC_Report_Wheat_GVC_and_food_security_in_MENA.pdf.

⁷ Micronutrient Initiative et al., *Investing in the Future. A United Call to Action on Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies. Global Report 2009*, Ottawa, 2009, <http://www.unitedcalltoaction.org/flashreport.asp>.

Food and nutrition insecurity arise from key challenges facing the governing food systems on multiple levels and disciplines. The region has been witnessing political turmoil for nearly a decade, with significant economic, social and health repercussions. This upheaval has been partly triggered by neo-liberal policies such as those witnessed in Syria, which liberalized its agricultural economy while at the same time reducing support for farmers.⁸ In addition, the food price spikes of 2007/2008 and 2010/2011 led to considerable social tension in many countries, thereby exposing the inherent vulnerability of the MENA region to fluctuations in the world market for foodstuffs. In fact, the MENA region is heavily dependent on food imports to satisfy its growing and urbanizing population,⁹ which may create vulnerability in the domestic food supply.¹⁰ For example, Egypt, which used to be relatively self-sufficient, now imports 40 percent of its food to meet the demand of its growing population and as a short-term strategy to address the problem of food insecurity in the country.¹¹ In Iraq, decades of wars and sanctions impeded agricultural practices and development, leaving local farmers unable to compete with subsidized imported foods.¹² The food price spikes contributed to the onset of regional social distress and political unrest, which led to revolutions and riots in several countries of the region, culminating in the Arab Spring and resulting in food insecurity and hunger.¹³ In response to population growth and the rising demand for food, the current agro-food system in the region, characterized by intensive agricultural production that is environmentally damaging and inefficient, is facing climate change and depleted land, energy and water resources, making it no longer sustainable.

To date, MENA countries have fallen short of achieving food and nutrition security due to efforts that have taken a primarily “producer-oriented” approach to feeding populations and preventing extreme outcomes such as hunger and famine. Such an approach has focused on addressing food security merely as a supply problem by increasing agricultural production to provide more calories and make more food available, affordable and convenient. However, this dynamic has overlooked the consumption aspect of the problem, which is governed by the quality and

⁸ Jane Harrigan, *The Political Economy of Arab Food Sovereignty*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁹ Rami Zurayk, *Food Farming and Freedom. Sowing the Arab Spring*, Charlottesville, Just World Books, 2011, p. 238-240.

¹⁰ Lina Eklund, “On Virtual Water and Food Security in the Middle East and Beyond”, in *Your Middle East*, 22 August 2016, http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/opinion/on-virtual-water-and-food-security-in-the-middle-east-and-beyond_42380.

¹¹ David Hedengren, “Calls for Action to Deal with Looming Food Crisis in the Arab World”, in *Your Middle East*, 31 August 2012, http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/features/calls-for-action-to-deal-with-looming-food-crisis-in-the-arab-world_9120.

¹² Lina Eklund, “Food Security after Years of War and Sanctions in Iraq”, in *Population and Environment in the Middle East* (Blog), 19 February 2014, <http://wp.me/p46PZb-2l>.

¹³ Rami Zurayk, *Food Farming and Freedom. Sowing the Arab Spring*, cit.

allocation of nutrients consumed, leaving initiatives to tackle food and nutrition security only partially realized and compromised to date.¹⁴

A reliance on intensive agricultural production would not necessarily help MENA countries achieve food self-sufficiency, as this would remain an unrealistic prospect due to several factors. For instance, despite the notable regional increase in wheat production, the majority of MENA countries have not managed to achieve wheat self-sufficiency, as is evident in the increase in imports to satisfy the high demand for wheat over the past five decades (1961–2010) (see Figures 3 and 4 and Table 1 in Appendix).¹⁵ Moreover, wheat yield in most MENA countries has been shown to be lower than the world average (2,374 kg/ha vs 3,090 kg/ha in 2012), mainly due to climatic and agronomic factors.¹⁶ Saudi Arabia is one example, where the country invested heavily in the agriculture sector and became a wheat producer and exporter during the 1990s, thereby succeeding in achieving wheat self-sufficiency.¹⁷ However, the country suffered high economic and financial costs, including large subsidies, low economic and financial returns and depletion of groundwater resources, which led to a phasing out of wheat production in 2016.¹⁸ With regard to trade in the case of Egypt, an overvalued Egyptian exchange rate has been regarded as an obstacle to promoting the exports needed to generate foreign exchange in order to finance food imports. Consequently, Egypt's competitiveness is in decline because the goods it produces are overpriced.¹⁹

On the other hand, famine has increased and food security indicators across the MENA region have deteriorated.²⁰ Although the burden of undernourishment in the region has traditionally been low in comparison with other developing countries, the situation has changed over the past few years with the onset of conflicts and political instability in some countries.²¹ In fact, the number of

¹⁴ Janice Meerman, James Garrett and Marzella Wüstefeld, "Development Partners and Country Programming in Nutrition and Agriculture: Preview of Findings from a Landscape Review", in *SCN News*, No. 40 (2013), p. 10-18, <https://www.unscn.org/en/resource-center/Unscn-news?idnews=1310>.

¹⁵ UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), *Pathways towards Food Security in the Arab Region: An Assessment of Wheat Availability* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2015/1), New York, 17 March 2015, p. 30-31, <https://www.unescwa.org/node/93686>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Perrihan Al-Riffai, "How to Feed Egypt", in *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, No. 18 (Summer 2015), p. 37-43, <https://www.thecairoreview.com/?p=4041>.

²⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Regional Overview of Food Insecurity - Near East and North Africa. Strengthening Regional Collaboration to Build Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition*, Cairo, 2015, p. 1-2, <https://shar.es/1F3moz>.

²¹ Ibid.

undernourished people doubled between 1990–92 and 2014–16, while the proportion of undernourished people increased by 14 percent in the same period, with the Mashreq subregion witnessing the most dramatic increase (60 percent) and accounting for the highest number of undernourished people in the region (70 percent).²² This picture is primarily linked to conflict, which is considered the main driver of food insecurity and malnutrition, both acute and chronic.²³ Conflict can reduce the amount of food available, disrupt people’s access to food, hinder families’ access to food preparation facilities and healthcare and increase uncertainty about satisfying future needs for food and nutrition.²⁴ The high incidence of conflicts and protracted crises in the region has negatively impacted the nutritional status of affected populations, exerted high demand on food assistance and eroded community resilience by exposing vulnerable population groups, particularly children, to various forms of malnutrition.²⁵ For instance, the Syrian crisis has left 13.6 million people – 9.8 million inside Syria and 3.8 million refugees – in need of food assistance.²⁶ In Iraq, the prevalence of undernourishment nearly tripled between 1990–92 and 2014–16.²⁷ In Yemen, one in four people is considered undernourished, in a country with the highest incidence of poverty, unemployment and child malnutrition in the region. At the beginning of 2015, an estimated one-half of Yemen’s population required humanitarian assistance.²⁸

In parallel, MENA countries are experiencing a nutrition transition marked by the adoption of a “Westernized” diet, and facing the triple burden of malnutrition characterized by the co-existence of obesity, undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, even in affluent countries. While the rate of undernutrition and levels of stunting, wasting and underweight, particularly among children under five, have been on the decline in some MENA countries, there has been a parallel, dramatic increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases in the region.²⁹ For example, four MENA countries – Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – were ranked among

²² Ibid. The Mashreq subregion, or Oriental Near East, includes the following countries: Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan and Syria.

²³ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Peace and Food Security: Investing in Resilience to Sustain Rural Livelihoods amid Conflict*, April 2016, <https://shar.es/1F30oj>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Regional Overview of Food Insecurity - Near East and North Africa*, cit.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 2

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Barry M. Popkin, “Urbanization and the Nutrition Transition”, in James L. Garrett and Marie T. Ruel (eds.), “Achieving Urban Food and Nutrition Security in the Developing World”, in *2020 Vision Focus Briefs*, No. 3 (August 2000), <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15738coll2/id/92784>.

the top 20 countries with the highest obesity rates worldwide in 2014;³⁰ three of these countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar) were also among the top ten in diabetes prevalence worldwide in 2013, and are expected to remain so in 2035.³¹ Moreover, these relatively wealthy Gulf states also suffer from a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies (anaemia, iodine and vitamin D deficiency), as well as stunting,³² even though they have been classified as low on food insecurity (Figure 1). Thus, excess calorific intake manifested in high rates of overweight and obesity does not guarantee and should not be considered as an indicator of food and nutrition security. On the contrary, both rich and poor countries in the MENA region exhibit evidence of the triple burden of malnutrition, and therefore food and nutrition insecurity. Moreover, food consumption patterns in the MENA have been shown to be strong predictors of diet-related chronic diseases.³³ As a result, diets have become less diverse, less nutritious and unsustainable, with perversely negative impacts on human health.

These challenges can be addressed by enhancing the sustainability of the food system and promoting sustainable food consumption as a means to achieve food and nutrition security in the MENA. Sustainable food consumption denotes safe and healthy consumption of food in quantity and quality, achieved through economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable means, while being environmentally sound and considerate of the needs of others. Hence, sustainable food consumption constitutes a choice for food that is beneficial and life enhancing for individuals, society and the planet.³⁴

Adopting sustainable food consumption patterns would also present an opportunity for MENA countries to respond to current global needs by addressing key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12, which includes sustainable production and consumption of food among its targets, in addition to SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 3 (good health and well-being).³⁵ These goals aim to

³⁰ NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC), "Trends in Adult Body-Mass Index in 200 Countries from 1975 to 2014: A Pooled Analysis of 1698 Population-Based Measurement Studies with 19.2 Million Participants", in *The Lancet*, Vol. 387, No. 10026 (2 April 2016), p. 1377-1396, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)30054-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)30054-X).

³¹ International Diabetes Federation (IDF), *Diabetes Atlas 6th ed.*, 2013, <http://www.diabetesatlas.org>.

³² Micronutrient Initiative et al., *Investing in the Future*, cit.

³³ Ashkan Afshin et al., "The Impact of Dietary Habits and Metabolic Risk Factors on Cardiovascular and Diabetes Mortality in Countries of the Middle East and North Africa in 2010: A Comparative Risk Assessment Analysis", in *BMJ Open*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (May 2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2014-006385>.

³⁴ Lucia A. Reisch, "A Definition of 'Sustainable Food Consumption'", in *CORPUS, The SCP Knowledge Hub*, 2010.

³⁵ UNDP website: *Sustainable Development Goals*, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>.

address the root causes of poverty, hunger, food and nutrition insecurity and disease, while promoting sustainable food consumption and production patterns. Thus, sustainable food consumption constitutes an important tool and a promising approach to achieve the three aforementioned SDGs. In addition, sustainable food consumption may indirectly serve as one important solution (among many others) for countries where food self-sufficiency is relatively far-fetched in view of the multifaceted constraints on food and nutrition security, through adoption of large-scale nutrition interventions.³⁶

Against this backdrop, policy recommendations for sustainable food consumption in the MENA are proposed from a “consumer-oriented” perspective, adopting a nutrition lens to drive agricultural production as well as access to and utilization of food, in an attempt to mitigate food and nutrition insecurity in the region.

Policy recommendations

Policy recommendations for sustainable food consumption in the MENA may include the following: promoting the Mediterranean diet, entrenched in the region, as a model for developing sustainable food-based dietary guidelines; reducing red meat consumption for a smaller environmental footprint; adopting nutrition interventions to increase the availability and accessibility of nutritious, safe and sustainable foods; and developing a sustainability index to assess the sustainability of current food consumption patterns.

Promoting the Mediterranean diet, entrenched in the region, as a model for developing sustainable food-based dietary guidelines

There is no single or defined Mediterranean diet (MD), but rather “variations” of the MD that represent social and cultural expressions of the different Mediterranean food cultures.³⁷ However, the term MD does refer to common dietary characteristics that are shared among Mediterranean countries, such as high intake of olive oil and olives, fruits, vegetables, cereals (mostly unrefined), legumes, nuts and fish; moderate amounts of dairy; low intake of meat and meat products; and wine in moderation if culturally and religiously acceptable.³⁸ Most of

³⁶ Perrihan Al-Riffai, “How to Feed Egypt”, cit.

³⁷ Sandro Dernini and Elliot M. Berry, “Historical and Behavioral Perspectives of the Mediterranean Diet”, in Donato F. Romagnolo and Ornella I. Selmin (eds.), *Mediterranean Diet. Dietary Guidelines and Impact on Health and Disease*, Cham, Springer-Humana Press, 2016, p. 29-41.

³⁸ Antonia Trichopoulou and Pagona Lagiou, “Healthy Traditional Mediterranean Diet: An Expression of Culture, History and Lifestyle”, in *Nutrition Reviews*, Vol. 55, No. 11 (November 1997), p. 383-389; Anna Bach-Faig et al., “Mediterranean Diet Pyramid Today. Science and Cultural

these components, particularly those of plant origin, have been reported to be protective against mortality from cardiometabolic diseases³⁹ and, at the same time, sustainable.⁴⁰

From a historical perspective, the MD has evolved from a healthy dietary pattern in the 1950s to a sustainable dietary pattern in 2009–10, encompassing all four dimensions of nutrition/health, society/culture, economy and environment in a new model of a sustainable diet.⁴¹ This multidimensional framework has valorized the MD as a healthy and sustainable lifestyle model with dual benefits for the individual and the planet.⁴² Moreover, UNESCO inscribed the MD on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013,⁴³ thus magnifying its cultural value and granting it international visibility and acceptance. More recently, in 2016 the Gran Canaria Declaration recommended “Enjoying the Mediterranean Diet” as part of its Decalogue for sustainable food and nutrition in the community.⁴⁴ These historical milestones have highlighted the MD as one of the most emblematic examples of a healthy and sustainable diet that is nutritionally adequate, environmentally sustainable and culturally renowned.

On the other hand, existing Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDGs) have traditionally been developed and used as a tool to encourage healthy eating, but without considering environmental sustainability. To make current food consumption patterns more sustainable, FBDGs should be revisited to consider nutritional impact as well as sustainability for each guideline. The affordability, environmental footprint and ethical considerations of all foods should be assessed, and recommendations adjusted accordingly.⁴⁵

Updates”, in *Public Health Nutrition*, Vol. 14, No. 12A (December 2011), p. 2274-2284, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980011002515>.

³⁹ Ashkan Afshin et al., “The Impact of Dietary Habits and Metabolic Risk Factors on Cardiovascular and Diabetes Mortality in Countries of the Middle East and North Africa in 2010”, cit.

⁴⁰ EAT and Sustainia, *Eat in Sustainia: Taste the Food Systems of Tomorrow*, 2015, p. 76, http://sustainia.me/resources/publications/Eat_in_Sustainia_2015.pdf.

⁴¹ Sandro Dernini and Elliot M. Berry, “Historical and Behavioral Perspectives of the Mediterranean Diet”, cit.

⁴² Sandro Dernini et al. “Med Diet 4.0: The Mediterranean Diet with Four Sustainable Benefits”, in *Public Health Nutrition*, 22 December 2016.

⁴³ See the UNESCO website: *Mediterranean Diet*,

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/mediterranean-diet-00884>.

⁴⁴ Video: *Decalogue for Sustainable Food and Nutrition in the Community*, https://youtu.be/_91m8N85cBk.

⁴⁵ Nahla Hwalla, Rachel A. Bahn and Sibelle El Labban, “Sustainable Food Consumption in Arab Countries”, in Ibrahim Abdel Gelil and Najib Saab (eds.), *Arab Environment 8: Sustainable Consumption for Better Resource Management*, Beirut, Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED), 2015, p. 134-171, <http://www.afedonline.org/Report2015/AFEDreportEng-Ar2015.html>.

Mediterranean countries are encouraged to provide their populations with FBDGs that preserve their Mediterranean heritage and satisfy the components of both health and sustainability within the context of MDs. In fact, the MD, with its four aforementioned sustainable benefits and dimensions, represents a valid tool for promoting sustainable food consumption patterns,⁴⁶ and therefore could serve as a model for developing sustainable FBDGs. Hence, developing national sustainable FBDGs based on the MD would constitute an important step towards sustainable food consumption patterns in the Mediterranean basin. This can provide a pathway for studying the sustainability of food consumption patterns in other MENA countries that have not yet undertaken such efforts and are urged to take immediate steps to incorporate sustainability considerations into their guidelines. For example, it may seem difficult, and probably impractical, for Gulf countries to implement the MD per se as a model in the development of their prospective sustainable FBDGs. Nonetheless, and as a first step, these countries can and are encouraged to include the dietary components of the MD (which have been proven to be both healthy and sustainable) in their food consumption patterns, as a start in their journey towards sustainable FBDGs. Hence, MENA countries can consult and build on methodologies and indicators around the MD to assess dietary sustainability; however, efforts should be made to ensure that recommendations are culture-specific and tailored to the traditions, dietary needs and eating habits of the MENA population.

Reducing red meat consumption for a smaller environmental footprint

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization's food demand projections, the world needs to close a 70 percent "food gap" between the crop calories available in 2006 and expected calorie demand in 2050.⁴⁷ This food gap is a result of global population growth and convergence towards "Westernized" diets that are high in calories, protein and animal-based sources.⁴⁸ As nations urbanize and citizens become wealthier, populations generally increase their calorie intake and the share of resource-intensive foods, such as dairy and beef, in their diets. These dietary trends pose challenges for food and nutrition security and sustainability, particularly in the MENA region, which is experiencing nutrition transition and

⁴⁶ Roberto Capone et al., "Relations between Food and Nutrition Security, Diets and Food Systems", in *Agriculture and Forestry*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (2016), p. 49-58, <http://dx.doi.org/10.17707/AgricultForest.62.1.05>.

⁴⁷ Nikos Alexandratos and Jelle Bruinsma, "World Agriculture towards 2030/2050: The 2012 Revision", in *ESA Working Papers*, No. 12-03 (June 2012), <http://www.fao.org/economic/esa/publications/details/en/c/147899>; Jelle Bruinsma, *The Resource Outlook to 2050: By how much do land, water and crop yields need to increase by 2050?*, Paper presented at the FAO Expert Meeting on How to Feed the World in 2050, Rome, 24-26 June 2009, <https://landportal.info/pt/node/12976>.

⁴⁸ Janet Ranganathan et al., "Shifting Diets for a Sustainable Food Future", in *World Resources Institute Working Papers*, April 2016, <http://www.wri.org/node/43991>.

depleted environmental resources. Efforts to close the food gap have focused on increasing agricultural production, which, in turn, will continue to exert additional pressure on environmental resources. Therefore, relying on yield increases alone to sustainably close the food gap is likely to be insufficient, and shifting food consumption patterns is clearly required.⁴⁹

Animal-based foods, apart from being associated with poor health outcomes if consumed in large amounts, require significantly more water and energy resources to produce than plant-based foods. Beef, in particular, is the most resource-intensive and environmentally impactful, requiring significantly more land and freshwater resources and generating more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of protein consumed than any other food.⁵⁰

Hence, among the proposed dietary reforms that aim to foster sustainable food production is a reduction in beef consumption specifically. For instance, reducing beef consumption in the average American diet was shown to significantly reduce land use and greenhouse gas emissions by 33–35 percent as compared with a 13–16 percent reduction as a result of substituting beef with pork and poultry or with legumes.⁵¹ In addition, analyses of the water footprint of different dietary scenarios based on the MD in 13 Mediterranean cities showed that adherence to a vegetarian diet that excludes meat and offal leads to significant water footprint reductions of 28–53 percent in these cities.⁵²

The “double pyramid” in Figure 2 is a useful illustration of the nutritional and environmental impact of various food groups, showing that foods with higher recommended consumption levels have lower environmental impact, and vice versa. Hence, lowering the consumption of red meat and increasing intake of plant-based foods (grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes) will result in the double effect of more nutritionally adequate, sustainable food consumption and lower environmental impact.⁵³

⁴⁹ Ibid.

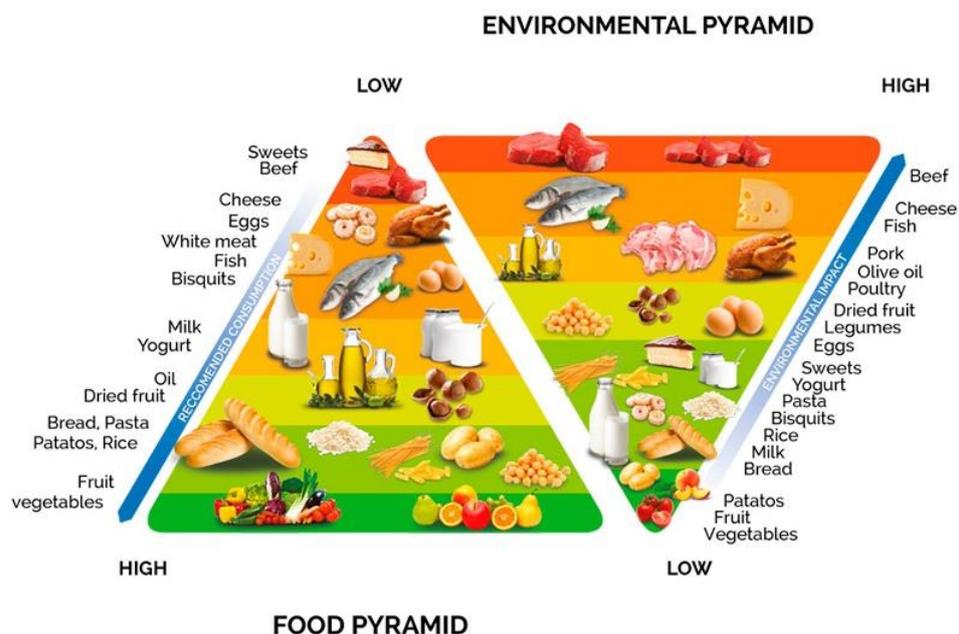
⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Davy Vanham et al., “Water Consumption Related to Different Diets in Mediterranean Cities”, in *Science of the Total Environment*, Vol. 573 (15 December 2016), p. 96-105, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.08.111>.

⁵³ Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition (BCFN), *Double Pyramid 2016. A More Sustainable Future Depends on Us*, 2016, p. 62-63, <https://www.barillacfn.com/en/publications/double-pyramid-2016-a-more-sustainable-future-depends-on-us>.

Figure 2 | Double pyramid for adults



Source: Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition, 2016, https://www.barillacfn.com/media/images/doppia-piramide-adulti_en.jpg.

In the MENA region, red meat availability and consumption have been reported at alarmingly high levels, as most countries consume more than three times the nutritionally recommended amount of red meat, that is, 16–36 kg/capita/year despite the recommended 5.2 kg/capita/year.⁵⁴ A preliminary calculation illustrated the potential environmental benefits of decreasing red meat intake in MENA countries. Calculations showed that by reducing red meat consumption to nutritionally recommended levels, MENA countries could enjoy a more nutritious diet and jointly reduce their water footprint by more than 70 billion m³/year.⁵⁵

Adopting nutrition interventions to increase the availability and accessibility of nutritious, safe and sustainable foods

Community-based policy interventions aimed at promoting sustainable food consumption may include information-based instruments, market-based

⁵⁴ Calculations based on: Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), *Arab Agricultural Statistics Yearbook, Vol. 32*, Khartoum, 2013, <http://www.aoad.org/eAASYXX.htm>; Ashkan Afshin et al., “The Impact of Dietary Habits and Metabolic Risk Factors on Cardiovascular and Diabetes Mortality in Countries of the Middle East and North Africa in 2010”, cit.
⁵⁵ Nahla Hwalla, Rachel A. Bahn and Sibelle El Labban, “Sustainable Food Consumption in Arab Countries”, cit.

initiatives, direct regulations, “nudges”⁵⁶ and the empowerment of women, of which selected examples that can be adopted in the MENA region are presented here.

Information-based instruments can take the form of nutrition education programmes that target school children and adults, whereby school feeding programmes and other institutional food services are reoriented to provide food that is healthy, seasonal and sustainably produced.⁵⁷ Few nutrition education programmes and campaigns have been implemented or initiated in MENA countries. As of 2012, the Ministry of Health in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has put in place new regulations on the types of food sold at schools, whereby processed foods (chocolate and potato chips) are replaced with healthier options (fruits and vegetables).⁵⁸ In Lebanon, the “Healthy Kids–Ajyal Salima” nutrition education programme was launched in 2010 with an aim to increase health and nutrition awareness among public and private school children and to address the rising overweight and obesity prevalence among youth in Lebanon.⁵⁹ The programme includes interactive learning sessions and hands-on activities on nutrition, healthy eating and physical activity for children and an educational component for parents.⁶⁰ Furthermore, the programme involves supporting healthy food options in school snack shops. The impact of this intervention on changes in children’s dietary practices has been assessed by means of a questionnaire administered both at baseline and post-intervention. So far, the intervention programme has proven to be effective, showing an increase in students’ nutritional knowledge and self-efficacy, as well as a decrease in the purchase and consumption of high-energy snacks and beverages (potato chips and sweetened drinks) post-intervention.⁶¹ As a result, the programme has been part of the Lebanese Ministry of Education’s school health unit curriculum since 2014.⁶²

⁵⁶ Lucia Reisch, Ulrike Eberle and Sylvia Lorek, “Sustainable Food Consumption: An Overview of Contemporary Issues and Policies”, in *Sustainability: Science, Practice & Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2013), p. 7-25, <http://d20nn6mxpbiih2.cloudfront.net/sspp-journal/SSPP-v9.2.1207-033.reisch.pdf>

⁵⁷ Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, 15 October 2015, <http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/text>.

⁵⁸ Afshan Ahmed, “Junk Food Taken off the Menu in UAE Schools”, in *The National*, 10 October 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/education/junk-food-taken-off-the-menu-in-uae-schools>.

⁵⁹ American University of Beirut website: *Early Nutrition Education Gains Traction in Lebanon & the Region*, http://www.aub.edu.lb/fafs/fafs_home/NewsEvents/Pages/2016EarlyNutritionEducationGainsTractioninLebanontheRegion.aspx.

⁶⁰ Carla Habib-Mourad et al., “Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity among School Children: Findings from Health-E-PALS the First Pilot Intervention from Lebanon”, in *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 14, No. 940 (September 2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-940>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² American University of Beirut website: *Early Nutrition Education Gains Traction in Lebanon & the Region*, cit.

The success of the programme in Lebanon has enabled its transferability to public schools in four other MENA countries: in Palestine, where it will be implemented this year; in Jordan, where it has been expanding since last year; in Dubai, where it has been in operation since 2012; and in Saudi Arabia, where it completed a pilot run in 2014. The programme has thus reached more than 40,000 children in the MENA to date.⁶³ However, covering solely the health aspects of sustainable food consumption is insufficient. Education for sustainable consumption is crucial in order to provide school children with the appropriate information and knowledge of the environmental and social impacts of their daily food consumption and to propose alternative solutions so that they make optimal, healthy and sustainable food choices.⁶⁴ For instance, the Ministry of Education in Lebanon could modify the content of their established curriculum to include themes, topics and modules around the subject of sustainable food consumption, and encourage all primary and secondary schools to provide education in this subject for a minimum of one hour a week each year for all grades.

In addition, given that the first 1,000 days of life constitute a window of opportunity to provide optimal nutrition, programmes targeting infants and children under five should promote good nutrition practices for optimal growth and development, such as educating mothers about the importance of breastfeeding and of timely, nutritionally adequate and safe complementary feeding, which offer protection from under- and over-nutrition that can progress into adult-onset chronic diseases.⁶⁵

On the other hand, emergency food programmes should work to provide needy individuals with food baskets that can deliver, and/or voucher-based assistance that can enable access to, essential macro- and micronutrients that are vital for human health and well-being. Providing refugees and the underprivileged with staple foods such as oil, sugar and flour may help meet energy needs but does not directly deliver the protein and micronutrient diversity needed for adequate growth and maintenance and could potentially contribute to nutrient deficiencies that negatively impact children's growth and adults' health. Questions about which nutrients to provide are clearly related to wider questions of how to achieve a balance between delivering food choices to beneficiaries that meet their preferences and ensuring dietary diversity for optimal health. However, even subsidy reforms based on increasing the number of subsidized items to allow more

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Victoria Thoresen, *HERE and NOW! Education for Sustainable Consumption. Recommendations and Guidelines*, Paris, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), 2010, p. 11, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11822/8011>.

⁶⁵ Nahla Hwalla, Sibelle El Labban and Rachel A. Bahn, "Nutrition Security is an Integral Component of Food Security", in *Frontiers in Life Science*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (June 2016), p. 167-172, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21553769.2016.1209133>.

choice in selection is deemed tricky, as new additions may include unsustainable food items such as animal protein. Hence, consumer education and awareness is paramount in this regard, and promoting nutritious food to consumers can thereby inform agriculture by demanding increased production of nutritious foods.⁶⁶

With respect to market-based instruments, and in the light of alarming obesity rates among all age groups in the MENA, governments are urged to provide subsidies for healthier foods (reduced VAT for fruits and vegetables) and impose taxes on harmful or unsustainable food and drink.⁶⁷ Such financial instruments are powerful tools, as price is a key decision criterion for consumption. Moreover, consumers are more likely to notice perceived financial losses due to taxes than price reductions resulting from subsidies. Therefore, taxes may be more influential than subsidies in consumers' decision to switch to more sustainable food products. In addition, taxation has been proposed as a means for generating revenue that governments can use to finance education-based policies, such as programmes to prevent obesity among children and adults.⁶⁸ In general, consumers are more

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ In 2014, according to NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC) data (<http://ncdrisc.org/data-visualisations-adiposity.html>), four MENA countries (Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) were in the top 20 for highest adult obesity worldwide. In the same year, the prevalence of obesity ranged from 9–34 percent among men, while it was higher among women, ranging from 19–45 percent. For both genders, the lowest values were reported in Yemen, whereas the highest values were reported in Gulf countries. Most MENA countries have adult obesity rates comparable to or higher than those observed in the United States (35 percent) but definitely higher than those observed in the United Kingdom (26–28 percent). Among children and adolescents in the MENA, obesity prevalence ranged from 6.3 percent in Qatar to 13.7 percent in United Arab Emirates (using IOTF criteria), being higher than that reported in Germany (3.1 percent) and comparable to rates reported in Canada (7.6 percent) and Portugal (11.3 percent). Among children under five in MENA, the prevalence of overweight and obesity ranged from 2 percent in Oman and Yemen to 22.4 percent in Libya, with most countries showing either comparable or higher levels than those observed in the United States (6 percent). See for Qatar: Abdulbari Bener, "Prevalence of Obesity, Overweight, and Underweight in Qatari Adolescents", in *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 2006), p. 39-45, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/156482650602700106>; for UAE: Mahdi Malik and Ali Bakir, "Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity among Children in the United Arab Emirates", in *Obesity Reviews*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (January 2007), p. 15-20; for Germany: Helen Kalies, J. Lenz and Rudiger von Kries, "Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity and Trends in Body Mass Index in German Pre-School Children, 1982–1997", in *International Journal of Obesity*, Vol. 26, No. 9 (September 2002), p. 1211-1217, <https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.ijo.0802013>; for Canada: Meizi He and Charlene Beynon, "Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in School-aged Children", in *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (2009), p. 101-104; for Portugal: Cristina Padez et al., "Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity in 7-9-Year-Old Portuguese Children: Trends in Body Mass Index from 1970–2002", in *American Journal of Human Biology*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (November/December 2004), p. 670-678; for USA: UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Group, *Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates - Levels and Trends*, 2016, <http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/estimates2015/en>.

⁶⁸ Lucia Reisch, Ulrike Eberle and Sylvia Lorek, "Sustainable Food Consumption", cit.

likely to support and favour a tax that is introduced with an aim to promote health and the revenues from which will be dedicated to such purposes.⁶⁹

In Egypt, the food subsidy system was reformed to provide the consumer with more flexibility in food selection by including new subsidized commodities such as red meat, chicken, fish, pulses and dairy products, but no vegetables or fruits.⁷⁰ The new system also provides beneficiaries with a monthly cash allotment on a smart card, which can be redeemed for any of the subsidized commodities in any available packaged unit.⁷¹ Such a strategy might have led to positive dietary effects by encouraging a shift away from high-calorie, nutrient-poor staple foods (bread, oil, sugar and rice) towards more nutritious food items. However, it does not necessarily guarantee the consumption of a healthy and sustainable diet in the light of the subsidized animal-based products that might be considered an attractive option by the consumer. Hence, a possible solution would be to improve the Egyptian food system by including fruits and vegetables in the list of newly subsidized food items to provide a wider variety of healthy and sustainable food choices. Another option would be better targeting, allocation and prioritization of food subsidies to guarantee full coverage for the most vulnerable groups. In fact, a significant number of beneficiaries are deemed non-poor, while almost 20 percent of the vulnerable are not covered.⁷²

As for regulatory instruments, given the effectiveness of the media in promoting junk food (especially among children and less-educated individuals), regulation of advertising, particularly during children's programmes, should be used as a means to limit exposure to such food messages.⁷³

Shifting towards more sustainable food consumption can be achieved through "nudges" that softly and voluntarily shift consumers toward "better choices".⁷⁴ Examples include moving soda machines to more distant, less visited areas within schools; creating a health-supportive infrastructure; providing sustainable choice

⁶⁹ Kelly D. Brownell et al., "The Public Health and Economic Benefits of Taxing Sugar-Sweetened Beverages", in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 361, No. 16 (October 2009), p. 1599-1605, <http://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMhpr0905723>.

⁷⁰ Olivier Ecker, Jean Francois Trinh Tan and Perrihan Al-Riffai, "Facing the Challenge: The Recent Reform of the Egyptian Food Subsidy System", in *Arab Food and Nutrition Security Blog*, 19 December 2014, <http://www.arabspatial.org/blog/blog/2014/12/19/facing-the-challenge-the-recent-reform-of-the-egyptian-food-subsidy-system>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Perrihan Al-Riffai, "How to Feed Egypt", cit.

⁷³ Lucia Reisch, Ulrike Eberle and Sylvia Lorek, "Sustainable Food Consumption", cit.

⁷⁴ Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge. Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Consumer Policy Toolkit*, Paris, OECD, 2010, <http://www.oecd.org/sti/consumer/consumer-policy-toolkit-9789264079663-en.htm>.

defaults in school and institutional cafeterias; and securing access to affordable, healthier food alternatives for all income groups.⁷⁵ Another option is “smart canteens”, whereby healthy food is rearranged and presented more attractively, such as locating the salad bar in the middle of the cafeteria where everybody passes by and requiring students to pay cash for sweets. Such solutions have been shown to lead to greater behavioural change than simply banning junk food or sugary drinks from school cafeterias.⁷⁶

Last but not least, women tend to play a pivotal role in the framework of conflict, food and nutrition security and peace building. In most rural settings, women are primarily responsible for food and nutrition security within the household, and in most developing countries they contribute significantly to agricultural labour despite being highly exposed to gender gap and inequality.⁷⁷ Moreover, evidence and experience have shown that women are more likely than men to spend their income on food, healthcare and education, which proves their critical role in recovering and restoring peace in post-conflict settings.⁷⁸ Therefore, targeting women as the first beneficiaries of food aid and social protection and promoting their economic empowerment as well as their right to access and use resources can significantly contribute to improving household resilience.⁷⁹ This is exactly what the work and mission of several non-governmental organizations is based on.

Action Against Hunger (ACF), which operates with nutrition security at the heart of its interventions in conflict-afflicted areas in Lebanon, aims to promote access to safe and nutritious food by boosting the economy of households.⁸⁰ To do so, ACF relies on “conditional cash transfer” in exchange for employment or nutrition

⁷⁵ Stephan Wahlen, Eva Heiskanen and Kristiina Aalto, “Endorsing Sustainable Food Consumption: Prospects from Public Catering”, in *Journal of Consumer Policy*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (March 2012), p. 7-21; Lucia Reisch and Wencke Gwozdz, “Smart Defaults and Soft Nudges. How Insights from Behavioral Economics Can Inform Effective Nutrition Policy”, in Joachim Scholderer and Karen Brunsø (eds.), *Marketing, Food, and the Consumer. Festschrift in Honour of Klaus Grunert*, Harlow, Pearson Education, 2013, p. 189-200.

⁷⁶ David R. Just and Brian Wansink, “Smarter Lunchrooms: Using Behavioral Economics to Improve Meal Selection”, in *Choices*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (2009), <http://ageconsearch.tind.io/record/94315>; Daniel R. Taber et al., “Banning All Sugar-Sweetened Beverages in Middle Schools. Reduction of In-School Access and Purchasing but Not Overall Consumption”, in *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, Vol. 166, No. 3 (March 2012), p. 256-262, <https://doi.org/10.1001/archpediatrics.2011.200>.

⁷⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Peace and Food Security*, cit.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Joaquin Cadario (Food Security and Livelihood Advisor, Action against Hunger), Oral presentation at the conference on “Rebuilding Health Post-Conflict: A Dialogue for the Future”, Beirut, 8 December 2016.

sensitization sessions.⁸¹ For example, the organization provides “bulgur” that is fortified with iron and zinc to women who, in return, cook it and sell it to neighbouring families.⁸² Such income-generating activity has proven to be impactful as it promotes livelihoods, engages women in the economy and increases their chance of employment.⁸³ In fact, 70 percent of women beneficiaries were able to secure a job after engaging in these activities that enabled them to broaden their social network and enhance their professional skills.⁸⁴ Thus, investing in women and reinforcing their capacities in conflict settings is certainly rewarding on all levels. Most importantly, “the economic empowerment of women greatly contributes to the stabilization of societies emerging from armed conflict”.⁸⁵

Developing a sustainability index to assess the sustainability of current food consumption patterns

Dietary patterns are being revisited and studied in terms of their sustainability in addition to their health implications, particularly in developed countries where most of the work on environmental sustainability to date has been undertaken. In the MENA, research on environmental sustainability is scarce, and policy-makers and stakeholders do not have access to tools that assess the sustainability of current food consumption patterns.

Therefore, MENA countries are advised to examine the impact of their current food consumption patterns on natural resources using a step-wise approach. First, “protective” and “harmful” foods should be evaluated with respect to their environmental footprint, including soil erosion, water use, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as their economic cost. For example, in the light of the nutrition transition and high consumption of red meat in the MENA, this step would help determine a sustainable level of meat consumption consistent with environmental and health objectives, and would provide a better understanding of the environmental benefits of reducing high-sugar, high-fat and high-salt processed foods.⁸⁶ Second, a sustainability index should be developed for each protective and harmful food component, taking into account its environmental footprint. Third, the derived sustainability index should be used for actionable

⁸¹ Ibid. Sessions of sensitization and education on essential practices linked to nutrition (breastfeeding, hygiene, feeding practices, etc.).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ UN Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013), 18 October 2013, [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2122\(2013\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2122(2013)).

⁸⁶ Carlos Gonzales Fischer and Tara Garnett, *Plates, Pyramids, Planet. Developments in National Healthy and Sustainable Dietary Guidelines: A State of Play Assessment*, FAO and the University of Oxford, 2016, <http://www.unclearn.org/es/node/12488>.

knowledge, such as issuing policy briefs to inform policy-makers and stakeholders in the region about sustainable food consumption, and/or designing convenient mobile applications that would help consumers easily assess the sustainability of their foods, and guide them towards healthy and sustainable eating.

On the other hand, researchers at Texas A&M University have recently developed the water–energy–food (WEF) framework, which offers an explicit quantification of the existent linkages between water, energy and food systems, and a corresponding assessment tool, the WEF Nexus modelling tool (WEF Nexus Tool 2.0), to guide proper planning and management of these resources.⁸⁷ However, the tool lacks a nutrition component, which would constitute an essential element to drive a more comprehensive analysis and management of these linkages. Hence, MENA countries can learn from approaches that bring together scientists and policy-makers to build a sustainability tool that includes nutrition in addition to the food, water and energy nexus, and hence be able to develop sustainability indices for prevailing food consumption patterns.

Conclusions

The MENA region is facing political, economic, environmental, and health and nutritional challenges that have resulted in a severe state of food and nutrition insecurity, negatively impacting both populations and environmental resources alike. Transition towards sustainable food consumption patterns in the MENA is crucial to alleviate these challenges, achieve long-term food and nutrition security and respond to SDGs. Looking at the big picture, trade could be one of the first means for achieving resilience in the region, especially since the continuous decline in agricultural prices has benefited MENA countries in their position as net food importers.⁸⁸ However, given the specifics and dynamics of the current food system in the region, a set of coherent, integrated and holistic policies is essential to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the linkages between the different food-related dimensions and address the full range of drivers of unsustainable food consumption.⁸⁹ Policy recommendations aimed at promoting sustainable food consumption should be based on research activities as well as evidence-based

⁸⁷ Bassel T. Daher and Rabi H. Mohtar, “Water–energy–food (WEF) Nexus Tool 2.0: Guiding Integrative Resource Planning and Decision-making”, in *Water International*, Vol. 40, No. 5-6 (2015), p. 748-771.

⁸⁸ For example, by importing food staples such as wheat, MENA countries would actually be importing “virtual water” while at the same time reducing the use of their own environmental resources (primarily water). See American University of Beirut website: *World Expert on Water Tony Allan Puts Food-Water Security on Forefront for MENA Region*, <http://www.aub.edu.lb/news/2016/Pages/tony-allan.aspx>.

⁸⁹ Lucia Reisch, Ulrike Eberle and Sylvia Lorek, “Sustainable Food Consumption”, cit.

interventions focused on public awareness and education, in which both policy-minded researchers and research-minded policy-makers should be involved.⁹⁰ Furthermore, nutrition should be at the core of these policies and an integral component of knowledge dissemination, education and extension.⁹¹ Ultimately, empowering consumers is paramount, helping them “make the sustainable choice the easy choice”⁹² and providing them with accurate and comparable information on the nutritional value and environmental impact of foods.⁹³

The policy recommendations proposed in this paper conform to the abovementioned specifications and contain the strategies and interventions necessary to advance sustainable food consumption in the MENA as a means to mitigate food and nutrition insecurity. However, adopting a holistic and multilateral approach to developing and implementing these policies as a whole and all at once would be too idealistic and probably unrealistic, particularly in the light of the political turmoil and rivalry between various nations in the region and the dominance of security issues among the priorities of many governments. Instead, MENA countries are encouraged to consider a context-specific approach to effectively promote these policies, bearing in mind that what works in one country may not be fully replicable in another.⁹⁴ “Comprehensive, country specific food security strategies and their implementation are key for development and peace.”⁹⁵ In other words, while countries in the region share several determinants of food and nutrition insecurity, they should, nevertheless, prioritize their action plans to address, in the first place, existing and pressing needs and/or strategies that are subject to improvement/amendment, as a first easy and practical step towards the common goal of sustainable food consumption. For example, while Lebanon may choose to revise its existing FBDGs for their sustainability impact and modify the content of its established curriculum to include themes, topics and modules around the subject of sustainable food consumption, Egypt may choose to further improve its reformed food subsidy system by introducing a sustainability

⁹⁰ Karen Bogenschneider and Thomas J. Corbett, *Evidence-based Policymaking. Insights from Policy-minded Researchers and Research-minded Policymakers*, New York, Routledge, 2010.

⁹¹ Alexandre Meybeck et al., “Improving Food Systems for Sustainable Diets in a Green Economy”, in *FAO GEA Rio+20 Working Papers*, No. 4 (March 2012), <http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/ags/docs/SFCP/WorkingPaper4.pdf>.

⁹² Lucia Reisch, Ulrike Eberle and Sylvia Lorek, “Sustainable Food Consumption”, cit.

⁹³ Alexandre Meybeck et al., “Improving Food Systems for Sustainable Diets in a Green Economy”, cit.

⁹⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Strengthening the Links between Resilience and Nutrition in Food and Agriculture. A Discussion Paper*, Rome, FAO, 2014, <http://www.fao.org/2/i3777e>.

⁹⁵ Clemens Breisinger, *Beyond the Arab Awakening: From Revolution to Food Security and Development*, Presentation at the Food Security Seminar Series, 18 April 2013, https://fsc.uni-hohenheim.de/fileadmin/einrichtungen/fsc/FSC_in_Dialog/previous_FSC_in_dialog/2013/Breisinger_Food_Security_Seminar.pdf.

component, either through nutrition education or inclusion of more sustainable food items.

Nevertheless, a twin-track approach that links emergency and development is also crucial for the success of these policies. Promoting sustainable food consumption in a comprehensive manner requires addressing acute needs while at the same time making investments in long-term development in order to secure food and nutrition security in the long run. As a matter of fact, addressing sustainable food consumption (highlighted in SDG 12) is a worldwide concern, as is evident in the global movement to advance commitment to the SDGs, hence requiring major efforts in this direction from both developed and developing countries alike. However, while the world might be moving towards the same goal, the underlying reasons for and drivers of such commitment actually differ between countries. For developed (including Mediterranean) countries, the issue of sustainable food consumption is primarily driven by the negative effects of climate change and relatively high obesity rates. The same profile applies to MENA countries, aggravated by high levels of food and nutrition insecurity, the triple burden of malnutrition and high levels of hunger in countries with protracted crises. To achieve this, capacity building in food and nutrition security is fundamental and should focus attention on research to explore technical challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective and on conferences, platforms, frameworks of action and think tanks to address the urgency of the regional situation and progress towards the common goal of sustainable food consumption.

For example, to achieve the proposed policy recommendations, MENA countries are encouraged to join global strategies such as the 10 Year Framework of Programs (10 YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), a global framework of action aimed at enhancing international/regional cooperation and accelerating the shift towards SCP in both developed and developing countries.⁹⁶ In particular, to accelerate the shift towards SCP in the Arab region and to enhance the existing regional mechanism, a draft road map for the implementation of the 10 YFP in the Arab region has been proposed.⁹⁷ The road map describes the roles and interactions between each of the executive board of the Arab Roundtable on SCP and its technical secretariat, the national focal points, and the stakeholders focal points, and highlights the steps required for the effective implementation of the programme in the Arab region.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ See UNEP website: *What is the 10YFP?*, <http://web.unep.org/10yfp/about/what-10yfp>.

⁹⁷ United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), *Draft Roadmap for Implementation of 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Arab Region*, January 2014, http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_for_the_implementation_of_0yfp_in_the_arab_region.pdf.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

In addition, Arab countries of the Mediterranean basin can advocate for policy recommendation (1) and promote the MD as a model for sustainable FBDGs by uniting in their efforts and joining academic institutions from Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and other participating European Mediterranean institutions in officially endorsing the 2016 Call for Action on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet.⁹⁹ By doing so, Arab and European countries can act together to slow the erosion of the MD heritage; develop academic and research institution platforms as well as joint interdisciplinary studies; and reach a consensus on how to assess the adherence to and the sustainability of the MD.

By participating in these global and regional initiatives, MENA countries will have the opportunity to participate in working groups and public meetings; learn from other partners and share experiences, lessons learned, best practices and tools; participate in the formulation and implementation of flagship projects; propose new activities in line with the programme's objectives; learn from successful projects; and scale up and replicate activities at the national or regional level based on best practices. As a result, MENA countries will not only gain international visibility, but will also play a leading role in identifying and catalysing partnerships with international, UN and EU agencies and organizations and the private sector, to enhance the transition towards sustainable food consumption patterns in the region.

However, taking part in the aforementioned endeavours will not be sufficient without proper access to and analysis of data pertinent to the MENA region. Obviously, there is a clear need for reliable, comprehensive and updated data and information covering the multiple dimensions of food and nutrition security, to support evidence-based policies and programmes as well as decision-making. The Arab Spatial¹⁰⁰ Food and Nutrition Security Analyser is considered a pioneering interactive mapping and charting tool that allows users to quickly visualize, compare and monitor a wide range of indicators on food and nutrition security, poverty and development across the Arab world. The tool focuses on monitoring the region's progress towards the SDGs and aims to improve access to quality information to support decision- and policy-making in the Arab world.

Finally, the successful implementation and outcome of the proposed policies on a national level necessitates coordinated actions through multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborative efforts between the public sector, the private sector

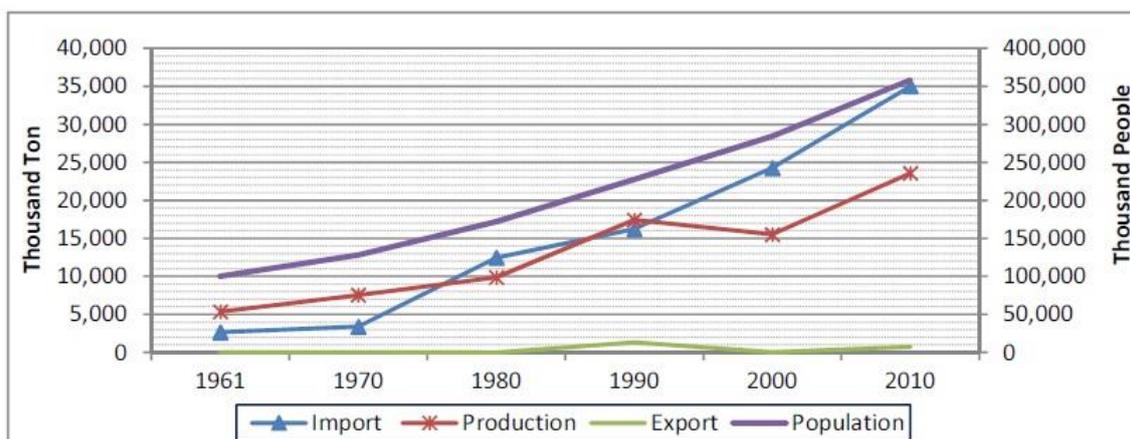
⁹⁹ IFMeD First World Congress on the Mediterranean Diet, *The 2016 Call for Action on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet*, Milan, 8 July 2016, <http://www.ifmed.org/?p=4933>.

¹⁰⁰ Arab Spatial is a start-up initiative of the Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the CGIAR Program on Policies, Markets and Institutions. See the website: <http://www.arabspatial.org>.

and civil society. High-level political support is also required, as well as the incorporation of sustainable food consumption into governments’ policies, programmes and strategic plans that address food and nutrition security. An example of political leadership and accountability that MENA countries can learn from is the Global Food Security Act of 2016 signed in July by former US president Barack Obama, which asserts that it is in the United States’ national security interest to accelerate growth that reduces poverty, hunger and malnutrition.¹⁰¹ However, inter-ministerial collaboration at the national level as well as inter-governmental and public-private partnerships remain weak and challenging in most MENA countries, especially in the face of ongoing political instability. Nevertheless, concrete action is required from all key stakeholders to redirect the nutrition transition towards diets that are less dependent upon resource-intensive foods in order to be on the right path towards a sustainable future. Otherwise, the MENA region will continue to face uncontrollable climate change that is likely to worsen, as well as unpredictable social distress and political unrest that may generate protracted crises and severe malnutrition. Current dietary patterns will continue to exhaust the environment, deliver sub-par health outcomes and eventually prolong food and nutrition insecurity if not shifted towards healthy *and* sustainable food consumption patterns.

Appendix

Figure 3 | Population growth, wheat production and import in the MENA region



Source: UN ESCWA, *Pathways towards Food Security in the Arab Region*, cit., p. 31.

¹⁰¹ Fernanda Crescente, “Obama Signs Global Food Security Act to End Hunger”, in *USA Today*, 20 July 2016, <http://usat.ly/2abWFg7>.

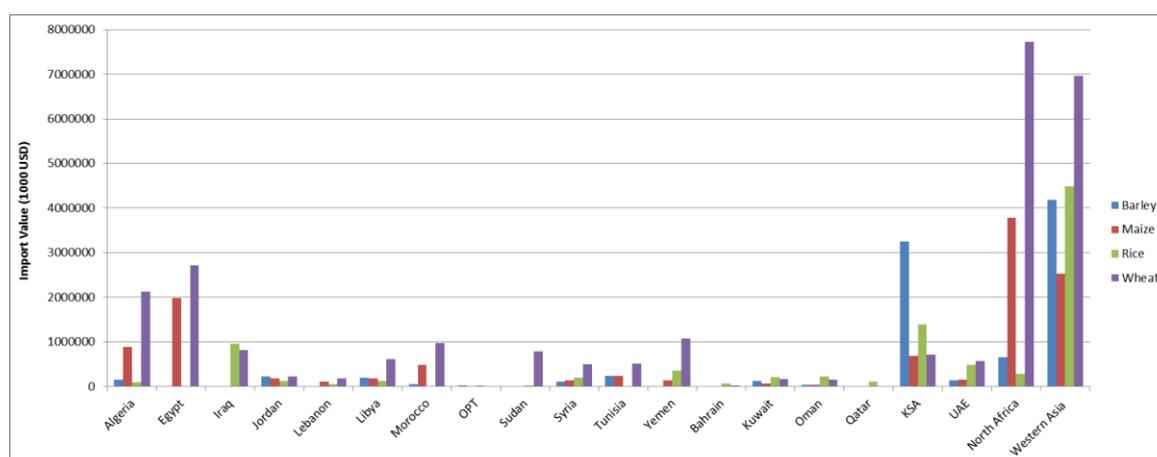
YOUTH AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: EXPLORING NEW APPROACHES TO DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

Table 1 | Import value of barley, maize, rice and wheat in selected MENA countries, 2013 (1,000 US dollars)

	Barley	Maize	Rice	Wheat
Algeria	152,253	891,543	99,448	2,120,883
Egypt	10,229	1,984,982	15,757	2,715,936
Iraq	-	10,181	957,321	813,748
Jordan	228,067	188,506	126,977	233,472
Lebanon	6,607	111,502	52,970	190,129
Libya	198,827	180,910	129,244	618,276
Morocco	51,201	484,438	11,764	978,326
OPT	20,202	8,305	26,248	13,880
Sudan	2	11,265	23,459	783,095
Syria	119,371	141,380	205,243	506,741
Tunisia	241,455	234,775	6,753	509,202
Yemen	0	145,270	363,070	1,072,393
Bahrain	243	6,064	66,136	33,018
Kuwait	120,267	64,201	212,011	173,786
Oman	39,696	42,804	227,294	148,505
Qatar	17,793	5,202	116,739	17,410
Saudi Arabia	3,249,587	685,720	1,387,453	719,527
UAE	143,695	152,411	483,093	574,252
North Africa	653,967	3,787,913	286,425	7,725,718
Western Asia	4,179,746	2,533,664	4,488,498	6,958,670

Source: FAOSTAT. Available from: <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/TP>.

Figure 4 | Import value of barley, maize, rice and wheat in selected MENA countries, 2013 (1,000 US dollars)



Source: FAOSTAT. Available from: <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/TP>.

Summary of findings (Table 1 and Figure 4)

- Wheat is the most imported commodity in MENA, with highest import values in Algeria and Egypt.
- Maize and rice come next, with highest import values in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq (rice only).
- Barley import is relatively low in MENA, but particularly high in Saudi Arabia.

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2.

WATER SCARCITY IN JORDAN: ROOTS OF THE ISSUE AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Hussam Hussein

In recent years, studies relating to political and international relations in the Arab region have been centred on security, stability and democracy.¹ The so-called Arab Spring has monopolized the attention of scholars, to the detriment of issues related to the environment. The Arab region is often described as an arid or semi-arid region with low precipitation. Over two-thirds of the renewable surface water in Arab countries is of a transboundary nature. Therefore, water scarcity is a political issue. In fact, water scarcity is often framed as a matter of national security that necessitates the development of more and new water resources by engineers through mega-projects aimed at increasing water resources in the country. As a result, the scientific aspects of water studies are overlooked, and water scarcity issues are rarely addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective. Nevertheless, an interdisciplinary approach is key to understanding people's perceptions of water scarcity and proposed policy approaches, and why certain policies are strongly supported while others are not.

Jordan is known to be among the top ten most water scarce countries in the world.² Most of the surface water resources in the country are of a transboundary nature, and therefore their use is bound by bilateral agreements. There are three rivers in Jordan: the Yarmouk, the Jordan and the Zarqa. Only the Zarqa is entirely within Jordanian territory, while the Yarmouk and the Jordan flow from or into other countries. As shown in data obtained from the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI), Jordan relies mainly on groundwater resources, even though

¹ This paper adopts the UN ESCWA definition of Arab region, which comprises 18 Arab countries in Western Asia: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

² Mercy Corps, *Tapped Out: Water Scarcity and Refugee Pressures in Jordan*, Portland, Mercy Corps, March 2014, <https://www.mercycorps.org/node/30792>. Ranking is very controversial as data is contested according to the indicators used to make the ranking. However, the ten poorest countries in terms of water resources per inhabitant are Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Malta, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. See Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *Review of World Water Resources by Country*, Rome, FAO, 2003, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4473e/y4473e08.htm>.

most of the water resources in Jordan are surface water resources. This is because most of the groundwater resources are entirely within Jordan. Given the increasing water demand in the country, the Jordanian government has increased reliance on groundwater resources, which are currently overexploited at a ratio of 159 percent over their average safe yield. Consequently, the quality and quantity of the aquifers are decreasing.

After a brief description of current water use in the country, this paper analyses why water demand in Jordan is increasing. It then moves to examine potential solutions to the issue of water scarcity in the country. Finally, it provides a number of recommendations to policy-makers.

Water uses in Jordan

Water resources in Jordan have been heavily overexploited. In fact, while the available renewable water resources are 864 million cubic metres (MCM) per year, in 2013 the actual total water uses for the different sectors was higher: between 900 and 1,000 MCM.³ This has been possible due to the overexploitation of groundwater resources.

Table 1 shows that most of the water resources are being used for irrigation and that in the past this sector has decreased its use of freshwater, substituting it with treated wastewater. The table also shows increased use by the municipal sector, also due to the growing population, and an overall stable level of use by the industrial sector.

Table 2 shows that in 2011 the total agricultural use, including livestock, amounted to 58 percent of total water use, or around 500 MCM a year.

³ However, in the national water strategy “Water for Life” the water demand is around 1,400–1,500 MCM for 2007, while the water supply is 867 MCM, with a water deficit of around 500 MCM. This misleading data is due to the definition adopted for water demand: the water needs to reach the policy objectives and not the actual water uses. Therefore, for this section, I will only focus on the actual water uses by sector. Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI), *Water for Life. Jordan’s Water Strategy 2008–2022*, Amman, March 2009, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/admin/download.php?id=4230>.

Table 1 | Water supply and consumptive use (MCM), by sector in 2010

Source	Domestic	Industrial	Irrigation	Livestock	Total	Share (%)
Surface water	120.0	6.6	154.5	7.0	288.1	31.9
Ground water	231.7	33.9	245.0	0.3	510.9	56.6
Treated wastewater	0.0	1.5	101.5	0.0	103.0	11.4
Total water used	351.7	42.0	501.0	7.3	902.0	100.0
Share (%)	39.0	4.7	55.5	0.8	-	-

Source: Author's elaboration based on MWI data from 2010.⁴

Table 2 | Water uses (MCM) per sector, 2008-2011

Sector	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average share 2011 (%)
Municipal	315	326	352	347	37
Agriculture	397	399	400	405	58
Agriculture (treated water)	101	101	103	103	58
Other (mainly services)	8	8	7	7	1
Industry	38	37	39	37	5
Total	858	871	901	899	100

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from the MWI water budget 2010–2011.

In 2011 the municipal sector accounted for about 37 percent of the total water used, almost 350 MCM. According to the MWI, in 2008 available water per person was 145 CM per year, while in 2011 this level decreased to 90 CM per year, far below the absolute water scarcity levels of 500 CM per year.⁵ Therefore, it is not surprising to see that drinking water is the first priority within the water sector in Jordan, as emphasized in the national water strategy “Water for Life” and expressed by Jordan’s King Abdullah II:

⁴ Emad Karablieh, *ISSP Water Valuation Study: Disaggregated Economic Value of Water in Industry and Irrigated Agriculture in Jordan*, Washington, USAID/Jordan Institutional Support and Strengthening Program (ISSP), October 2012, <https://jordankmportal.com/resources/water-valuation-study-disaggregated-economic-value-of-water-in-industry-and-irrigated-agriculture-in-jordan-2012-issp>.

⁵ Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI), *Water for Life*, cit., p. 1-2; Rami Abdelrahman, *Jordan. Groundwater to Save the Capital, for a While*, April 2011, <http://hispagua.cedex.es/en/documentacion/documento/87044>; Malin Falkenmark, Jan Lundqvist and Carl Widstrand, “Macro-scale Water Scarcity Requires Micro-scale Approaches”, in *Natural Resources Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (November 1989), p. 258-260; GLOWA Jordan River project website: *Background*, <http://www.glowa-jordan-river.de/Project/Background>.

Our water situation forms a strategic challenge that cannot be ignored. We have to balance between drinking water needs and industrial and irrigation water requirements. Drinking water remains the most essential and the highest priority issue.⁶

Industrial use in 2011, as shown in Table 2, accounted for 5 percent of the total water used, or 37 MCM. The main industries in Jordan are phosphates, potash, mining, pharmaceuticals and tourism, of which the phosphate and potash sectors are the largest and most important. The phosphate industry is located in the central-southern part of the country, while the potash industry is found on the shores of the southern part of the Dead Sea, at Safi. These industries use primarily groundwater from private wells that they own, while in the case of the potash industry surface water from side wadis and dams is also used. To reduce costs, industries also recycle and reuse their wastewater. Not surprisingly, the main constraint on Jordanian industries is the country's lack of natural resources, mainly energy.⁷

Water use distribution by sector is even more striking when compared with the sectors' contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment in Jordan. Table 3 shows that agriculture is responsible for around 3 percent of the national GDP, industry for around 30 percent and services, including tourism, for around 67 percent.⁸ In addition, less than 4 percent of the labour force is employed in agriculture, many them non-Jordanian workers, around 20 percent in industry including construction (6 percent), and 77 percent in services.⁹ However, several interviews at the MWI and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) revealed that this data does not consider the whole agricultural chain, but only those directly working and the revenues of those directly employed in agriculture. Nevertheless, even considering the whole agricultural chain, which includes preparation of the land including seed supplies and fertilizers, land preparation including irrigation, production and processing, and trading including transportation, this sector would employ around 25 percent of the labour force and account for about 28 percent of GDP.¹⁰

⁶ Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI), *Water for Life*, cit., p. 1.

⁷ Interviews 40, 43 and 62 with personnel from the main Jordanian industries and from the Jordanian Chamber of Commerce.

⁸ Ethan B. Kapstein, René Kim and Hedda Eggeling, *Socio-economic Impact of IFC Financing in Jordan. An Assessment of Employment and Value-added*, November 2012, p. 2, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/564371468038676446>. See also the European Commission website: *Trade - Jordan*, <http://europa.eu/!Wn93Hn>.

⁹ Jean-Marc Castejon et al. (eds.), *Developing Qualifications Frameworks in EU Partner Countries. Modernising Education and Training*, London and New York, Anthem Press for European Training Foundation (ETF), 2011, p. 227.

¹⁰ Mahmoud Abusetta Al-Jaloudy, "Jordan", in *FAO Country Pasture/Forage Resource Profiles*, January 2001 (modified May 2006), p. 6,

Table 3 | GDP and employment by sector in Jordan

Sector	GDP (%)	Labour force (%)
Agriculture	3	3
Industry	30	14
Services	67	77

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Ethan B. Kapstein et al., *Socio-economic Impact of IFC Financing in Jordan*, cit., and European Commission website: *Trade - Jordan*, cit.

Causes of water scarcity in Jordan

What are the causes of water scarcity in Jordan? In the 106 semi-structured interviews conducted during ten months of fieldwork in Jordan in 2014, seven reasons for water scarcity in the country emerged: (i) population growth, immigration and refugees; (ii) unfair sharing with neighbouring countries; (iii) climate change; (iv) aridity and low precipitation; (v) non-revenue water due to leakages and physical losses; (vi) non-revenue water due to illegal uses and illegal wells; (vii) unsustainable agricultural water use.¹¹

The first explanation identifies population growth as a reason for water scarcity, blaming it on waves of refugees, most recently from Syria, and immigrants from neighbouring countries. By blaming refugees and immigrants, this explanation does not challenge current uses and therefore protects the status quo and current water uses in Jordan. Interestingly, population growth is not mentioned in any of the interviews or reports, with few identifying the natural demographic growth rate of Jordanians as an issue.¹²

<http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpc/doc/Counprof/Jordan/Jordan.htm>. See also Emad Karablieh, *ISSP Water Valuation Study*, cit.

¹¹ Hussam Hussein, *An Analysis of the Discourse of Water Scarcity and Hydropolitical Dynamics in the Case of Jordan*, PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia, June 2016, <https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/63066>.

¹² Reem Al Rawashdeh, "Jordanians and Syrian Refugees Share the Water Shortage Problem" (in Arabic), in *Al Rai*, 2 September 2012; Hana Namrouqa, "Illegal Wells in Al Lubban Sealed under Agreement with Tribal Leaders", in *The Jordan Times*, 16 August 2014, <http://www.jordantimes.com/node/254673>; "Launch of a Strategy for supplying the Northern Governorates with 50 MCM of Water Annually" (in Arabic), in *Ad-Dustour*, 3 December 2015, <http://addustour.com/articles/79938>; Mercy Corps, *Tapped Out*, cit.; Hana Namrouqa, "Jordan World's Second Water-Poorest Country", in *The Jordan Times*, 22 October 2014, <http://www.jordantimes.com/node/256991>.

The second explanation considers the problem of water scarcity as linked to the unfair sharing with neighbouring countries of most of the surface water resources of Jordan.¹³ In this context, some have claimed that Jordan's right to an equitable and reasonable share of all transboundary flows is not being respected. The positions range between those who blame Israel and those who blame Syria. The positions also range between those who blame the Syrian government for not respecting the bilateral 1987 agreement on the Yarmouk River, those who believe that Israel is respecting the Jordanian share, and those who blame the 1994 Jordanian–Israeli agreement for not being a fair and just agreement for Jordanian interests.¹⁴

Those blaming the Syrian government highlight how Syrian authorities have been violating the bilateral agreements on the Yarmouk by building dams upstream without consulting Jordan and seeking its approval and consent. According to the 1987 agreement on the Yarmouk River between Jordan and Syria, Jordan is entitled to 208 MCM a year, but in practice Jordan rarely receives more than a third of its share. Concerning the 1994 Jordanian–Israeli peace treaty, high-level Jordanian officials argue that there is an agreement and that the Israeli government has been respecting it, and that the bilateral relations on water resources are cooperative. According to the 1994 agreement, Jordan is to receive from the Jordan River around 80–100 MCM a year from Israel, but in practice Jordan receives 50–60 MCM a year.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the perception among Jordanian farmers and the general public is that Israel is stealing Jordan's water and that the agreement is not fair to Jordanians and Palestinians. This perception is linked to the 1967 Arab–Israeli War, which resulted in the occupation by Israel of the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula, Syrian Golan Heights and the West Bank. It is argued that the 1967 war was not only about land, but also about water.¹⁶

The third explanation considers water scarcity to be the result of climate change and climate variability. The impact of climate change is identified in temperature increases, decreases in precipitation, droughts and increased evaporation. For Raouf Abbas, senior adviser at the Jordanian Ministry of Environment, by the end

¹³ The concept of fairness is not easily definable, but in this context it means perceived as unfair by the Jordanian government or by Jordanians, as further elaborated below.

¹⁴ Hana Namrouqa, "Jordan Does Not Owe Israel a Drop of Water", in *The Jordan Times*, 5 March 2010, <http://cjpp5.over-blog.com/article-the-jordan-times-com-jordanie-jordan-does-not-owe-israel-a-drop-of-water-par-hana-namrouqa-46118514.html>; Hana Namrouqa, "Yarmouk Water Sharing Violations Require Political Solution", in *The Jordan Times*, 28 April 2012, <http://mideastenvironment.apps01.yorku.ca/?p=4892>.

¹⁵ Numbers are contested.

¹⁶ Martin Asser, "Obstacles to Arab-Israeli Peace: Water", in *BBC News*, 2 September 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11101797>.

of this century Jordan will witness a 15–60 percent decrease in precipitation and a 1–4°C increase in temperatures.¹⁷ These effects are already resulting in reduced recharge of aquifers and surface water and a decrease in the quality of surface and groundwater resources. Therefore, climate change is seen as adding pressure to water scarcity.¹⁸

The fourth explanation points to the arid and semi-arid territory with low precipitation in which Jordan is located as a reason for water scarcity. In fact, the precipitation rate in Jordanian territory is less than 200 mm per year in around 90 percent of the country.¹⁹

The fifth explanation of water scarcity focuses on non-revenue water as a result of leakages and physical losses. The mismanagement of the water resources in the country by the relevant water utility companies is seen as a major challenge that contributes to water scarcity.²⁰ Data and statistics are contested, but there is general agreement that about 40 percent of water resources are lost due to leakages and physical losses.²¹

¹⁷ Dana Al Emam, “Climate Change Impact on Jordan an Opportunity in Disguise”, in *The Jordan Times*, 2 June 2016, <http://www.jordantimes.com/node/281603>.

¹⁸ Scott Greenwood, “Water Insecurity, Climate Change and Governance in the Arab World”, in *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer 2014), p. 140-156, <http://www.mepc.org/node/2530>; Jordanian Ministry of Environment, *The National Climate Change Policy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 2013-2020. Sector Strategic Guidance Framework*, Amman, UNDP, 2013, http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/library/environment_energy/publication_1.html; Batir Wardam, “Water Planning in Jordan Disregards Climate Change”, in *The Jordan Times*, 22 June 2009.

¹⁹ In the 1990s, the media and politicians believed that this would have brought countries to war, seeing water as the new blue oil of the 21st century. For more on these, see: John Bullock and Adel Darwish, *Water Wars. Coming Conflicts in the Middle East*, London, Gollancz, 1993.

²⁰ The Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ), within the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, is responsible for operation and maintenance of the public water supply and sewer services either directly or indirectly through its subsidiaries. Currently, WAJ manages the water supply through its subsidiaries: the Aqaba Water Company (AWC), established in 2004 as Jordan’s first semi-autonomous water utility (owned by WAJ (85 percent) and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (15 percent); the Jordan Water Company (Miyahuna), established in 2006 for the Governorate of Amman (100 percent owned by WAJ); and the Yarmouk Water Company (YWC), established in 2010, serving the northern governorates of Jordan, is also a 100 percent subsidiary of WAJ.

²¹ Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), *JICA’s Cooperation for Water Sector in Jordan. 30 Years History of Remarkable Achievements*, 2012, https://www.jica.go.jp/jordan/english/activities/pdf/activity_01.pdf; Valerie Yorke, “Politics Matter: Jordan’s Path to Water Security Lies through Political Reforms and Regional Cooperation”, in *NCCR Trade Regulation Working Papers*, No. 2013/19 (April 2013), <https://www.wti.org/research/publications/493/politics-matter-jordans-path-to-water-security-lies-through-political-reforms-and-regional-cooperation>.

The sixth explanation given for water scarcity blames illegal uses and illegal wells,²² of which there are estimated to be more than 1,300 in the country. Illegal connections to pipelines as well as illegal wells are reducing available water in the network, negatively affecting water availability for users that are legally connected to the pipeline.²³

The seventh explanation for water scarcity emphasizes the unsustainable water uses of the agricultural sector. One trend is to blame obsolete irrigation techniques, focusing on inefficiencies in irrigation. This position targets mainly the farmers in the Highlands, who use two-thirds of the water used by the agricultural sector to produce one-third of the agricultural products in the country. In addition, these farmers use only groundwater resources, which are heavily overexploited. The other trend is to focus on the types of crops produced, which often are not suitable to an arid environment as they are very water intensive. This trend also emphasizes the small contribution made by the agricultural sector to the national GDP – about 3 percent – while it consumes about 60 percent of water resources. In addition, most of the agricultural products are then exported, which cannot be seen as a wise policy for a water scarce country like Jordan.²⁴

An analysis of reports by the Jordanian Ministry of Water and Irrigation, donors and academics, and in particular of the National Water Strategy, showed that solutions to the issue of water scarcity in the country can be grouped according to supply, demand and conservation dimensions. The proposals on the supply side, voiced mainly by governmental institutions, aim at solving the issue of water scarcity by increasing supply. These have been identified as:

- The Red Sea–Dead Sea Canal, which aims to bring water from the Red Sea to the Dead Sea through a canal, and desalination plants. Concerning desalination, Jordan can desalinate water either in Aqaba from the Red Sea or from brackish groundwater. Currently, there are a few small brackish desalination plants used for industrial purposes as well as for irrigation, for a total of 10 MCM, meaning

²² “PM: Gov’t is Working to End Violations against Water Sector”, in *Petra News*, 5 February 2014, http://www.petra.gov.jo/Public_News/Nws_NewsDetails.aspx?lang=2&site_id=1&NewsID=139123

²³ Hana Namrouqa, “Illegal Wells in Al Lubban Sealed under Agreement with Tribal Leaders”, cit.; Hana Namrouqa, “Jordan World’s Second Water-Poorest Country”, cit.; Hana Namrouqa, “Authorities Continue Crackdown on Water Theft”, in *The Jordan Times*, 4 June 2016, <http://www.jordantimes.com/node/281656>.

²⁴ Myriam Ababsa, *Jordan Food Dependency and Agriculture Sustainability. Main Economic and Social Challenges*, Paper presented at the seminar “Developing Agriculture, Cultivating Sovereignty in the Arab Middle-East (1940-2014)?”, University of Fribourg, 6-8 November 2014, <https://lettres.unifr.ch/fr/hist/histoire-contemporaine/colloques/developing-agriculture-cultivating-sovereignty-in-the-arab-middle-east-1940-2014.html>; Emad Karablieh, *ISSP Water Valuation Study*, cit.

about 1 percent of current water resources. Those are privately owned and the latter are mainly located in the Jordan Valley and belong to large farmers who can afford their costs. Desalination is seen by donors and by the MWI as a realistic solution, although it is still a very expensive technology.

- The Disi project, which has been operational since 2013 and brings water from the non-renewable Disi aquifer to Amman and the northern governorates, and is shared with Saudi Arabia.
- Wastewater treatment and reuse.
- Dams and water harvesting.
- Claiming of Jordan's "fair" share of transboundary waters.

Proposed demand-side solutions focus on reducing domestic demands for water. The rationale behind these proposals is that there is water scarcity due to mismanagement of the current water resources. These approaches are voiced mainly by donors, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations. Their proposals are:

- increase in the efficiency of the water utility companies through further privatization;
- increase in the efficiency of irrigation;
- rehabilitation of the supply system;
- tariffing system, especially for the agricultural sector, and subsidies removal;
- regulations on the type of crops;
- closure of all illegal wells.

All stakeholders generally support the conservation solutions, and their aim is to change the behaviour of Jordanians through awareness campaigns.

All these recommendations are also mentioned in the 2009 National Water Strategy. In the document, it emerged that while all these policy options are suggested on paper, in practice only those that benefit the powerful groups – meaning large farmers and the political-economic elites – are implemented. That is, most of the policies that are enacted apply to the supply side, as they do not challenge current water uses, rather than the demand side, which would undermine current allocations of water resources and thus harm the interests of powerful groups.

Therefore, the policy recommendations contained in this briefing are divided according to the different stakeholders active in the sector and their respective interests. Policy recommendations consequently target the following groups and themes: the environment, powerful groups, the economy, marginalized people and the Palestinians.

Concerning policy recommendations for *the environment*, this would mean rehabilitating the Jordan River. Given the transboundary nature of the river, this would require transboundary cooperation. In addition, within the policy recommendation for the environment, the currently overexploited groundwater resources are central. In fact, the Jordanian government should stop the overexploitation of groundwater resources. In addition, the non-renewable Disi aquifer should not be used. Because of its non-renewable nature, the Disi aquifer should be seen as a resource to be used only in extreme cases.

Broadly speaking, the government should consider a shift towards an industrial and service-based economy and ban agricultural exports, forbid water-intensive crops and increase the water tariffing systems, particularly for irrigation. These measures should be taken at the same time as the rehabilitation of the water supply system and the implementation of policies to increase awareness among the population – including farmers – of water scarcity in Jordan. The NGO EcoPeace is strongly advocating transboundary cooperation along the lower part of the Jordan river basin to address environmental concerns. While their work is effective and important from an environmental perspective, it has been criticized because it overlooks power asymmetries in transboundary cooperation, de facto supporting the normalization of relations in the basin that harm in particular the Palestinians.

Concerning policy recommendations for *powerful groups*, this would mean increasing supply through transboundary cooperation and groundwater use and increased use of desalination technologies. The overall goal would be to support the powerful groups and their interests, and therefore not to challenge the current uses that serve the interests of these groups. In this way, the support of these powerful groups would be ensured and therefore also their interest in maintaining the country's political stability. However, this means continuing with unsustainable water uses and strengthening transboundary cooperation by building the Red Sea–Dead Sea Canal project, increasing the supply, and ensuring military and security cooperation with Israel. These solutions would be detrimental to the environment, and would overlook the water rights of marginalized groups and the Palestinians.

Policy recommendations for *the economy* would include using water resources more efficiency, and therefore using water for industry rather than for agriculture. In addition, it would also mean maintaining the country's economic and political stability, by supporting transboundary cooperation and ensuring the support of Jordan's allies: the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Policy recommendations for *marginalized groups* should focus on the redistribution of water resources. Policies should focus on demand management, and reallocate or redistribute water among sectors, regions and neighbourhoods

to ensure that everyone has access to water resources more than once a week – as is not currently the case in several neighbourhoods in East Amman.

In terms of policy recommendations for the *Palestinians*, Jordan would have to discuss and consider Palestinian water rights before engaging in any transboundary water cooperation project with the Israelis that would not recognize and ensure Palestinian access, share and rights to these shared water resources. This would also mean working with the Palestinian National Authority and Palestinian civil society.²⁵

Conclusion

As outlined above, water management is a complex issue, as it combines geopolitical, economic and environmental aspects. Today especially, in the broader context of the Arab Spring, the Jordanian government needs to make difficult choices, considering trade-offs between different approaches. Water scarcity is common to most of the other countries in the region. Gulf countries have solved the issue by desalinating water from the sea, as they have the technological, economic and geographical capabilities to do so. Jordan has to mediate among environmental, economic, societal, political and geopolitical considerations. In this debate, national security and stability are at the top of the political agenda. For Jordan to deploy desalination as the main solution would require regional cooperation, in particular with Israel, which would provide the economic, geographical and geopolitical capabilities for such a strategy. In addition, this solution would support the economy, particularly the powerful groups. However, the environment, marginalized groups and the Palestinians would continue to be overlooked, as desalination means focusing on the supply side, maintaining the current uses and distribution of water, and therefore reproducing patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

This policy brief has presented the issue of water scarcity in Jordan. It discussed seven explanations that emerged as the main reasons for the situation of water scarcity in the country. It then examined the supply, demand and conservation solutions. Finally, it discussed different policy recommendations, dividing them according to whose interests the government wants to promote. Nevertheless, it also contextualizes these recommendations within a broader framework, demonstrating the complexity of policy-making in the water sector for the Jordanian government in the context of the current regional dynamics.

²⁵ “Rami Hamdallah: Israel Waging Water War on Palestinians”, in *Al Jazeera*, 17 June 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/israel-cuts-water-supplies-west-bank-ramadan-160614205022059.html>.

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3.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AS A CORNERSTONE OF STABILITY IN THE MENA REGION

Abdelrahman Aldaqqah

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a heterogeneous region, extending from Morocco to Iran. It includes countries at various stages of economic development and with a diverse array of challenges. In the MENA region, youth represent a major agent of change. There are more than 111 million people between the ages of 15 and 29, accounting for 27 percent of the population of the region.¹ Youth unemployment rates vary, from 15 percent in Kuwait to 40 percent in Egypt and Libya, constituting the highest global unemployment rates.²

Many researchers have tried to explain and find solutions to the major problems facing the MENA region, for example immigration, various forms of violence, political instability, economic stagnation, gender inequality, social dislocation and the growth of terrorist organizations or groups such as the Islamic State (ISIS). However, few studies have focused on promoting solutions based on the views of MENA youth themselves. These views and aspirations form the core of this paper. While the developmental process should target all age groups, youth must be at the centre of this process: we must invest in, educate, empower and build up the young generation to be future leaders capable of changing power dynamics in the region.

Challenges and opportunities in the MENA region after the Arab Spring

Six years ago, the world was impressed by the massive, brave and unarmed crowds of (mainly) youth who gathered in the public squares of major Arab capitals to demand an end to dictatorship. From Tunisia to Egypt, a number of Arab and

¹ Center for International and Regional Studies (CIRS), "Youth in the Middle East", in *CIRS Summary Reports*, No. 15 (November 2016), p. 1, <http://bit.ly/2fU7FBi>.

² Masood Ahmed, Dominique Guillaume and Davide Furceri, "Youth Unemployment in the MENA Region: Determinants and Challenges", in World Economic Forum (WEF), *Addressing the 100 Million Youth Challenge. Perspectives on Youth Employment in the Arab World in 2012*, Geneva, WEF, May 2012, p. 8, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/addressing-100-million-youth-challenge>.

international media outlets dubbed these events the “Arab Spring”. This was supposed to be the start of a new era of hope, freedom, personal liberty and participation in the decision-making process. It was also meant to signal an end to economic stagnation and the mismanagement of political crises.

However, several problems have arisen in the wake of the Arab Spring protests, including the deterioration of democracy, economic collapse, political instability, poverty, social violence and further conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. As a result, youth in the region face major problems that are real expressions of an ambiguous future, a lack of hope, blocked horizons, loss of motivation and the spread of bankrupt ideologies that make them feel insecure and hopeless in terms of the future. Furthermore, ineffective public policies in some MENA countries focus excessively on finding jobs or proper accommodation for the youth. Instead, these strategies should look for meaningful and effective ways to empower the next generations, and it is these that are the target of this research.

Youth exclusion vs. involvement

Accumulated data shows that youth exclusion is imposing high costs on societies. According to a recent study by the Middle East Youth Initiative, exclusion imposes major economic costs on Middle Eastern societies, varying from 1.5 billion dollars in Jordan to a high of 53 billion dollars in Egypt.³ Moreover, MENA countries’ efforts to reduce youth exclusion have diminished in recent years.

While there are costs associated with investment in youth employment and empowerment programmes, youth can contribute to increases in productivity, consumption and income tax revenues.⁴ It is extremely important to invest in youth as an interventional approach to social problems. Data shows that the rate of depression among the inhabitants of the Middle East and North Africa is the highest in the world, over 7 percent, whereas the global average is 4 percent.⁵ Researchers at Australia’s University of Queensland have suggested that conflict, social problems, serious epidemics, inadequate health services and unsteady

³ Jad Chaaban, “The Costs of Youth Exclusion in the Middle East”, in *The Middle East Youth Initiative Working Papers*, No. 7 (May 2008), p. 5, <http://www.meyi.org/publication-the-costs-of-youth-exclusion-in-the-middle-east.html>.

⁴ World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*, Washington, World Bank, September 2006, <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/5989>.

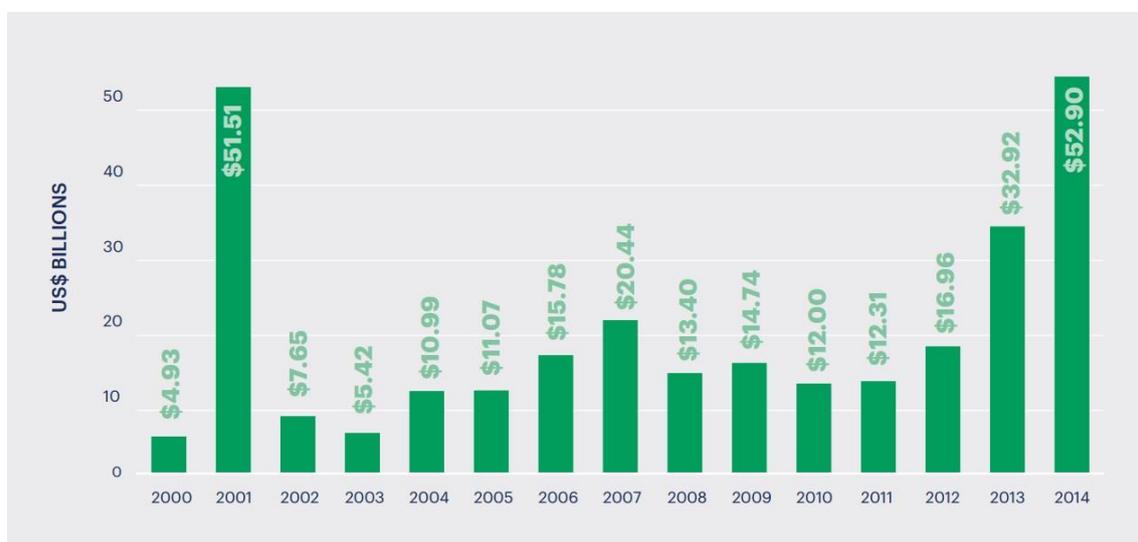
⁵ Alize J. Ferrari et al., “Burden of Depressive Disorders by Country, Sex, Age, and Year: Findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010”, in *PLOS Medicine*, Vol. 10, No. 11 (November 2013) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001547>

economies are the main reasons behind these high rates of depression in the MENA.⁶

Security and terrorism in the MENA region

Terrorism is defined as the unlawful use of violence, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.⁷ According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the economic impact of global terrorism has been increasing progressively over the past decade, as Figure 1 shows.

Figure 1 | Global cost of terrorism, 2000-2014 (constant 2014 US dollars)



Note: Figures include property damage from the September 11 attacks.

Source: Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *Global Terrorism Index 2015*, cit., p. 63.

In 2014, the estimated cost was over 52 billion dollars.⁸ In addition, more than 14 trillion dollars was spent on international conflicts in 2014. For example, American taxpayers pay 14 million dollars an hour on war facilities (or 1.6 trillion dollars a year).⁹

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Terrorism", in *Oxford Dictionaries*, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/terrorism>.

⁸ Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *Global Terrorism Index 2015*, November 2015, p. 62-63, <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/2015-Global-Terrorism-Index-Report.pdf>.

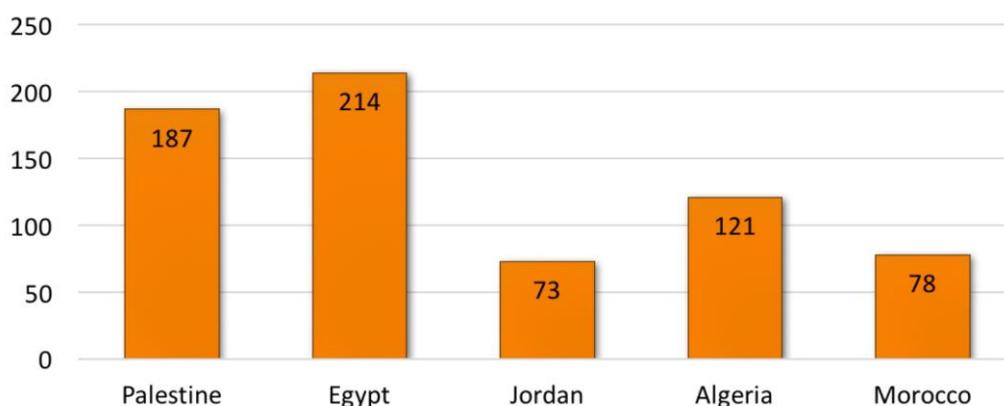
⁹ David DeGraw, *The "War On Terror" Is A \$6 Trillion Racket, Exceeding The Total Cost Of World War II*, Globalresearch.ca, 6 July 2011, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-war-on-terror-is-a-6-trillion-racket-exceeding-the-total-cost-of-world-war-ii/25531>.

In view of the above, has this extensive spending on the military had positive repercussions for stability in the MENA? According to data provided by the US State Department, “incidents of terrorism” have increased by 6,500 percent since the “war on terror” began in 2001 – with half of the incidents registered in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁰

The results of MENA youth opinions survey on empowerment

A social Internet-based survey in Arabic language was conducted to solicit youth opinions about empowerment, entrepreneurship, participation in volunteering or events and other issues. A group of 673 youth from Palestine, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria and Egypt participated in the survey. Figure 2 shows the geographic distribution of the participants.

Figure 2 | Geographic distribution of the participants



The analysis of this data has shown that a majority of youth lack the chance to present themselves as leaders or politicians. Rather, 75 percent of the youth surveyed think that the free time¹¹ they have will be a negative factor influencing their future careers. Surprisingly, 93 percent have never attended an international event. Meanwhile, only 9 percent have participated in a youth empowerment programme during their life and only 7 percent have participated in volunteering. When asked “have you ever had a business idea in the past two years?”, 63 percent

¹⁰ Lorenzo Kamel, “Havoc in the Middle East: The Other Side of the Coin”, in *Eurasia Review*, 7 September 2016, <http://www.eurasiareview.com/07092016-havoc-in-the-middle-east-the-other-side-of-the-coin-oped>.

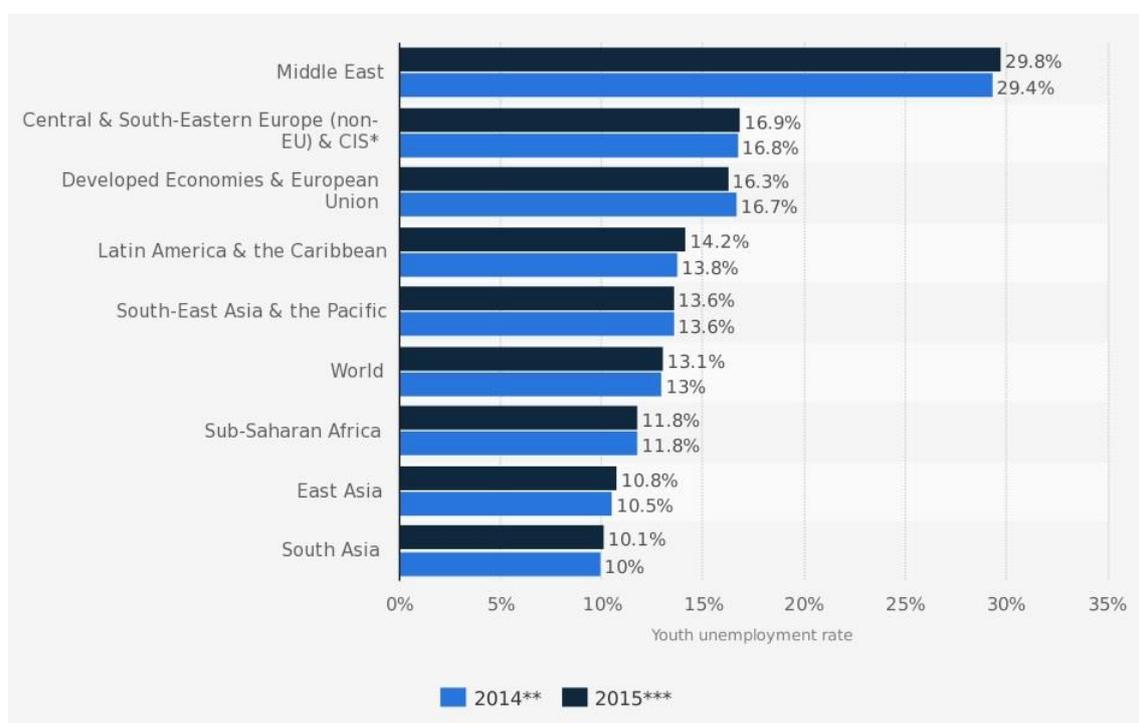
¹¹ Free time refers to the time spent away from work, business, education, job hunting and domestic chores.

responded that they had, but a large proportion of them were unable to find a good source of funds. Meanwhile, 67 percent agreed with the statement “change starts from youth”, while the remainder responded that change depends more on government.

Youth unemployment: a key problem

One can argue that government policies are concentrated disproportionately on youth employment. In 2014, the unemployment rate continued to rise, fluctuating between 28.2 and 30.5 percent in the MENA region compared with a 13 percent global average as figure 3 shows.¹²

Figure 3 | Youth unemployment rates in selected world regions in 2014 and 2015



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO).

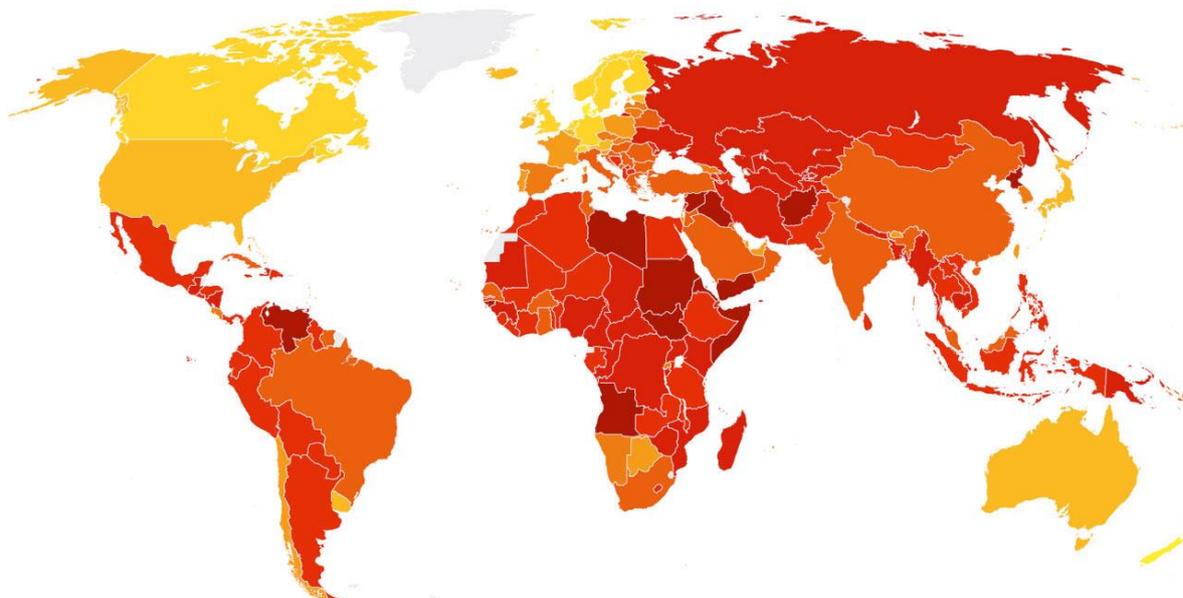
Despite efforts introduced by developing economies to implement action programmes for employment growth and the reduction of poverty, reports show that employed youth get low-quality jobs and/or jobs that are below their expectations. While poverty (living on less than 2 dollars per day) has decreased in

¹² International Labour Organization (ILO), *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015*, October 2015, p. 2-6, <http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/youth/2015/lang--en/index.htm>.

recent years, it still affects 169 million young workers in the developing world (one in three).¹³

Many experts explain this problem by pointing to a lack of essential skills, a mismatch between education curricula and job market opportunities, and the importance of having personal or family connections in order to be hired. It is not easy for a qualified person to enter the competitive job market, as some youth reported that a lack of essential skills and good connections remain a barrier to securing a job. Economic burdens and lack of opportunities represent significant constraints on youth to start or expand businesses and to build up new career prospects.

Figure 4 | Corruption Perceptions Index 2016



Note: The darker colours indicate higher rates of corruption.

Source: Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2016*, cit.

Moreover, three of the bottom ten countries in Transparency International's annual Corruption Perception Index – Iraq, Libya and Sudan – are located in the

¹³ Ibid., p. 47.

MENA region (see Figure 4). This weakens democracy and the economy in both the short and long term.¹⁴

Innovation and society perspectives

Youth constitute a significant portion of the population in the MENA. Yet they still face political and economic obstacles and suffer from a lack of innovative/creative programmes that aim to empower their performance and skills. International studies show that while the Global Innovation Index is 2.1 percent, the Arab world's average is only 0.3 percent.¹⁵ On top of this, the average Arab child spends six minutes reading per year compared with 12,000 minutes for their Western counterparts.¹⁶ Likewise, social structures limit the horizons of success and innovation. Marriage and family formation is a major rite of passage for young people. Pressure from parents compounds the financial and social pressure to form a family despite the lack of economic resources available to recent graduates or unemployed youth, which contributes to constraints on youth innovation and creativity.¹⁷

Governments must reconsider the current security and defence approach to tackle the MENA's problems

Ineffective government policies are a major contributing factor to the limited opportunities for success available to the youth, despite the efforts of some MENA countries. Although some MENA politicians have made attempts at empowering and involving the youth, the region still faces the highest rates of unemployment and a number of deep social problems. This in turn has contributed to the increase in political instability and economic crises, and may also promote further conflicts between different ethnic or religious groups.

¹⁴ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2016*, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2016>.

¹⁵ Nagwa Ibrahim, "Health Care Research in Arab Countries: Where Do We Stand? A Summary for Previously Published Reports", in *Journal of Pharmaceutical Care & Health Systems*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (December 2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/2376-0419.1000e137>.

¹⁶ Arab Thought Foundation (ATF), *The 3rd Annual Arab Report on Cultural Development* (in Arabic), Beirut, 2010, p. 310, <http://arabthought.org/en/node/551614>.

¹⁷ Hoda Rashad, Magued Osman and Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, "Marriage in the Arab World", in *Population Reference Bureau MENA Policy Briefs*, September 2005, <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Reports/2005/MarriageintheArabWorld.aspx>.

Clearly, youth empowerment requires a search for new and more effective tools. Reigniting global economic growth, improving politics and providing access to technology all figure prominently in this context. Consequently, it is time to scale up action with a combination of tactics. As noted by Nobel laureate James J. Heckman, “the later in life we attempt to repair early deficits, the costlier the remediation becomes”.¹⁸

This highlights the importance of identifying the needs of youth early on and of managing and meeting their demands and expectations. Therefore, finding solutions for the MENA and moving towards stability requires looking in the right places. This includes the regional, national and international levels, in which policies should always target youth as a central element of the proposed solutions.

Gender equality and empowerment are linked

If governing bodies recognize the abilities of youth instead of proposing quick-fix solutions, more individuals will take leading roles in society. This can be achieved through specific steps focusing on youth and the role of young generations, including women, in pushing for regional cooperation and stability. These approaches include promoting education, gender equality, human rights and increased participation of youth in international and non-governmental organizations and civil society. Most of the countries in the region need to reduce gender discrimination and stereotyping. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women’s participation in the labour force globally is 56.6 percent, while in the MENA region it is 32 percent. This data highlights how the MENA region lags behind the rest of the world in this important dimension.¹⁹

As computer engineer Alan Kay once argued, “the best way to predict the future is to create it”.²⁰ MENA countries urgently need to develop and implement strategies focused on fully engaging youth in the economy, society and public life. Solving the youths’ problems must be the result of a collaborative effort.

¹⁸ Kevin Hempel and Wendy Cunningham, “Investing in your Country’s Children and Youth Today: Good Policy, Smart Economics”, in *Child & Youth Development Notes*, Vol. 4, No 1 (August 2010), p. 3, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/360861468314362308>.

¹⁹ International Labour Organization (ILO), *Discrimination at Work in the Middle East and North Africa*, 13 April 2007, http://www.ilo.org/declaration/info/factsheets/WCMS_DECL_FS_92_EN/lang--en/index.htm.

²⁰ Steve Olson et al., *Integrating Large-Scale Genomic Information into Clinical Practice*, Washington, National Academies Press, 2012, p. 56, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK91500>.

The need for a multidimensional approach

Finding opportunities to address these problems and eventually move towards stability requires looking in the right places; we need a multidimensional approach that links the roles of government, the region and the international community.

Ultimately, youth need to feel secure and safe. Yet the world invests trillions in security and defence in regional conflicts with less attention to youth programmes. The region's youth will likely be more productive and innovative if highly skilled jobs are created. Involving them in the decision-making process, and matching their needs with government programmes by investing in economic and social development, are particularly important. For example, 50 million jobs could be created as a result of an investment of 4.3 trillion dollars in infrastructure.²¹ This should push governments to further develop strategies and plans at the international, regional and local levels.

Education remains the core of development. MENA countries should improve their quality of education to prepare the youth with the skills and training that employers are looking for, as well as connect employers with the students at schools. This will limit the gap between schools and the job market and help meet the demand. Governments should foster the implementation of UNICEF's goals, which include promoting quality education, gender equality, equitable accessibility and girls' access to education.²²

Youth empowerment programmes

While youth in the MENA face many challenges, it is particularly important to develop and implement strategies focused on fully engaging them in the economy, society and public life. Youth can contribute to increases in productivity, consumption and income tax revenues.

One of the examples is the MENA Youth Empowerment Strategy (YES) programme implemented in several countries, including Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. The programme includes entrepreneurship and soft skills training, technical training

²¹ Saifur Rahman, "Middle East Needs \$4.3 Trillion Investment", in *Gulf News*, 4 February 2013, <http://bit.ly/2pjMA7l>.

²² United Nations Children' Fund, *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All*, New York, September 2007, p. 27-39, https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_42104.html.

and evaluation systems. After taking part in internships and training courses, 60 percent of participants were able to find employment.²³

In Peru, the Young Micro Entrepreneurs' Qualification Program aimed to promote entrepreneurial skills among 15- to 25-year-olds. After completing the programme, the probability of owning a business increased by 7.8 percent, and beneficiaries' average income increased by 8 percent.²⁴

One can argue that economic solutions alone will not solve all the problems faced by the youth. One example is Libya, where the youth benefited from some economic advantages before 2011 such as high salaries, free housing and low taxes. However, people demanded democratic and human rights through an armed revolution that started in 2011. Developing a multidimensional policy for youth empowerment is urgently required. This must cover economic, democratic and human rights issues.

Policy recommendations and a call to action

These recommendations are based on data gathered by the author.

General recommendations include:

- Governments, youth and civil society should be an integrated part of this process.
- While vast resources and time are dedicated to armed, security-related policies, governments should increase efforts to implement economic and development solutions through collaborative strategies such as the UNDP's Youth Strategy, the World Programme of Action for Youth and/or a new strategy adopted by local governments.
- Feedback and monitoring systems must be implemented for further development, training and follow-up.

In order to foster a better MENA region where young people can enjoy a productive and satisfying life, the governments, society and young people themselves should promote policies and programmes that support youth.

²³ Global Community, *MENA Youth Empowerment Strategy (YES)*, 14 April 2014, <https://www.globalcommunities.org/node/37812>.

²⁴ Olga Susana Puerto, "Interventions to Support Young Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Report for the Youth Employment Inventory", in *World Bank Working Papers*, No. 40602 (June 2007), p. 17, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/607051468772495470>.

Governments should:

- Include and engage youth in local, state, national and international decision-making bodies that directly affect policies and programmes regarding youth employment, empowerment and access to education.
- Empower women and promote gender equality.
- Fund youth-related programmes devoted to, for example, entrepreneurship, leadership, skills-based training, volunteering, events, conferences and competitions. This will empower youth, expand their horizons and create the next generation of passionate businessmen and businesswomen.
- Improve the flexibility of the labour market, investing in infrastructure, supporting private-sector activities and encouraging pro-employment and pro-entrepreneurship public policies.
- Fight corruption in the private and public sectors.

Civil society should:

- Demand laws and funding to empower youth and promote their dialogue and debate skills through well-organized platforms and events targeting a maximum number of MENA youth.
- Support youth as members of decision-making bodies in the community.
- Involve young people in developing and implementing programmes designed to improve the economy and promote sustainable development.
- Support programmes to treat and prevent depression among youth and adolescents.

Youth should:

- Speak out for their right to participate in changing and improving their environment.
- Build partnerships and connections with regional and international organizations, individuals and civil societies through dialogue and collaboration, which will reduce stereotyping, extremism and divisive ideologies and eventually expand their horizons.
- Build pressure on governments to fund and support empowerment programmes such as skills training, active participation in events and conferences, participation in political parties and elections and gender equality.
- Develop their skills through active participation in training programmes and events.

Conclusion: MENA youth need more than jobs

Peace and stability are of key importance in promoting economic development. However, current policies in the MENA overemphasize security and defence solutions while giving less attention to youth needs. Thus, governments need to develop a collaborative strategy that balances both security and economic solutions to move toward youth empowerment through the implementation of economic solutions, human rights and democratic values. A particular focus should be on enhancing women's participation in the decision-making process. This has the potential to improve quality of life and reduce violence and terrorism. According to IEP, "If global violence was to decrease by 10 per cent uniformly, an additional US\$1.43 trillion would effectively be incorporated into the world economy each year".²⁵ Development is complementary to security, and they should work hand in hand in order to attain their ultimate aims. Youth should be an integrated part of this strategy: we should educate, empower, invest in and engage with them to be the future leaders of their societies, as they will likely remain the major agents for change in these countries.

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²⁵ Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), *Global Peace Index 2015*, June 2015, p. 67, http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Global-Peace-Index-Report-2015_0.pdf

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4.

THE SQUARE'S SPATIALITY AND WOMEN'S ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACE. TAHRIR SQUARE: THE 18 DAYS

Marwa Wasfy

Egyptian women's issues have historically been treated by the Egyptian government as a subset of broad national issues, such as the effort to build the state, to reform the educational system or even to preserve national security. Women did not have room to express their concerns separately, and most women activists were expected to refrain from publicly raising gender claims; thus society came to tolerate a decline in women's rights as long as socio-economic conditions were improving. While some hoped that the revolution in January 2011 would represent a unique historical moment for gender equality, female activists were faced with either being part of the revolution or raising their independent gender demands. Most of them ultimately decided to sacrifice their gender demands for the sake of the revolution (bread, freedom and social justice).

Discrimination against Egyptian women starts in the home/family sphere, where baby boys are preferred over girls, as boys are responsible for carrying on the family name across generations. Girls lead very different lives from boys, with limited freedom in decision-making and restricted access to public space. While men keep the family's name, women are the object of the family's honour and their bodies are the places where honour may be lost.¹

This discriminative approach to gender has generally been attached to the spatial difference between the private and public spaces, as differentiated by Plato. Female biological differences were attached to the private sphere and thus they were excluded entirely from the public world. Kitchens and houses became the daily geography of women, while any involvement with what lay outside became coded as women's interference in men's geography.²

¹ Anouk Soomers, *The Changes of Women's Space Caused by the Revolution of 2011 in Egypt*, BA Thesis, Nijmegen, Radboud University, July 2011, p. 20-21, <http://theses.uibn.ru.nl/handle/123456789/2588>.

² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

In Egypt, access to public space has been shaped historically according to masculine patterns through male control over the meaning and criteria of morality, which is used against women's active participation in the public sphere. However, by the beginning of 2010 and what is known as the "Arab Spring", the debate over the occupation of public space had undergone a novel turn. Some argued that the new shape of the public sphere during the Arab revolutions challenged the main traditional paradigms for managing cities and metropolises – including the neo-liberal paradigm.³

In general, the idea of public space has always been a problem in Cairo, which lacks any specifically allocated place for people to meet or loiter. Human occupation of the public space is defined according to a variety of factors including the right to voice and claim a presence in urban spaces, the right to participate in societal functions, to use or give meaning to the space, and the right to live fully.⁴

This paper focuses on the relationship between gender and space during the days of protest in Tahrir Square. As defined by Lefebvre, space is produced and representational. Thus, the paper looks at spatiality and what place women have occupied and are expected to occupy after the revolution. According to Lefebvre, space is a crucial element for producing social relations in society.⁵ Spaces create relations, while social relations between men and women create and reshape spaces as well. However, space for women in Egypt is formed and determined mainly by men. Thus the question is whether women were able to create their own space after the revolution. How has the spatial dimension of women's experiences changed?⁶ The space here is where women live – where they experience their gender roles, whether in the private sphere (home) or the public sphere (the street, the workplace, politics, etc.).

Yet despite the crucial role women played during the 18 days of Tahrir and afterwards, they are still excluded from the structure of power that was erected after the revolution.

The main question explored in the paper is how the spatial patterns of women's participation in the Egyptian uprising affected the space of women as social actors negotiating access to the public space through their active roles in the protest. In addition, the paper looks at how the square as an urban space was gendered and

³ Mona Abaza, "Post January Revolution Cairo: Urban Wars and the Reshaping of Public Space", in *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 31, No. 7-8 (December 2014), p. 168.

⁴ Sahar Attia, "Rethinking Public Space in Cairo: The Appropriated Tahrir Square", in *Trialog*, No. 108 (January 2011), p. 12-13, [http://www.cpas-egypt.com/pdf/Sahar_Attia/Rethinking Public Space in Cairo.pdf](http://www.cpas-egypt.com/pdf/Sahar_Attia/Rethinking_Public_Space_in_Cairo.pdf).

⁵ Henrie Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford and Cambridge, Blackwell, 1991, p. 39.

⁶ Anouk Soomers, *The Changes of Women's Space Caused by the Revolution of 2011 in Egypt*, cit., p. 2.

explores how women's access to public space may impact the future of citizenship in Egypt.

We assume that the spatial experience of women on the square did not fully challenge the masculine structure of power and the distribution of roles based on gender differences. Moreover, women's visibility and their share of the space was not totally free, but rather was restricted by male rules of organization.

The paper does not adopt definitions that elaborate on gender as a static role or value, but rather defines it as an ongoing process practised through different social, economic and political structures, which usually start within the family as the initial structure for power. The same goes for the revolution, which is treated here as a continuous process of which the first 18 days of Tahrir Square are only one component. Accordingly, spatiality is no longer a one-dimensional phenomenon. Such relational description means that space is now open for any future formation affected by the arrangements of people and social goods.⁷ Urban space is produced and reproduced by gendered relations and feelings of fear or exclusion.

In this regard, we agree with most of the literature that the space in the square was made either by the power of technology and social media, or by the power of the crowd and the multitudes that animated the physical public space. Women tried to make their own space in the square using those two sides of the physical along with virtual visibility. However, the virtual space is not the main concern of this paper.

Theoretical framework: gender, space and revolution

With the state's attempts to control urban spaces, Cairo gradually descended into chaos, where everything became out of control and the state utilized repression to restore order on the street. Asef Bayat and others have explained in detail how relations of power have been reshaped in recent years to make the street a political site for conflict between people and the authorities. This also motivated Nezar Alsayyad to say that Cairenes (people of Cairo) are acting outside traditional institutional arenas as they seek active citizenship by challenging the state's historical control over the public space.⁸

⁷ Martina Löw, "The Social Construction of Space and Gender", in *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (May 2006), p. 120, http://www.postcolonialeurope.net/uploads/Low,_Martina_119.pdf.

⁸ Nezar Alsayyad, "Afterword Whose Cairo?", in Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (eds.), *Cairo Cosmopolitan. Politics, Culture, and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East*, Cairo, American

During the last decade, public space has been conceptualized in the minds of many Egyptians as being the space owned by the government or the space where the governmental structures exist, as was symbolized by the large government building, the Mogamma, located at the heart of Tahrir Square. Moreover, public space was fenced off to prevent the masses from using it as a space for mobilizing opposition to the regime. One can consider the events of 25 January 2011 as being a moment when the masses felt they were the owners of the public space.⁹

Patrick Cockburn has described the role that occupying the square or the urban centre of a big city played in the revolutions, noting: “At this time, revolutionaries in the Arab world believed they had hit on a winning formula in confronting a repressive state. Peaceful protesters would take over a square or central space in a capital city, such as Tahrir Square in Cairo or the Pearl Roundabout, Bahrain, which became the symbol of resistance and the rallying point for demonstrators.”¹⁰

While it would be incorrect to define the revolution as confined to urban areas, Tahrir Square or even Cairo, there is no doubt that Cairo and Tahrir played a crucial part in the protests. The central question was why people were coming from various governorates to join the Tahrir protest, rather than staying in their own regions and having rallies or sit-ins there. Mahienour El-Massry, a female political activist, has partially answered this question: their governorates lacked squares in which governmental complexes were concentrated, as they are in Tahrir, and thus their sit-ins would not have disturbed the government in the same way.¹¹

In general, occupying squares in big cities became a source of visibility, allowing all groups to deliver their messages. Anti-regime protesters occupied Tahrir Square, while pro-Mubarak groups went to Roxy Square and then to Al-Abasya. The square was an important space for Islamic groups to celebrate their victory in the

University in Cairo Press, 2006, p. 540-541. See also Nouran Al-Hanwar El-Hawary, *The Graffiti of Mohamed Mahmoud and the Politics of Transition in Egypt: The Transformation of Space, Sociality and Identities*, Phd Thesis, The American University in Cairo, September 2014, p. 40-43, <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/4081>.

⁹ Sahar Attia, “Rethinking Public Space in Cairo: The Appropriated Tahrir Square”, cit.; Nezar Alsayyad, “The Virtual Square: Urban Space, Media, and the Egyptian Uprising”, in *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Summer 2012), p. 58-63

¹⁰ Patrick Cockburn, “Are Protesters Overthrowing a Brutal Despot, or Merely Bad Losers at the Polls?”, in *The Independent*, 16 February 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/are-protesters-overthrowing-a-brutal-despot-or-merely-bad-losers-at-the-polls-9131002.html>.

¹¹ Atef Shahat Said, *The Tahrir Effect: History, Space, and Protest in the Egyptian Revolution of 2011*, PhD Thesis, The University of Michigan, 2014, p. 15, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/110379>.

presidential election in 2012 and later their defeat during the anti-Muslim Brotherhood protests on 30 June 2013.

As an urban space, Tahrir Square came into existence 140 years ago under the rule of Khedive Ismail, after whom the square was named. Nasser changed the name of the square in celebration of the British departure from Egypt. The square also used to have an empty pedestal of Khedive Ismail as a symbol of the failure of the monarchy. However, the square has the meaning of liberation; it was not meant for the people until 25 January 2011. Although the protests at Tahrir Square were intense, the uprising was not limited to a specific space; even people who supported, shared news with and sometimes provided food and facilities to the protesters in their homes can be counted as part of the uprising.¹²

Genderization of the square

Women are fearful of the threat of being sexually attacked by men and thus respond by distancing themselves in space and time from the places where they feel most vulnerable to violence, which are mostly related to public spaces. Consequently, fear creates a sense of social isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness, which defines precisely the position of women before 25 January.¹³

Before the revolution, women were able to mingle in the public space as long as they abided by male rules. These include the avoidance of laughing, of loud voices or of smoking among others. Thus the public space was ruled by male entitlements. What happened on 25 January and afterwards allowed women to assume the roles traditionally limited to males and to challenge their masculine rules by shouting and by their mere existence as bodies on the street.

Public space historically has been considered a domain under male ownership. As Wilson mentioned in her study of 18th-century London, women used to be considered a source of chaos for the city, in contrast to their male counterparts who were considered the source of organization. She explained further that women were perceived as disordering because they “symbolised the promise of sexual adventure”.¹⁴ This analysis can help to explain the masculine understanding

¹² Nezar Alsayyad, “The Virtual Square”, cit., p. 58.

¹³ Hille Koskela, “‘Gendered Exclusions’: Women’s Fear of Violence and Changing Relations to Space”, in *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (1999), p. 111.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City. Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, p. 6. See also Nadia Ilahi, “Gendered Contestations: An Analysis of Street Harassment in Cairo and Its Implications for Women’s Access to Public Spaces”, in *Surfacing*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (May 2009), p. 57.

of women in the public space in Egypt and most of the Middle East. Islamic societies consider women's existence in the public space as a source of sexual attraction for men and thus a source of social chaos. Accordingly, women in Egypt were either required to step out of the public space or to accept the social conditions of entering this space.

Indeed, 25 January was not the first time that a crowd, including women, had demonstrated in an area of downtown. One of the crucial gatherings prior to 25 January was arranged by the Kefaya movement in 2005 in front of the higher courts complex and the press syndicate. This event was crucial for women, as their bodies were used as weapons against opponents. Female activists were harshly attacked and harassed to discourage their future participation. A number of feminist activists launched a campaign called "Street Is for Us" to voice their rejection of the state's occupation of the public space. In addition, in December 2007, women started to be more active in workers' sit-ins; around 3,000 men and women from among the employees of the state tax collector participated in a sit-in that lasted 11 days in front of the parliament.¹⁵

Women gave different reasons for coming to the square on 25 January, including: "I am here because of the regime's brutal attacks on the protesters; I am here searching for a good future for my kids; I am here because it's the best place to be, it is the first time I am in such a crowd and not being attacked or harassed." Most women did not mention gender equality, but they described how they finally had found a public space where they could exist and move freely without facing violence or harassment.¹⁶

At the beginning of the 18 days in the square, everyone felt that he/she had a place in the spreading spirit of welcome for all and of mutual aid. Even resources were shared in a way that is underappreciated: blankets, food and water were distributed freely and equally by the people. For some time, the square became like a tent city where people gathered from different socio-economic and political backgrounds. The square was a space that motivated all to come and share in it, described by May Telmissany as serving a utopian function, "one for all and all for one" space.¹⁷

[http://schools.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/IGWS/GradCent/Documents/Surfacing_Vol2-No1_Full Issue.pdf](http://schools.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/IGWS/GradCent/Documents/Surfacing_Vol2-No1_Full_Issue.pdf).

¹⁵ Atef Shahat Said, *The Tahrir Effect*, cit., p. 76.

¹⁶ Hania Sholkamy, "Women's Empowerment in the Egyptian Revolution", in *Ahram Online*, 13 February 2011, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/5517.aspx>.

¹⁷ May Telmissany, "The Utopian and Dystopian Functions of Tahrir Square", in *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (June 2014), p. 40.

These days on the square generated optimism about women in relation to the public space, as those women who had been restricted to certain spaces in public suddenly were rallying on the streets among massive numbers of people. Women were contrasted at that time with the stereotyped perception of them as passive and submissive. However, it is worth mentioning that during the rallies, women were usually in locations that had been decided on by males. This type of organization was especially obvious during the Islamic marches and those originating from the mosques.

Later on, a kind of organization quickly developed on the square, where tasks were distributed among the participants. It was similar to the subcommittees in local neighbourhoods, where one was tasked with medical care, another with survival means, security checkpoints and *it* support.

The roles distributed to women during the revolution primarily reflected the gender socialization and patriarchal domination of the Egyptian family in which women hold expressive roles, while men occupy formal leadership positions. Blair has described such cases in the past using the term “municipal housekeeping”. Thus, although women led some demonstrations, their efforts were focused mainly on providing food, managing blood donations and providing a protective body fence against police abuse.¹⁸

On the square, men wanted to assert their masculine privileges and their role as protectors of weaker participants. This feeling was expressed when men asked female protesters to step back during the direct fight with police forces. Men were standing on chains to protect them, which again ensured the masculine construction of the gender relation. This implied that women could not freely or independently control the space, and that males were an essential part of whatever space women had. Moreover, women’s visibility in the square was not totally free but rather conditional, with different male rules that women had to follow to remain safe and secure.

Some male protesters wanted to establish a separate space for women in the interest of protection. Islamic groups specifically allowed their women to occupy part of the square, in contrast with most of their beliefs. However, they refused to allow women to share the same space as men and attempted to create separate sections for them to occupy and to sleep in at night. A member of the Muslim Brotherhood said: “Women slept in separate areas. We slept in the street and

¹⁸ Maha Gaad, *The Roles of Women in the Egyptian Revolution and Their Perceptions of the Effects of the Revolution on Their Future Roles: A Sociological Analysis*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2012, p. 12-13.

women slept in the tents.”¹⁹ However, the huge numbers and limited spaces did not allow them to implement this separation literally. Some women were sleeping in the same place and were sharing the same chains as men. However, the space that had opened up for women was only temporary, and thus restrictions were resumed quickly after the 18 days of the square and those who had challenged the masculine roles were looked upon with moral suspicion.

Praying was another space of male control and visibility. During prayers in the square, males occupied the major spaces, while women came behind, according to Islamic rule. Members of Islamic groups also asked that women be given a hidden place to pray so they would not be visible to the public. The images that were later used to portray praying on the square were always dominated by males.

Women were allowed to come to the forefront only as a means to protect men from police abuse. It was thought that the police would not be able to hit an old woman leading a demonstration and that more women on the square meant more protection. It is possible, then, that they were allowed to come to the forefront in order to provide moral security to the protesters.

Notwithstanding the various male restrictions, some girls and women insisted on defining their space in the square as citizens and not necessarily as women. In telling her story, Samira Ibrahim said that although she belongs to a lower middle class family, she decided to challenge the social restrictions and sleep on the square the night of 25 January. Samira and many other women insisted on securing a space for themselves on the square, while their bodies were used to inflict shame and humiliation on them. Samira was later arrested by the security forces, who justified the virginity tests they forced on her and other women by saying that they did not want to be later accused of raping them.²⁰

Some other women challenged traditional masculine roles and volunteered to act as guards at the various checkpoints on the square, searching other women’s bodies to make sure the protest space was safe. Those functions were, however, accepted by male participants due to the normative rules that theoretically prohibit men from searching women’s bodies.²¹

¹⁹ Anouk Soomers, *The Changes of Women’s Space Caused by the Revolution of 2011 in Egypt*, cit., p. 31.

²⁰ Sherine Hafez, “The Revolution Shall Not Pass Through Women’s Bodies: Egypt, Uprising and Gender Politics”, in *The Journal of North African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2014), p. 173-174.

²¹ Althea M. Middleton-Detzner et al., “Women and the Egyptian Revolution: A Dream Deferred?”, in Mariam M. Kurtz and Lester R. Kurtz (eds.), *Women, War, and Violence. Typography, Resistance, and Hope. Vol. 1*, Santa Barbara, Praeger, 2015, p. 325-332 at p. 334-335, <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/7991-2>.

In the end, there was a hidden condition for women's visibility in the square, which was to go along with the crowd's major goals and slogans and thus to avoid making any gender demands. Some female activists accepted those conditions for the sake of solidarity. Seham Shawadda, a labour organizer and journalist who had organized donations and logistical help for the workers' sit-ins since 2006, ended up being responsible for the distribution of food, blankets and other aid during the Tahrir days. She said that while she had not wanted to adopt that role, the success of the revolution required that everyone take up a task at which he/she was experienced.²²

Sally Zohney carved out the idea of the square as a new space for gender equality, but more in terms of citizenship, as she said: "It was national and it was gender blind. I was not a woman again, I was a citizen. Finally! I was not a woman of 'Oh my god there's a woman!' which is not comforting."²³ Sally and other feminists and female activists wanted to maintain their space on the square by coping with the rules consolidated by men.

Women tried in many ways to find alternative spaces on the square and in the area, including through street art and more specifically graffiti. The wall of the square and everywhere was a good place for women to express themselves as equal partners in the revolution. Some of the graffiti depicted the female body as a free bird and said "My body is free", while some portrayed woman in a masculine body that is defending her against a male harasser. This kind of art emerged as a new strategy for fighting the regime. Decorating the streets afterwards was an expression of resistance, but also of rejecting the state's control of the urban public space. Female street artists such as Noon Al-Neswa, the Mona Liza Brigades and Graffiti Harimi initiated projects that allowed women a space on the wall. One of the most famous pieces of women's graffiti portrayed three women, one unveiled, one with a headscarf and one with full-face cover, with the message "Don't label me". Another depicted the famous singer Om Kalthoum with her song "Give me my freedom, release my hand".²⁴

Conclusion: Access to public space

There is no doubt that the revolution has affected how gender roles are perceived by society. Women faced the same dangers as men and shared in previously

²² Atef Shahat Said, *The Tahrir Effect*, cit., p. 96.

²³ Ahmed Kadry, "Gender and Tahrir Square: Contesting the State and Imagining a New Nation", in *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2015), p. 203.

²⁴ Joyce van de Bildt, "Revolutionary Graffiti in Egypt: Resistance and Commemoration", in *Tel Aviv Notes*, Vol. 7, No. 24 (26 December 2013), p. 3-4, <http://www.aftau.org/document.doc?id=190>.

exclusively masculine tasks. Traditionally women were excluded from the male world and the public sphere was closed to them. That was changed by the revolution. However, the change was not dramatic, and it may require a long time to consolidate such change and build on it.

Masculinity still controls the boundaries of public space even after the revolution. The square was not very utopian: women's visibility was conditional, and the first condition was not to raise gender demands and to stay in line with the single, male-defined cause. The same structure of power between men and women in Egypt resumed, in which women are characterized as weak, emotional and irrational, while men are strong, unemotional and rational. Men are still considered more suited to hard power functions, including politics and management of the state.

In addition, the commonly held belief in the Arab world that women's emancipation would automatically follow the success of the national movement was not accurate. The deeply rooted reasons behind gender inequalities in the gendered structure of power are still powerful. As McClintock explained, "If nationalism is not deeply informed, and transformed, by an analysis of gender power, the nation-state will remain a repository of male hopes, male aspirations, and male privilege".²⁵

Yasmin El Baramawy was one of the first activists who had the courage to speak out about harassment during the square protest. Yasmin was the victim of a two-hour-long gang rape on Tahrir Square. After the incident, she wrote on her Facebook page: "It has been happening for years", adding that she blamed not only the rapists for this extreme violence, but also those who ignored the problem – or "didn't believe her."²⁶

Indeed, domestic and state violence against women continued, and what happened after the revolution confirmed that during the nation's radical transnational periods it is not always right for women to step back from calling for their specific rights in favour of the general call for democracy. As in 1919, so on 25 January and thereafter: women went onto the streets along with men and were then excluded from the constitutional drafting committee and the entire process of the post-revolution era.

²⁵ Anne McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven': Women and Nationalism in South Africa", in *Transition*, No. 51 (1991), p. 122,

https://english.wisc.edu/amclintock/writing/Future_Heaven_article.pdf.

²⁶ "New Law to End Sexual Harassment in Egypt", in *Al Jazeera*, 12 June 2014,

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/06/new-law-end-sexual-harassment-egypt-2014612101924323684.html>.

This is not to ignore the positive impacts of women's experience on the square and their potential access to the public space. The voice of women on the square was a representation of their refusal of the discrimination practised against them. Women's voices used to be perceived as shameful in the public space; they could not speak or laugh loudly on the streets. This rule was broken when women raised their voices in the square and demanded their rights. Although they were not calling specifically for their rights as women, they at least found a different space in which to express themselves.

The revolution helped women at least to break the barrier of fear, increasing their chance of visibility in the public space. According to Nehad Abu Komsan: "The problem is that women did not have the ability to talk", she argued, "and they feel the shame and were afraid to talk, but now they are more free to talk and they know that they are not alone and this is not their fault."²⁷

The revolution experience has also created a better space in which women's causes can be expressed, such as the various initiatives to secure women's right to exist in the public space. One of those initiatives was Shoft Tahrosh, or "I saw harassment", which worked to record incidents of harassment during the protests as well as major Egyptian celebrations, in which massive crowds occupied the streets. For example, the members of the group arranged for a human chain around the bridge of 6 October that says "The road is yours and hers" or "be a man and protect her" or "protect her instead of harassing her".

Recommendations

Most of the women activists on the square in 2011 found themselves forced to sacrifice their women's/gender claims for the sake of the major slogans and demands of the majority on the street (bread, freedom and social justice). Afterwards, when some attempted to restore gender equality to the post-revolution agenda, they were confronted with the dominant conservative and patriarchal attitudes. However, the revolution was a chance for women to reshape their connection with the public/private spheres, and to move from the legal tools to express their demands towards adopting new tools such as social media, graffiti and direct intervention in the street. Moreover, women after the revolution have raised their voices loudly against all forms of violence that restrict their access to the public space. Women who used to keep silent when being harassed, faced with

²⁷ Joseph Mayton and Manar Ammar, "A Majority of Cairo Women Face Street Harassment", in *AlterNet*, 21 October 2008, <http://www.alternet.org/story/103130>. See also Mona Eltahawy, "Why Do They Hate Us?", in *Tahrir & Beyond*, 25 April 2012, <https://theangryegyptian.wordpress.com/2012/04/25/mona-hate-us>; Anouk Soomers, *The Changes of Women's Space Caused by the Revolution of 2011 in Egypt*, cit., p. 37.

a lack of support from society, have become more forthright in denouncing such incidents.

On 7 May 2015 the Ministry of Interior adopted a national strategy to combat all kinds of violence against women. However, such violence in both the public and private spheres continues to be a grave problem. The current relevant articles of the penal code (Art. 267, 268, 269 and 289) are not adequate to stop the epidemic of assault and violence against women. For instance, Article 267 defines rape in a way that only includes penile penetration, while penetration by fingers or hard tools is only defined as indecent violation. In that regard, the new amendments of Article 306 of the penal code aimed at increasing penalties for harassment are still insufficient in nature and extent, as they consider harassment a crime only if the victim is targeted to obtain sexual benefits.²⁸ This is hard to prove, especially when society continues to tolerate all kinds of violence against women and large sectors of the community consider it normal for men to physically harm their spouses as a form of punishment. Moreover, Articles 17 and 60 of the penal code are being used to justify domestic violence or to impose more lenient sentences as an act of mercy for honour crimes or a husband's right to discipline his wife.

Women have gained some privileges in the new constitution of 2014²⁹ that might not be framed in terms of clear gender equality but could positively impact on women's status in Egypt. The constitution increased the scope of mandatory education from the primary to the secondary level, which in turn means a reduction in child marriage. In addition, it criminalized the trafficking of young girls, of which the majority of victims are from rural areas. Among the articles that promote women's rights is Article 6 on citizenship, which states, citizenship "is a right to anyone born to an Egyptian father or an Egyptian mother". Article 11 on equality between men and women stipulates, "The State shall ensure the achievement of equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights", while Article 180 on the political empowerment of women states, "Every local unit shall elect a local council by direct and secret ballot [...] provided that one quarter of the seats shall be allocated [...] for women".

In terms of political empowerment, the constitution of 2014 (Art. 11) commits the state to "take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate representation of women" in legislative bodies and other high public posts. However, the law has only granted women a quota of 70 seats out of 567 in the parliament, or around 12 percent. The problem is not only with the number, but also with the agenda of

²⁸ According to Article 306, any physical, verbal or online sexual harassment will attract a prison sentence of six months to five years and up to 50,000 Egyptian pound fines.

²⁹ Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2014, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/Newvvr/Dustoren001.pdf>.

those women elected or appointed to parliament, most of whom do not promote gender reform. Moreover, some are proposing laws that target and even withdraw some of the legal rights women have already gained.

While President Abdel Fatah al Sisi has emphasized the importance of women's participation in politics and society, only four women were nominated to the new cabinet out of a total of 34 members; most of them occupy the service ministries and none has a role in the sovereign ministries, which are reserved for males. No woman was appointed as a governor. It seems that there is still a perception that hard work can only be undertaken by a male. Economically, in 2016 the unemployment rate among those aged 15–29 was 21 percent for males and 46.8 percent for females.³⁰

In general, the status of women and gender equality have witnessed a decline since 2014. Egypt was ranked 132nd out of 144 in gender equality according to the Global Gender Index of 2016, while it was ranked 136th out of 145 in 2015 and 129th out of 142 in 2014. According to the same index, Egypt ranked 121st in female literacy.³¹

Some policies will be recommended to overcome the restrictions that prevent women from gaining equal access to the public space and to prevent the various kinds of violence practised against women in the public and private spheres. In addition, other policies are needed to empower women in different areas (politically, economically, educationally and socially) to enable them to compete equally with males in accessing the public sphere.

Policy recommendations

The enactment of a comprehensive national strategy, to be adopted by both state and non-state actors, is urgently needed to fight violence against women. For decades, improving women's rights was framed as an issue for the state and thus most efforts focused on improving the legal position of Egyptian women. Accordingly, women's issues were addressed with a top-down approach, starting with Abdel-Nasser and through to Mubarak, by which reforms were primarily based on state-led, top-down initiatives. These reforms were mainly supported by the state-sponsored women's organizations and were in response to pressure from international actors such as the European Union. This approach has proven to be inadequate, especially in rural and poor areas of the country. In contrast, the

³⁰ Hossam Mounir, "Unemployment Rate Reaches 12.7% in Q1 of 2016: CAPMAS", in *Daily News Egypt*, 15 May 2016, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2016/05/15/unemployment-rate-reaches-12-7-in-q1-of-2016-capmas>.

³¹ World Economic Forum (WEF), *The Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=EGY>.

framing of women's issues as state business was met with strong resistance by those who hold a negative view of the state. This is not to argue that the state must turn away from women's issues completely, but a comprehensive approach needs to be adopted, one that deals with the deep reasons for, and especially the cultural aspects leading to the continuous decline of, women's rights.

There are few resources in either formal or informal educational institutions for promoting gender equality and mutual respect. The efforts of some civil society organizations in this sphere lack the support of the state, given the declining level of security provided for activists, particularly when they are women. Therefore, the state needs to mandate a new course for undergraduate students at Egyptian universities that promotes gender equality, educates girls on their constitutional and legal rights, and creates a space for students to express their insights on the issue.

Cairo University has taken the initiative to establish a new unit to fight harassment at the university and in the surrounding community. This unit should be applied nationally to fight the harassment and violence that many women suffer from in their places of work or study. Offices need to be created nationally to provide psychological and legal support for victims of violence.

From its side, the EU must ensure the implementation of the Egyptian action plan, especially with regard to gender equality and fighting all forms of violence against women. In this respect, the economic and social dimensions of women's rights have to go in parallel with the cultural, political and legal aspects. Women who suffer from poverty have limited awareness of their rights and limited resources to protect themselves from abuse. In addition, most of the initiatives that work for women's protection and empowerment should work with both men and women to ensure the cultural success of their outcomes.

Those who are working to promote women's rights should be trained to use the language that fits their specific audience among citizens. Residents of rural areas may not share the same cultural background as those in urban areas. Therefore, religion is an important factor and tool to be considered in promoting women's rights, especially among those in the most marginalized rural areas. Re-examining interpretations of religious texts concerning women's rights should be an essential part of the reform of religious discourse.

The various ministries should establish frameworks in which to cooperate with women's rights organizations and to ensure that their internal policies are being managed in connection with the main values of gender equality.

Legally, the penal code should be amended to clearly criminalize all forms of violence against women. Importantly, the law should be supported with strong application tools that allow women to stand for their cases. A new law has already been passed to fight harassment, but its implementation is still weak.

Most of Egyptian society has a problem with the old women's organizations that were attached to the wife of the president, Suzan Mubarak. Therefore, the re-institutionalization of women's rights organizations is needed. Old state-affiliated organizations that have been known for their corruption and state agenda should be replaced with a new national machinery, to be attached to the different governmental organizations in cooperation with trusted figures from civil society in order to ensure gender equality in a way that is accepted by society.

Cinema is also a powerful tool that shapes the mentality of society. Film-makers in Egypt have little to no interest in reshaping the gender interpretations of the social reality. In fact, as I noted in an earlier policy paper for the Arab Centre for Scientific Research and Humane Studies, many movies in the period between 2005 to 2015 promoted a negative image of women and more specifically of feminists and those working in favour of gender equality. Therefore, the European initiative, led by the German embassy, to support producers of short films in Egypt is a positive step that needs to earmark part of its funding to support films that target images of women in society.

Finally, we have to admit that the position of women in the private sphere is not separate from their existence in the public sphere. Therefore, the domestic violence committed by family members and husbands against women in the private sphere will also be reflected and be visible in the public sphere. Improving conditions for women and securing them equal access to the public space has to start with the family.

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5. A MORE DIPLOMATIC APPROACH TO ISIS? A CLAN- BASED NEGOTIATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT APPROACH TO COUNTER RADICAL EXTREMISM IN IRAQ

Khader Abualhayjaa

Dynamics between Al-Qaeda, ISIS and local Sunni clans

The birth of ISIS in Iraq owes a great deal to the precedent set by Al-Qaeda; however, the leader of ISIS, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, refused an invitation from Osama Bin Laden to join Al-Qaeda in 2000 after the two men met in Qandahar, Afghanistan. Al-Zarqawi's priority was not fighting the United States, the "far enemy", but rather taking on the "near enemy", that is, the regimes and governments in the Middle East.¹ Countries in the Middle East such as Egypt, Algeria and Libya had witnessed militant insurgencies in the past, but Iraq under Saddam Hussein had not; in an interview with Vice News, then US president Barack Obama pointed to the decision by his predecessor, George W. Bush, to invade and occupy Iraq as a crucial factor leading to the formation of ISIS.² Many ISIS members are fighters who joined the military conflicts in Iraq, Syria and other countries. Most of them come from Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey and Jordan.³ In 2003, Al-Zarqawi established a fighting group in Iraq under the name *Harakat Al-Tawheed wa Al-Jihad* (The Movement of Monotheism and Struggle). Soon thereafter the group rebranded itself as the Islamic State in Iraq.⁴

At that time there was still a significant contrast between Bin Laden and Al-Zarqawi in terms of their vision for resisting the American occupation of Iraq: Bin Laden did not see a danger in the transformation of the Iraqi resistance into a united secular national front, and opposed attempts by Al-Zarqawi to divide the Sunni-Shia front. However, in 2004, as the resistance led by the Shia leader

¹ Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamist Phoenix. The Islamic State and the Redrawing of the Middle East*, New York, Seven Stories Press, 2014, p. 36.

² Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS. A History*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 67-68.

³ Fahed Fanek, "The Return of the Jihadists to their Countries" (in Arabic), in *Al Rai*, 12 February 2017, p. 27.

⁴ Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamist Phoenix*, cit., p. 36.

Muqtada Al-Sadr gained popularity, and as Sunni rebels hung up posters bearing Al-Sadr's picture in Sunni neighbourhoods, Bin Laden realized he was wrong in not opposing the Shia's growing influence over the Iraqi resistance movement, and enlisted Al-Zarqawi's group as Al-Qaeda in Iraq, with Al-Zarqawi as their leader.⁵ This provided Al-Zarqawi with resources in terms of both personnel and equipment, which he used in attacks against the Shia population in an effort to ignite a full-scale civil war. The killing of Al-Zarqawi in 2006 in an American airstrike halted these operations, and an internal struggle developed among the leadership of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. At the same time, Sunni clan leaders, "Sheikhs", convinced their members to stop supporting Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq. These clan leaders subsequently formed the Sunni Awakening Movement (*Al-Sahawat*), to fight Al-Qaeda. As a result of the Awakening Movement and the increase in American troops present in Iraq during the US surge, Al-Qaeda was weakened. Finally, in 2010, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi took over leadership of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and rebranded it again, this time with its original name, "the Islamic State in Iraq".⁶ The rise of ISIS coincided with increased political polarization in Iraq and rising marginalization of the Sunni communities in Iraq by the government in Baghdad under then-prime minister Nuri al-Maliki.⁷

Al-Baghdadi realized that the local Sunni population resented Al-Qaeda, as was evident from their formation and support of the Awakening Movement and their fight against Al-Qaeda. But he also realized that the Sunni population resented the Iraqi government in Baghdad more than they did Al-Qaeda. Thus, Al-Baghdadi deliberately rebranded his group in order to distance it from Al-Qaeda, while also targeting the Shia areas and the Iraqi government. In addition, he retained Al-Zarqawi's overall strategy, the "Baghdad belt", which focuses on encircling Baghdad in order to cut off its supply routes and establish ISIS's authority in the area before attacking Baghdad and establishing "the Caliphate" there.⁸

Due to critical human and economic losses, Al-Baghdadi's group initially had a limited impact in Iraq. From 2011 his strategy was to use the conflict in Syria to expand the group's influence. Al-Baghdadi worked to restructure the group in Syria and increase its resources, while focusing its main operations on Iraq to try to capture Baghdad and overthrow the Shia-dominated government.⁹ In the beginning Al-Baghdadi and Al-Zawahiri agreed to "not announce" the presence of Al-Qaeda in the Syrian conflict, and to instruct their members to "blend in" among the already established Syrian opposition militant groups. In 2012, the Al-Nusra

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

⁷ Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS. A History*, cit., p. 147.

⁸ Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamist Phoenix*, cit., p. 37-38.

⁹ Ibid.

Front in Syria was established.¹⁰ Some tensions with Ayman Al-Zawahiri, the global leader of Al-Qaeda, did arise in 2013 after the Islamic State in Iraq expanded significantly in Syria and tried to merge with the Al-Nusra Front (recently renamed Fath Al-Sham Front, and now merged with other groups to form Tahrir Al-Sham in late January 2017).¹¹

After Al-Zawahiri emphasized that Al-Nusra, rather than Al-Baghdadi's group, was the "official" representative of Al-Qaeda in Syria, and rejected the merger between the Al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State in Iraq to form the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Baghdadi became more explicit about declaring his "independence" from Al-Qaeda and Al-Zawahiri. In 2013–14 ISIS expanded significantly in Iraq, capturing several main cities and towns and, in June 2014, Mosul. It then announced the creation of an "Islamic State" (IS), the so-called caliphate.¹² The radical split between Al-Qaeda and ISIS in 2013 resulted in the structural transformation of more than one "system": ISIS and Al-Nusra were not only indistinguishable from each other in Syria, but they also blended well with other militant groups, distinguishable mainly by their "fierceness and hyper-sectarianism".¹³ Despite the heavy investment of ISIS in Al-Nusra, which provided significant returns to ISIS in Iraq both logistically and financially, Al-Nusra's refusal to pledge allegiance to ISIS, choosing instead to pledge allegiance to Al-Qaeda, led to the violent break-up of both the relationship between ISIS and Al-Qaeda, and that between Al-Nusra and its founder ISIS. In effect, Al-Nusra chose to remain with its grandmother, Al-Qaeda, over its father, ISIS.¹⁴

An "apparent whistle-blower" on Twitter, as well as newspapers such as the German *Der Spiegel*, have asserted that the true leaders of ISIS are former Iraqi Baathist leaders and that Al-Baghdadi is simply a figurehead.¹⁵ Fawaz Gerges, however, has argued in his book *ISIS, A History* that it was Al-Baghdadi who recruited the former Baathists into his group, rather than the other way round, and that these new recruits subsequently increased both the power and the influence of ISIS among Iraqi society.¹⁶

¹⁰ Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS. A History*, cit., p.191-192.

¹¹ "Syria Islamist factions, Including Former Al Qaeda Branch, Join Forces: Statement", in *Reuters*, 28 January 2017, <http://reut.rs/2jgLAOp>.

¹² Loretta Napoleoni, *The Islamist Phoenix*, cit., p. 41-46.

¹³ Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS. A History*, cit., p. 182.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 197-198.

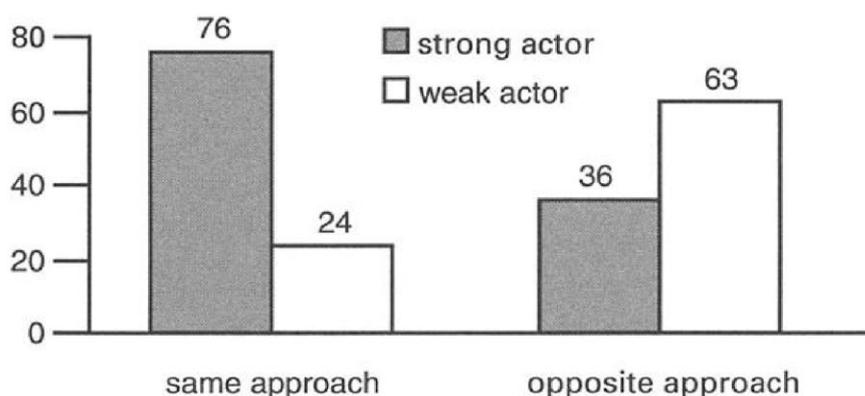
¹⁵ Christoph Reuter, "Secret Files Reveal the Structure of Islamic State", in *Der Spiegel*, 18 April 2015, <http://spon.de/aetVm>.

¹⁶ Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS. A History*, cit., p. 158-159.

Iraq's approach to ISIS

The strategies conceived and implemented by the Iraqi government in its current offensive on Mosul and against ISIS may seem absurd at first, especially from an ethical and analytical perspective. However, in terms of heartless pragmatic politics, and casting aside ethics, there is some evidence for the effectiveness of these strategies. Ivan Arreguín-Toft highlights that over the past 200 years there has been a significant increase in the success of weak actors in turning asymmetric conflict outcomes in their favour, usually by using an opposite approach to that of the strong actor (e.g. meeting a direct attack by the strong actor with guerrilla tactics).¹⁷ Between 1800 and 1998, the percentage of asymmetric conflict victors is 70.8 percent for strong actors and 29.2 percent for weak actors,¹⁸ as shown in Table 1.

Figure 1 | Strategic interaction and asymmetric conflict outcomes, 1800–1998



Source: Ivan Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars”, cit., p. 112.

Table 1 | Percentage of asymmetric conflict victories by type of actor in four 50-year periods

Period	Strong actor (%)	Weak actor (%)
1800–49	88.2	11.8
1850–99	79.5	20.5
1900–49	65.1	34.9
1950–98	45	55

Source: Ivan Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars”, cit., p. 97.

¹⁷ Ivan Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict”, in *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Summer 2001), p. 93-128.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 97.

However, when strong actors, that is, states and governments, employ hard and disproportionate force in response to guerrilla tactics, there is a high risk that these policies will backfire. Strong actors can win the battle or war against weak actors but lose the larger battle for the hearts and minds of the population. This is true for the current campaign against ISIS in Mosul, and is similar to Arreguín-Toft's example of France's victory against the armed insurgency during the Battle of Algiers. France won the war and put down the insurgency, but the high cost of victory included the loss of popular support in both Algeria and France, finally resulting in the loss of Algeria itself.¹⁹

Despite ISIS's claim to statehood, the group should still be considered a weak actor or a non-state/quasi-state actor. It is likely that ISIS will switch to guerrilla warfare, as it is growing increasingly clear that the direct offensive by the Iraqi government and its local and international allies will eventually succeed in recapturing Mosul. In addition, the fall of Raqqa in Syria, ISIS's self-proclaimed capital, can be viewed as a crucial victory, but not a total one, as eliminating ISIS will necessarily also entail countering its ideology, its recruits and its sources of economic sustenance.²⁰

The adoption of a more diplomatic approach to ISIS is potentially controversial, as it is often considered taboo to "negotiate with terrorists". However, in the words of Sun Tzu, regarding offensive strategy, "to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."²¹ The details and process of these "diplomatic" negotiations could be atypical: the intermediary between the Iraqi state and the non-state actor ISIS could be a third sector of Iraqi society – clan leaders and respected persons within these societies.

The voice of the forgotten: what can the clans' narrative add?

A spokesman for the Iraqi-Sunni clans of the Al-Anbar region was asked during a televised interview to point to a true and legitimate representative of the Sunni people in Iraq. The spokesman did not go into specifics, but said that there was a need for courageous politicians who are able to present the plight and grievances of Iraq's Sunni communities to the world. The spokesman specifically pointed to

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 123.

²⁰ Lorenzo Kamel, "Cutting ISIS's Lifelines", in *Project Syndicate*, 4 January 2017, <http://prosyn.org/ct59DVb>.

²¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 77.

the example of the Iraqi parliamentarian Vian Dakhil, the only Yazidi representative in Iraq's parliament, who was instrumental in convincing the world to come to the aid of the threatened Yazidi community in Iraq when they were suffering atrocities at the hands of ISIS.

However, many politicians who claim to represent Sunni communities in the Iraqi parliament have failed to represent the voice of their people on the world stage.²² The significant gap between the number of Sunni parliamentarians and the actual Sunni population make it difficult for them to wield any authority or influence state institutions and apparatuses.

In the Iraqi government offensive to retake Mosul, launched in December 2016, there is no clear coordination between the government and the local Sunni population, but rather more with the Kurdistan Regional Government and the militias, which are mainly from Shia-majority areas. Two months into the campaign, the leader of Iraqi army operations, Najm Al-Jbouri, declared that the Iraqi government would change its plans regarding the battle of Mosul, which would "surprise the enemy". Meanwhile, there have been reports casting doubt on claims of the effectiveness of the Iraqi operations and the scope of their success so far.²³

Several Sunni tribal leaders have noted that the Iraqi government is fighting the terror of ISIS with its own form of terror perpetrated by the Iraqi army and the Popular Mobilization Forces (*Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi*), while refusing to trust and arm Sunni youth to defend their regions and focusing instead on arming the militiamen from Shia-majority areas in the Popular Mobilization Forces (and these concerns are shared by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has expressed his disapproval of the Popular Mobilization Forces's advancement towards Tel Afar and Mosul).²⁴ On the programme "*Al-Mashhad Al-Akhir*" (i.e. "The Last Scene") shown on the local Iraqi news channel Al Rashid, there occurred a debate between Iraqi Parliament member Liqaa' Al-Wardi and Hamid Al-Hayes, who is leading operations in the name of the Iraqi government against ISIS in Al-Anbar province, as the president of Al-Anbar Salvation Council. Al-Wardi asked why the Iraqi government refused to arm the Sunni youth while at the same time, rather than relying on the Iraqi army, they formed the supporting the Popular Mobilization

²² Video: "In Frankness with Sheikh Hamid Al-Hayes and Abdul Razzaq Al-Shammari (Omar Al-Abbasi)" (in Arabic), in *Dijlah Channel*, 3 March 2015, <https://youtu.be/SL3xSVP6i4Q>.

²³ "Iraq Declares Changes in the Plans of the Battle of Mosul" (in Arabic), in *Al Jazeera*, 17 December 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.net/home/Getpage/f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432/aeebbcc-473a-4790-b990-174330c1b3c0>.

²⁴ Ali Jawad, "Shia Militia Starts 3rd Phase of Campaign East of Mosul", in *Anadolu Agency*, 14 November 2016, <http://v.aa.com.tr/685388>.

Forces.²⁵ She also questioned why the Iraqi army and the Iraqi state were defeated by ISIS. Hamid Al-Hayes responded that there was not a sufficient number of “volunteers” among the Sunnis to fight ISIS and that many had welcomed and surrendered to ISIS, to which Al-Wardi responded that the Iraqi government had been refusing to arm the Sunni population and the police in Al-Anbar even as ISIS attacked the province. As a specific example, she cited how Ahmad Al-Saddak, the chief of police of Al-Anbar, requested weapons from the Iraqi government to assist in the fight against ISIS’s attempt to take over Al-Anbar, but his request was rejected and he was captured and killed by ISIS.²⁶

Al-Wardi questioned the Iraqi government’s motives in not arming the clans in Al-Anbar against ISIS, noting that the clans have been resisting ISIS for 15 months despite not receiving weapons from the government, while the government has been arming youth in other areas of Iraq. Al-Wardi was not objecting to the arming of other groups, but rather was protesting the refusal to arm the Sunni youth in Al-Anbar to help them resist ISIS.²⁷ This account has been independently corroborated by the Al-Bu Nimr clan, which has been fighting ISIS without support from the government.²⁸ On the other hand, Hamid Al-Hayes, who supports the Popular Mobilization Forces, denied these claims and accused the youth of the Sunni areas of being lazy and [young policemen of] escaping from their work place.²⁹

Meanwhile, ISIS has capitalized on these tensions, arming and employing the unemployed youth who face discrimination by the Baghdad government. During a live debate on the Al Jazeera programme *Al-Ittihad al-Mu’akis* (“The Opposite Direction”), Alaa’ Al-Khatib, an Iraqi writer and media figure, made the accusation that many of the Sunni youth from the Dulaim clan in Al-Anbar had joined ISIS. In response, Sheikh Ali Hatem Al-Suleiman, the Prince of the Dulaim clans confederacy, responded that persecution and oppression could force the youth from his clan to join ISIS, or worst.³⁰ In another interview with a local Iraqi news

²⁵ It seems Al-Wardi’s point is not totally comprehensive: the Popular Mobilization Forces (*Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi*), were organized by the Iraqi government but with crucial assistance from the Iranian government, especially in terms of command and “architecture” of the structure (e.g. by the Iranian Major General officer Qasem Soleimani from the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution - IRGC).

²⁶ Video: “Haifa Al-Husseini with Sheikh Hamid Al-Hayes, PM Liqaa’ Al-Wardi, and Major General Tareq Al-Asal” (in Arabic), in *Al-Rashid Channel - Al-Mashhad Al-Akhir* [The Last Scene], 27 April 2015, <https://youtu.be/N8ISPd7wcZs>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Video: “The Al-Bu Nimr Clan Denies Rumors about Arming Tribes to Counter a Terrorist Organization” (in Arabic), in *Ent TV*, 28 December 2014, <https://youtu.be/3zYCCtmKsYk>.

²⁹ Video: “Haifa Al-Husseini with Sheikh Hamid Al-Hayes...”, cit.

³⁰ Video: “Is the Iraq’s Alliance with the Wrong Side?” (in Arabic), in *Al Jazeera - Al-Ittihad al-Mu’akis* [The Opposite Direction], 17 March 2015, <https://youtu.be/7e7jWQzYlWg>.

channel, Al-Suleiman claimed that 95 percent of ISIS members are “sons of the clans” who have suffered from the oppression and “disrespect” that successive Iraqi governments have been “selling”, reaching a point that made [these people] become “ISISites” (or “Dawa’esh”, as members of Da’esh/ISIS). In response to the interviewer’s question as to whether ISIS is the same thing as the sons of the clans in Al-Anbar, Al-Suleiman replied, “[it is] better than [if they] become Basij or [Iranian] militia”.³¹ Furthermore, he said that before the ISIS takeover of Al-Anbar there were around 40–50 murders per day in the province, with the corpses “thrown next to garbage containers”. He then asked the rhetorical question: “What do you want them [the Sunni youth] to work? [As] doctors? Pharmacists? Either they will join ISIS, or they will make a problem.”³²

This is also supported by a 2016 survey claiming that 78 percent of the Arab youth are against supporting ISIS, yet the remaining percentage “agree they could see themselves supporting Daesh if it did not use so much violence”³³ The rise of ISIS in Iraq, and its control of oil wells and levying of fees and “taxes” on economic activities, has enabled the organization to provide “generous” payments to the youth in Iraq and Syria who are deprived of income and work opportunities, as a result of conflict and discrimination in both countries.³⁴

Al-Suleiman denied that the clans in Al-Anbar are with ISIS, and asserts that the clans did fight Al-Qaeda in 2006 and 2007 (as discussed earlier in the introduction). In fact, the clans’ effectiveness in fighting Al-Qaeda by forming the Awakening Movement was again suggested as a model for combating ISIS.³⁵ Al-Suleiman later asserted that ISIS can be dismantled from the inside, and that the clans could resist ISIS if they were given weapons. However, he claimed there was a meeting in which “the Americans intervened, and an intermediary from the Iraqi government led by Al-Abadi intervened, and also an intermediary from the United Nations and said ‘no weapons, and sit down, and in any country you want you [can] negotiate there’”.³⁶

³¹ Video: “News Broadcast before Mid[day] with Sheikh Ali Hatem Al-Suleiman” (in Arabic), in *Hona Baghdad TV*, 13 March 2015, <https://youtu.be/2ZolInj0E7U>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Asda’a Burson-Marsteller, *Inside the Hearts and Minds of Arab Youth. Arab Youth Survey 2016*, April 2016, p. 11, <http://www.arabyouthsurvey.com/en/whitepaper>. See also Mazen Hammad, “The Arab Youth: A Depression Fed by Unemployment and ISIS” (in Arabic), in *Al-Watan*, 26 September 2016, <http://www.al-watan.com/Writer/id/2694>.

³⁴ Ibrahim Awad, “Youths’ Reasons for Joining ISIS” (in Arabic), in *CNN Arabic*, 12 October 2014, <http://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2014/10/12/opinion-shorouk-why-teens-join-isis>.

³⁵ Carolyn Schapper, “To Defeat ISIS (Again), Support Sunni Tribal ‘Awakening’”, in *Cicero Magazine*, 22 October 2014,

<http://web.archive.org/web/20160629173548/http://ciceromagazine.com/opinion/to-defeat-isis-again-support-sunni-tribal-awakening>.

³⁶ Video: “Is the Iraq’s Alliance with the Wrong Side?”, cit.

Sometimes it can be tempting to see the clans' refusal of any intervention in their communities by either ISIS or the Baghdad government as implicit support for ISIS, which is holding onto power on the ground in these areas. But a closer look may reveal these tribes' interest in finding a safe and secure place for their people in their local and historical homelands. In an interview with the news channel Alaan, Al-Suleiman, who is also the president of the Clans Revolutionaries Council in Iraq, demanded that Sunni religious scholars criminalize ISIS and expose how the group "disbelieved in Islam", and how they are distorting the image of Islam in front of the world. He also demanded that Shia religious scholars criminalize the "filthy" militias in Iraq which are supported by Iran and expose how they too "disbelieved in Islam", and he called for the Shia clan leaders to "withdraw their [tribes'] sons from these militias".³⁷

Conclusion and policy recommendations

This paper does not endorse military or violent approaches towards ISIS in Iraq and Syria, but rather calls for peaceful reconciliation. It is also tempting to suggest a "Marshall Plan" or funding for Iraq as a type of economic or development solution. But Iraq's predicament is not due mainly to a lack of wealth or funding, but rather its rich resources, which have made the fertile crescent so susceptible to external invasion and internal corruption within the state apparatus – Iraq was ranked as the eleventh most corrupt country in 2016 by the Corruption Perception Index.³⁸ Paradoxically, a move towards federalism, taking into consideration clans' historical lands and boundaries, could be seen as a step towards dividing Iraq. However, it could be the glue that prevents Iraq from collapsing and fracturing completely, as it is now threatening to do. This is due to the ongoing regional and global proxy wars occurring in the Middle Eastern theatre, coupled with the Sunni population in Iraq's lack of trust in the central government in Baghdad as a result of the extreme discrimination they face, such as prolonged jail times for the youth without fair trials, or even holding trials in prisons instead of in court, and "inseminating" Sunni women in jail by raping them.³⁹ Unemployment has long been a problem in Iraq,⁴⁰ and significant numbers of the youth had begun to leave

³⁷ Video: Special Interview with Sheikh Ali Hatem Al-Suleiman, Head of the Iraqi Tribes Revolutionary Council (in Arabic), in *Al Aan TV*, 29 October 2014, <https://youtu.be/OCoDcXGQ7FA>.

³⁸ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, <https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>.

³⁹ Video: Interview with Hanan Al-Fatawi and Ali Hatem Al-Suleiman (in Arabic), in *Al-Arabiya*, 10 April 2014, https://youtu.be/I99d_IAqMyg.

⁴⁰ Alaa Jousef, "Unemployment is Growing among Iraqi Youth" (in Arabic), in *Al Jazeera*, 19 April 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.net/home/Getpage/f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432/2a06f76f-cb9c-4f79-bc7c-a659dc8c045c>.

Iraq in search of better work opportunities. This emigration started before the recent migrant crisis in Europe, and is still continuing.⁴¹ Unemployment among the Sunni youth is also mainly the result of sectarian discrimination rather than a true lack of resources.

Reducing sectarian tensions and negotiating with the “grassroots” of ISIS will lead to more security and economic stability, which will greatly reduce the unemployment problem for the youth that is both a result of ISIS and an incentive for youth throughout the Arab world to join ISIS.⁴²

Clan leaders as arbiters and reinforcers of internal negotiations within Iraq

Local sources know why some of the youth have joined ISIS, and some leaders contend that ISIS can be dismantled from the inside if unemployment is properly addressed, political guarantees are made for the rights of the local populations in Sunni areas, and the challenges of refugees and especially internally displaced people are resolved. It has been suggested that a federal model for Iraq could potentially help the country overcome some of these challenges. Sheikh Al-Suleiman suggests that this dismantling of ISIS from the inside can be done mostly without violence, or with much less bloodshed than the alternatives.⁴³

In addition, Sheikh Abd al-Razzaq al-Shammari, speaker in the name of the Sunni tribes in Al-Anbar, notes that there is a dual terrorism problem, perpetrated by both ISIS and the militias from the south, and that the Sunni and Shia tribes should “exchange roles” – the Sunni tribes should fight ISIS, while the Shia tribes should fight the militias (that is, the Popular Mobilization Forces, whose members are overwhelmingly from the Shia social component in Iraq). The reason the Sunni Iraqi tribes have failed in their attempt to fight ISIS is because they lack weapons to match those of ISIS. Furthermore, no political guarantees have been given to ensure the Sunni people’s rights, at the national or the international level.⁴⁴

While this paper recommends the negotiation approach towards ISIS and its youth members, if the military solution against ISIS is necessary, then it would be best conducted in a way similar to that used by the local Awakening Movement in fighting Al-Qaeda, instead of using fighters and militias mostly from outside the Sunni areas of Iraq, such as the Popular Mobilization Forces. This could be especially effective if the Iraqi government trusts and provides weapons to local

⁴¹ “Iraqi Youth emigrate because of ISIS, Unemployment, and Corruption” (in Arabic), in *Al-Arabiya*, 21 August 2015, <http://ara.tv/m5afe>.

⁴² Ibrahim Awad, “Youths’ Reasons for Joining ISIS”, cit.

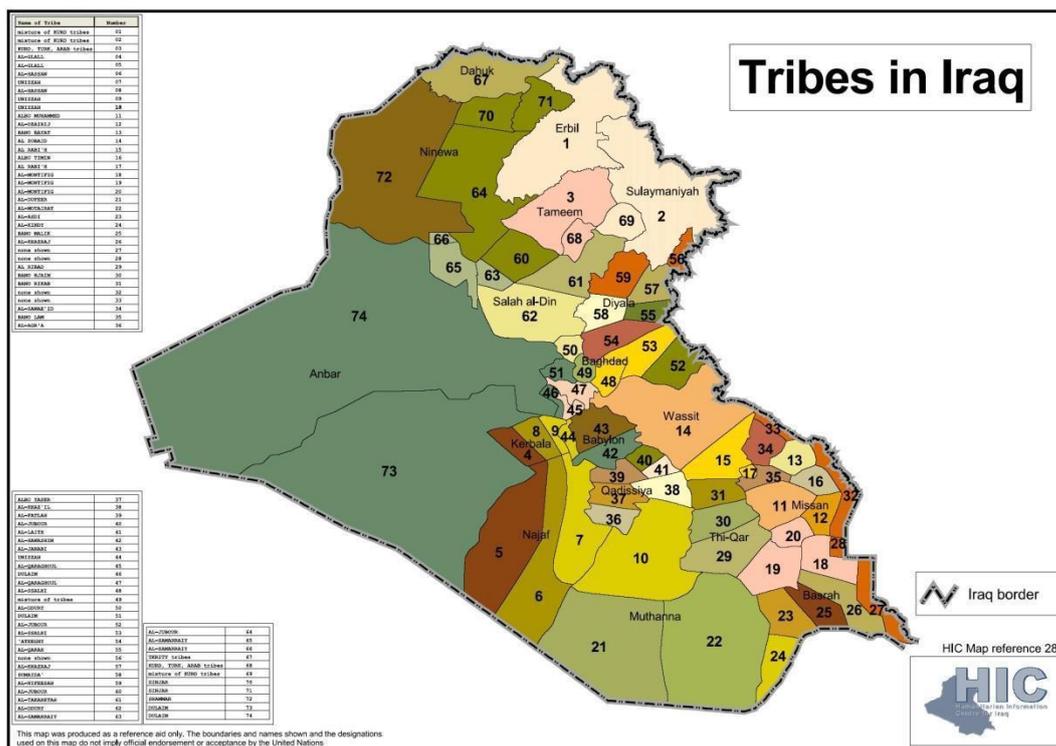
⁴³ Video: “Is the Iraq’s Alliance with the Wrong Side?”, cit.

⁴⁴ Video: “In Frankness with Sheikh Hamid Al-Hayes and Abdul Razzaq Al-Shammari (Omar Al-Abbasi)”, cit.

YOUTH AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: EXPLORING NEW APPROACHES TO DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

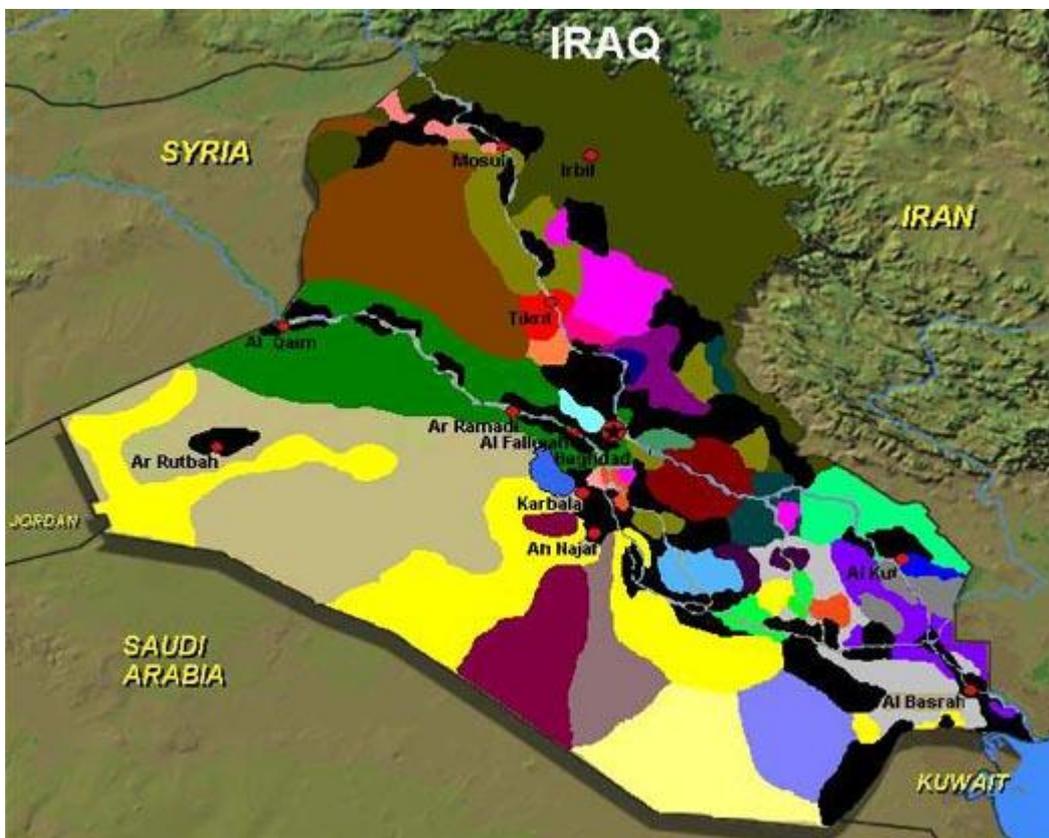
leaders in the community, since the failure to provide military assistance and weapons to the Sunni locals was the main reason for ISIS's ability to quickly occupy large territories in Iraq. Negotiating with ISIS through the Sunni clan Sheikhs might be more effective because they understand the local nuances, they have vested interests in the outcome, and they are the "establishment" in areas where the government is absent or not trusted. Local clan leaders are widely trusted and respected, including by many youth within ISIS. These local chiefs are also experts on the fine details of what will be effective at the delicate local level in encouraging the youths from their clans and tribes to leave ISIS and thus allow the organization to crumble by losing its base. International and regional efforts can assist by intermediating between the government in Baghdad and local social leaderships within the Sunni communities and by making the Iraqi government listen, instead of forcing yet another unpleasant military situation on their areas and neighbourhoods. The complexity of the local social nuances and the interconnected relations can be represented in the following two figures.

Figure 2 | Map of the Iraqi tribes (the majority tribe in each governorate)



Source: United Nations Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC), August 2003, available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/images/tribes.jpg>.

Figure 3 | A geographical map of the Iraqi tribes (regardless of governorates and per geographical residence in each area)



Source: Zeyad A., "Iraq's Tribal Society: A State within a State", in *The Healing Iraq Blog*, 18 June 2004, available at <http://www.baghdadmuseum.org/dq02.htm>.

The international community can play a local role in their own countries by addressing issues of minority religious rights in Western Europe, such as the veil ban, and treatment of minorities by law enforcement, in addition to addressing the issue of repressive regimes in the Middle East and the economic and social struggles of the youth that serve as a catalyst for some of them to view joining ISIS as a legitimate response.⁴⁵ The international community can also facilitate more direct political dialogue between the regional powers of Iran and Saudi Arabia in an effort to reduce tensions on the ground during the ongoing proxy wars in the Middle East. Media coverage of local events and governmental actions in Iraq and Syria, meanwhile, should focus on and highlight areas of communality and shared interests and concerns between the various ethnic and confessional groups and communities in Iraq. The words of Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg

⁴⁵ Lorenzo Kamel, "Cutting ISIS's Lifelines", cit.

pronounced after the 2011 Oslo attacks sums up well the essence of the approach towards ISIS and perhaps towards other terrorist individuals and groups as well: “We are still shocked by what has happened, but we will never give up our values. [...] Our response is more democracy, more openness, and more humanity. [...] We will answer hatred with love.”⁴⁶

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Lorenzo Kamel, “Cutting ISIS’s Lifelines”, in *Project Syndicate*, 4 January 2017, <http://prosyn.org/ct59DVb>

⁴⁶ Richard Orange, “Answer Hatred with Love’: How Norway Tried to Cope with the Horror of Anders Breivik”, in *The Guardian*, 15 April 2012, <https://gu.com/p/36qx9/stw>.

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6.

RADICALIZATION AND THE ISIS THREAT

Hamid Ait El Caid

The significant increase in threats and acts of terror in recent years has impacted not only on the affected states, but also democratic and stable countries in the northern and southern hemispheres. The ongoing violence perpetrated by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS) has forced civilians to choose either to leave their homes for uncertain destinations or to live under constant threat. Since its founding, ISIS has succeeded in gaining control over large, oil-rich territories in Syria and Iraq, and other terrorist groups in Africa and the Middle East – including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), present across North Africa and the Sahel, and Boko Haram in Nigeria – have announced their allegiance to Al-Baghdadi’s self-proclaimed “Islamic State”. Since then, acts of terror have expanded beyond the Middle East to other parts of the world including Europe, the USA, Australia and Africa.

Existing counter-terrorism policies have failed due to poor planning and the lack of multidimensional policy approaches that seek to eradicate the root causes of radicalization. As a result, the wider Mediterranean space has witnessed a number of geopolitical crises, notably after the intervention and failure of state building in Libya, as well as the ongoing migration catastrophes involving refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and turmoil.

Under these circumstances, the biggest mistake that national governments and transnational organizations have made while seeking to counter terrorism is relying excessively on the use of coercive power. Instead, these actors should adopt comprehensive strategies which take into account six key elements: *education; security and cyber security; migration policy; socio-economic opportunities; global governance; and the good management of former ISIS militants.*

Terrorism and radicalization post-2011: identifying root causes of the self-proclaimed Islamic State

In the absence of a globally accepted definition of terrorism, the term is generally defined as the use of violence against unarmed civilians for political gain. Acts of terror have concrete backgrounds that drive the perpetrators to commit these criminal acts. Radicalization tends to refer to the context prior to when acts of terrorism take place. Radicalization is described as “what goes on before the bomb goes off”.¹ However, the term could also be used to refer to “a gradual slide into extremism, fundamentalism or, even more generally, a movement towards justifying violence and finally personally engaging in it”.² While the concepts radicalization, extremism and fundamentalism may perhaps refer to the same thing, they all create the ideological basis driving ISIS to threaten and perpetuate acts of terror.

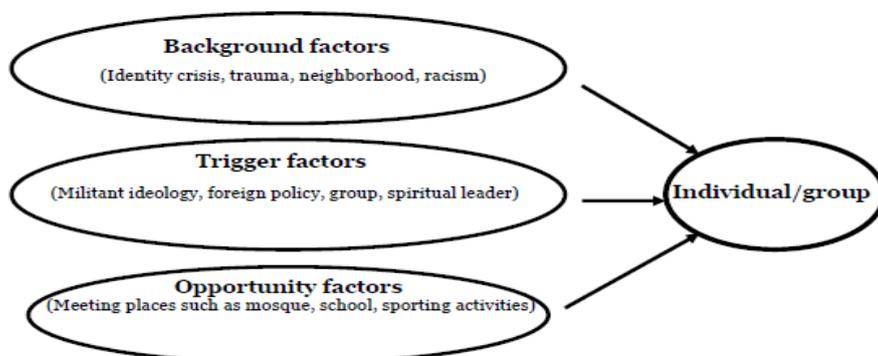
There are several factors driving radicalization and terrorism. Some are associated with socio-economic deprivation and lack of democratic governance (authoritarianism) and/or political expression in MENA/Arab countries, while others are connected with the ideological influence of conservative Islamist teachings such as *Wahhabism* and *Salafism*. Other factors can also be highlighted, however, such as the mismanagement of intra-state conflicts, foreign intervention in MENA countries, the failures of integration of Muslim communities in the West, rising Islamophobia and identity crises. Many scholars have attempted to identify the main factors leading to radicalization.³ However, the model of classification presented in Figure 1 is particularly valuable.

¹ Peter R. Neumann, “Introduction”, in Peter R. Neumann, Jacob Stoil and Dina Esfandiary (eds.), *Perspectives on Radicalisation and Political Violence*, London, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), April 2008, p. 4, <http://icsr.info/2008/03/perspectives-on-radicalisation-and-political-violence-papers-from-the-first-international-conference-on-radicalisation-and-political-violence>.

² Asta Maskaliūnaitė, “Exploring the Theories of Radicalization”, in *International Studies. Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (December 2015), p. 12, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ipcj-2015-0002>.

³ See, for example: Tomas Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe. From Conversion to Terrorism*, Copenhagen, Danish Ministry of Justice, December 2007, <http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/arbejdsomraader/forskning/rapporter-vedr-forskningspuljen/rapporter-vedr-forskningspuljen-2007>.

Figure 1 | Motivational factors for entering the radicalization process



Source: Tomas Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe*, cit., p. 38.

What follows is an analysis of the background, triggers and opportunity factors that lead to radicalization, and of the flawed global management of civil conflicts that has been a major factor in the emergence of ISIS.

The first factor leading to radicalization is *involvement in fundamentalist Islamist movements*. The Jihadi faction of the Salafi and Wahhabi movements is dominated by a strong objection to the West's neo-colonial policies in Muslim-majority countries. Hence they advocate armed resistance against what they call the West's invasion of Muslim lands. Since the late 1920s, certain Muslim clerics have called on their followers to embrace the fallacious idea of "Jihad" against Western bases in Arab and Muslim lands. Among these figures are Sayyid Qutb, Abul A'la Maududi, Abd al-Salam Faraj and most recently Osama Bin Laden and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.⁴ These individuals have formulated and promoted a strong Islamist and anti-Western discourse that has attracted support among certain sections of the Muslim populations in the region.

A second factor driving radicalization is *the identity crisis among young Arab/Muslim expats and their failure to adapt to and be integrated in European societies*. Youths who were brought up in conservative societies and moved to Europe, or who were born in Europe, have experienced significant integration challenges in their host countries. Although culture shock is a normal stage of integration, young Muslim migrants find it particularly hard to adapt to Western cultural practices and behaviours. Similarly, second- and third-generation

⁴ Riyadh Hosain Rahimullah, Stephen Larmar and Mohamad Abdalla, "Understanding Violent Radicalization amongst Muslims: A Review of the Literature", in *Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Science*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (December 2013), p. 20-21, <http://jpbsnet.com/vol-1-no-1-december-2013-abstract-3-jpbs>.

migrants are particularly exposed to the risks of identity crisis and feelings of marginalization. In these situations, Muslim migrants could be at risk of radicalization due to Europe's poor socio-political management of these migrants.⁵ Besides, "radicalization partially results from the inability of Muslims to handle modernity and globalization, particularly within the religious realm, in Western environments".⁶ The Paris terror attacks on 13 November 2015 and the Brussels suicide bombings on 22 March 2016 reflect this identity struggle. The perpetrators of both attacks, who claimed allegiance to ISIS, must have been caught in this "gap" between secular European values and ISIS's extremist ideology. Moreover, France and Belgium, two countries that have "produced" the highest numbers of foreign fighters in Europe, are also among the most aggressive promoters of European secularism, presenting particular difficulties for the integration of Muslim communities. These tensions only increased following the banning of the full Muslim veil in France and Belgium.⁷

Thirdly, the *international mismanagement of intra-state conflicts* can also be considered a driver of radicalization, notably after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 and the multiple interventions by several actors in Syria. These interventions have, albeit unintentionally, helped "fertilize" the ground for the spread and appeal of ISIS's radical ideology. International responses to these conflicts have demonstrated the absence of post-conflict and post-intervention strategies. The terrible situation in Libya has led many to blame the EU and the USA for not planning for the post-intervention phase while supporting pro-democracy actors in their revolt against Ghaddafi. The same mismanagement is witnessed in Syria, but this time Russia is also to be held responsible for supporting Assad's forces against the Western-backed "Free Syrian Army". It was in the context of Syria and Iraq that ISIS leader Al-Baghdadi announced the foundation of his self-proclaimed Islamic State. Therefore, the divergence of global interests and the lack of political reconciliation in Syria and Iraq created opportunities for terrorist groups to gain power and attract foreign fighters.

Last but not least, *the rise of Islamophobia in the West* can also be considered another factor leading to radicalization in the EU context, with frequent hate speech campaigns carried out by fanatics of far-right political movements. The

⁵ Akil N. Awan, "Antecedents of Islamic Political Radicalism among Muslim Communities in Europe", in *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2008), p. 13-17.

⁶ Dina Al Raffie, "Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora", in *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2013), p. 73, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.6.4.4>.

⁷ William McCants and Christopher Meserole, "The French Connection, Explaining Sunni Militancy Around the World", in *Foreign Affairs Snapshots*, 24 March 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-03-24/french-connection>.

European Islamophobia Report⁸ of 2015 showed that since the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in France, anti-Muslim attitudes have increased by more than 500 percent, with 75 percent of the victims being women.⁹ Thus, racist attitudes towards Muslims in the West create the perception, and even the reality, of “being a victim”, which in turn increases feelings of marginalization and disillusionment, leading in the most extreme cases to acts of violence and revenge.¹⁰

Inter-dimensional counter-terrorism policy: the best approach for a better Mediterranean

ISIS and its affiliated groups in the Middle East and Africa continue to threaten international peace and security. Southern and eastern Mediterranean countries are not the sole victims of these acts of terror, which have also targeted northern Mediterranean countries, especially the recent attacks in France, Belgium, Germany and Turkey.

Amid efforts to defeat ISIS in the territories it controls in Syria and Iraq, the major powers seem (ironically) to be neglecting the necessity of eradicating the roots of the “evil tree”. Instead, major powers have chosen to fight ISIS from the air. ISIS has, however, expanded beyond Syria and Iraq and claimed provinces in Libya and West Africa. In the absence of a national state in Libya and amid increasing threats from ISIS in the Maghreb and Europe, north–south cooperation in the Mediterranean is faltering, pushing leaders to seek alternative approaches to dialogue that could end the plight of migration and counter increasing threats and acts of terrorism on both sides.

In the era of globalization, the adoption of global policies in the fight against terror is more urgent than ever. Mediterranean countries cannot solve these problems alone, nor can the EU. Hence, the anti-ISIS policy approach proposed here addresses both Mediterranean and international actors and calls on them to avoid unilateral action at both the political and the military level. This inter-dimensional policy approach aims to address the root causes of extremist ideology. The proposed policy principles are centred on six key dimensions: education, security,

⁸ The European Islamophobia Report is a joint project of leading experts on racism and racial discrimination against Muslims in Europe. The project is sponsored by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research SETA, a Turkish non-profit research institute.

⁹ Olivier Esteves, “Islamophobia in France: National Report 2015”, in Enes Bayrakli and Farid Hafez (eds.), *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 161-162, <http://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/reports/2015-reports>.

¹⁰ Tomas Precht, *Home Grown Terrorism and Islamist Radicalisation in Europe*, cit., p. 44.

migration, socio-economic opportunities, global governance and the management of former ISIS militants.

Educational dimension

Parental upbringing and school education are two of the fundamental factors that determine one's future trajectory. Educating students about values such as intercultural understanding, the importance of tolerance and co-existence creates a better future for all generations. MENA countries, especially in North Africa, are called upon to reform their educational curricula in order to remove incentives for radicalization. More specifically, textbooks on "Islamic education" need to be reviewed and rewritten to remove content inciting Jihad, intolerance of minorities or acts of killing.

A number of Muslim-majority countries outside the Mediterranean have already taken important steps in reforming religious discourse through education. Late president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, for instance, emphasized that his country succeeded at educating young generations about "a culture of communication, religious tolerance, and co-operation" using new pedagogical methods.¹¹ These measures helped Azerbaijan achieve stability and progress. Similar measures have been introduced in Kazakhstan in response to terror threats from radical groups in Central Asia. For example, the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Kazakhstan and the "Foundation for support of Islamic culture and education" have contributed to the promotion of moderate Islam among the youth by training Imams, broadcasting programmes on tolerance and publishing books about "traditional Islam".¹²

Security and cyber-security dimension

Remaining vigilant even in times of peace is the best way to prevent terror attacks. States neighbouring the Mediterranean should intensify cooperation on border control between national intelligence agencies. States need to avoid adopting reactive policies in response to terror attacks, but should be proactive against potential terror cells. The major means of achieving an efficient preventive

¹¹ Heydar Aliyev, "Foreword", in OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *The Role of Religion and Belief in the Fight Against Terrorism*, Report of the OSCE Conference on The Role of Freedom of Religion and Belief in a Democratic Society: Searching for Ways to Combat Terrorism and Extremism, Baku, 10-11 October 2002, p. 4, <http://www.osce.org/odihr/13984>.

¹² Saniya Edelbay, "The Islamic Situation in Kazakhstan", in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 21 (November 2012), p. 208-218, <http://www.ijhssnet.com/journal/index/1403>.

strategy is through “a combination of intelligence and law enforcement work”.¹³ In terms of regional cooperation, the security agencies of Mediterranean states should hold frequent meetings to share experiences, and also exchange mobility information regarding individuals potentially attempting to join ISIS by transiting through Turkey into Syria or through Tunisia into Libya.

More importantly, the prosecution of potential ISIS militants should be pursued through accurate monitoring and censorship of social media, online magazines and newspapers since most of today’s ISIS followers “grew up with the Internet, and they live and socialise online”.¹⁴ Governments of Mediterranean countries are thus urged to work with Internet companies worldwide to restrict user access to alleged terrorist materials online, and should also strengthen current cooperative arrangements among international law enforcement agencies including EUROPOL, INTERPOL, the OSCE and the European Commission CyberCrime Centres of Excellence together with the national intelligence agencies of MENA countries.¹⁵

Migration policy dimension

Some northern Mediterranean states (and Western countries at large) must *reconsider* their internal migration policies towards Muslim communities in view of the rising phenomenon of Islamophobia. In the existing circumstances, the “anti-West” sentiment could increase among young Muslim expats, which could thus drive some young individuals to attempt attacks or suicide bombings inside their country of residence.

EU countries such as France and Belgium, where the most dramatic attacks have occurred, are particularly affected. European bodies in charge of migration issues are advised to consult with their counterparts from North Africa to identify the best tools to foster the integration of Muslim immigrants into European society. To this end, European countries could recruit qualified Imams and preachers to conduct orientation classes and sermons for Muslim migrants on the importance of co-existence and tolerance using evidence from the Quran and Hadiths. The topics of the sessions should illustrate the positive correlations between the democratic values of the West and moderate Islamic teachings and advise Muslim expats about the dos and don’ts in non-Muslim societies. It is also advisable for some European

¹³ Richard J. Hughbank and Don Githens, “Intelligence and Its Role in Protecting against Terrorism”, in *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 2010), p. 32, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.3.1.3>.

¹⁴ Christina Schori Liang, “Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda”, in *GCSP Policy Papers*, No. 2015/2 (February 2015), p. 2, <http://www.gcsp.ch/News-Knowledge/Publications/Cyber-Jihad-Understanding-and-Countering-Islamic-State-Propaganda>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

countries to pursue suspects accused of racism and discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, including Muslim ones.

Socio-economic dimension

Northern Mediterranean states should *re-evaluate* their strategies for cooperation with MENA countries regarding support for democracy initiatives. A better and more realistic means of cooperation is through supporting the most vulnerable and marginalized regions within MENA countries. This strategy could be achieved through public-private or private-private partnerships between EU donor institutions and local civil society organizations or start-ups working to reduce poverty and create job opportunities. Corruption and embezzlement within MENA governments is likely to diminish the efficiency of the EU's initiatives on human development. Yet social degradation, lack of opportunity and unemployment are among the main factors facilitating the spread of radicalization and extremist ideologies.

Global governance dimension

In the absence of a global consensus on a suitable strategy to combat ISIS and its affiliates in Syria and Iraq, these groups will continue to perpetrate brutal acts of terror and murder. In this regard, the UN and influential powers need to consolidate their efforts and adopt a united position regarding the crisis in Syria and Iraq. A global military coalition against ISIS should clearly identify the target group on the ground before waging airstrikes. Supporting local forces fighting on the ground, such as the Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi national forces, is also an important measure. After Mosul, Raqqa and other ISIS-controlled cities are liberated, the international community should outline a road map for political compromise and reconciliation that includes local and domestic actors in Iraq and Syria in the negotiation.

However, no foreign actor should take part in negotiations, even as facilitator or mediator. National sovereignty in Syria and Iraq must be preserved, and the political demands of the Kurdish communities and regions should also be taken into account during these negotiations. Nevertheless, foreign powers ought to provide support for post-ISIS Syria and Iraq in the military and technical spheres in order to assist national security forces in countering a potential return of ISIS-like cells. Finally, the international community should launch a worldwide reconstruction fund for Syrian, Iraqi and Libyan cities that have been destroyed during the war and help displaced civilians return home when peace and security is eventually restored.

Management of former ISIS militants

Data from the Soufan Group and other sources compiled by the Heritage Foundation estimates that as of 2015, nearly 30,000 foreign militants from more than 100 countries had travelled to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS. About 40 percent of all militants came from hybrid or democratic regimes, including Tunisia (6,000), Morocco (1,200), Jordan (2,000) and France (1,550).¹⁶

Table 1 | ISIS foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq by December 2015

Tunisia	6,000	Indonesia	300
Saudi Arabia	2,275	Kazakhstan	250
Jordan	2,000	United States	250
Russia	1,700	Austria	229
France	1,550	Bosnia	200
Turkey	1,400	Netherlands	190
Morocco	1,200	Tajikistan	190
Lebanon	900	Algeria	170
Germany	700	Malaysia	154
United Kingdom	700	Sweden	150
Egypt	600	Israel/Palestinian Territories	150
Libya	600		
Pakistan	500	Canada	130
Uzbekistan	500	Kosovo	125
Belgium	380	Australia	120
Turkmenistan	360	Denmark	115
China*	300	Yemen	110

Note: This table includes only countries with more than 100 fighters. * Figure according to party-run media reports.

Source: Lisa Curtis (ed.), “Combatting the ISIS Foreign Fighter Pipeline”, cit., p. 3.

However, according to Pentagon figures, as international airstrikes intensified and the Iraqi army approached Mosul, the number of foreign fighters entering Iraq and

¹⁶ Lisa Curtis (ed.), “Combatting the ISIS Foreign Fighter Pipeline: A Global Approach”, in *Davis Institute for Foreign Policy Special Reports*, No. 180 (6 January 2016), p. 3, <http://www.heritage.org/node/10767>.

Syria was reported to have dropped by 90 percent within 2015.¹⁷ The decline in foreign arrivals in Syria and Iraq proves that ISIS is unable to attract more sympathizers into the war. Moreover, a proportion of ISIS militants reportedly killed in the war, while others returned to their home countries, as stated by UN Assistant Secretary General Jean-Paul Laborde in a press conference in July 2016.¹⁸ Therefore, Former ISIS fighters need to be reintegrated into their home countries under close scrutiny and security. The best approach to reintegration will be to start the de-radicalization process through rehabilitation in prison. In Saudi Arabia for instance, the de-radicalization process for former Al-Qaeda militants involves counselling programmes, where clerics debate with the prisoners in an attempt to persuade them that they were tricked into their jihadist beliefs and to demonstrate how true Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance.¹⁹ In addition, former ISIS militants should be integrated into special psychological classes run by the state and by certified psychologists and religious preachers. Once their radicalized beliefs have been overcome, the government ought to offer these individuals vocational training before setting them free. They should be constantly monitored to prevent them forming new terror cells or attempting to leave the country for unknown reasons.

Nevertheless, rooting out the terrorist ideology among former ISIS fighters is not an easy task. Many have remained committed to the ideology despite efforts to provide them with vocational training and teach them about democratic principles. In this regard, countries receiving ISIS militants must formulate long-term educational strategies to refute the terrorist ideology through Friday sermons and mass media on a continual basis. Moreover, it is important to ban, or if necessary arrest, clerics advocating violence or incitement.

Morocco's counter-terrorism approach: why has it proven successful so far?

Since the Marrakesh bombings that killed more than 17 people on 28 April 2011, the government of Morocco has taken serious steps to battle terrorism using a multitude of measures aimed at reforming religious perceptions, countering Al-Qaeda/ISIS propaganda, strengthening security and intelligence systems and fostering socio-economic development. The Moroccan model of political Islam

¹⁷ Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Number of Foreign Fighters Entering Iraq and Syria Drops by 90 Percent, Pentagon Says", in *The Washington Post*, 26 April 2016, <http://wapo.st/1Sq10hL>.

¹⁸ AFP, "Nearly 30,000 'Foreign Terrorists' in Syria and Iraq, UN Warns", in *Daily Mail Online*, 5 July 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3675464>.

¹⁹ Andreas Casptack, "Deradicalization Program in Saudi Arabia: A Case Study", in *Middle East Institute website*, 10 June 2015, <http://www.mei.edu/node/20684>.

combined with counter-terrorism measures have brought the Kingdom stability and peace in spite of threats from ISIS.

The Moroccan version of political Islam has long been peaceful with regard to different Islamist movements in the opposition. For example, the unauthorized Islamist group *Al-adl Wa Al-ihssan*, or “Justice and Charity”, advocates the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a caliphate in Morocco through lectures and conferences, but without encouraging killing or the use of violence. Therefore, the management of political Islam and tolerant state-Islamist relations has fostered a unique political debate based on ideas instead of weapons.

The core counter-terrorism action taken by Morocco has been the reform of religious discourse. The Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs of Morocco has endeavoured to introduce a peaceful and moderate Islam. In July 2014, Morocco issued a law banning clergy from participating in political affairs or discussing politics during public sermons without government approval.²⁰ Hence, the topics for Friday sermons are exclusively decided by the Ministry so as to make sure they are free of any extremist ideas. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs has also utilized the state media channel Assadissa to broadcast programmes on moderate perceptions of Islam and the false ideology of ISIS. Moreover, in 2016 Marrakesh hosted for the first time an international conference on “The Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Lands”, which resulted in a joint declaration delivering policy recommendations to leaders of Muslim-majority states. The declaration urges Muslim educational institutions and authorities to “conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that add[r]esses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos, and results in the destruction of our shared societies”.²¹

Moroccan security and intelligence capabilities have also been strengthened against terrorist threats. A preventive security approach in Morocco has been enhanced by a new security mechanism called *Hadar* (literally, vigilance) which involves the deployment of security forces of the Royal Armed Forces, the Royal Gendarmerie, the police and auxiliary forces along the borders and in strategic locations such as airports, train stations, administrative buildings and tourist

²⁰ Genieve Abdo and Nathan Brown, *Religion, Identity, and Countering Violent Extremism*, Washington, Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, September 2016, p. 16-17, <http://mest.atlanticcouncil.org/?p=5017>.

²¹ Executive summary of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities, 27 January 2016, <http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/marrakesh-declaration.html>.

areas.²² As a result, counter-terrorism efforts have succeeded in dismantling more than 33 terror cells allegedly pledging allegiance to ISIS, with more than 230 people arrested in 2015 and 2016.²³

Moreover, the parliament adopted a new version of the 2003 anti-terrorism law, providing penalties of between five and 15 years in jail and a fine of up to 500,000 Moroccan dirham (equal to 45,000 euros) for any Moroccan “who joins or tries to join any type of non-state armed organization, whether inside or outside Morocco”.²⁴ The new law also tackles “cyber terrorism” through prosecution of individuals “praising” terrorist acts or “inciting” others to commit attacks via the Internet.

A third measure is the promotion of micro socio-economic initiatives targeted at socially underprivileged people. For at least a decade Morocco has engaged in a series of government initiatives to reduce poverty and provide career opportunities for youths who have graduated. Programmes that combat social marginalization, such as the Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain, have achieved some degree of social inclusion regardless of limited outcomes. Nevertheless, Morocco must seek out alternative models of development that primarily tackle corruption and ensure social justice, conditions that are fundamental for the state to regain trust.

Conclusion

In the context of the heinous crimes committed by ISIS and its affiliates, and while the international community searches for ways to battle the terrorist group and its ideology, it is high time to formulate comprehensive policies to concretely fight the motives behind radicalization. Hence, the world and the Mediterranean space are urged to foster regional and international cooperation in the fight against terror. Morocco’s thorough counter-terrorism strategy represents a breakthrough approach in which radicalization is tackled in a variety of dimensions. It is therefore worth sharing the Moroccan strategy with other similar Muslim-majority countries in the MENA region and abroad.

²² Mohammed Masbah, “Moroccan Foreign Fighters. Evolution of the Phenomenon, Promotive Factors, and the Limits of Hardline Policies”, in *SWP Comments*, No. 46/2015 (October 2015), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/moroccan-foreign-fighters>.

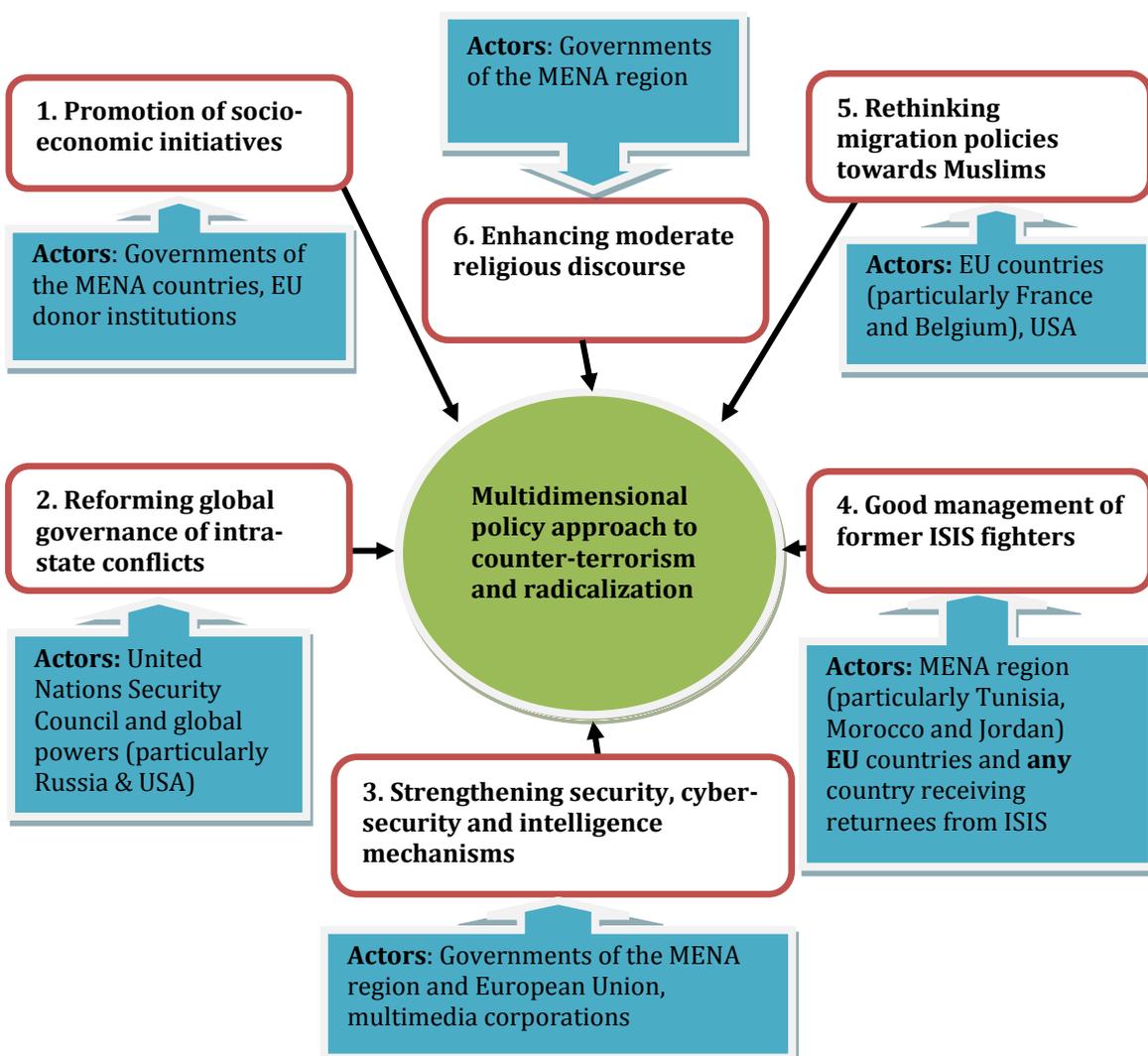
²³ Aziz Allilou, “Morocco Dismantled 13 Terrorist Cells and Arrested 129 Suspects Who Planned to Target Morocco in 2016” (in Arabic), in *2M.ma*, 12 September 2016, <http://bit.ly/2ck9mVH>.

²⁴ Mohammed Masbah, “Moroccan Foreign Fighters”, cit., p. 7.

At the present time, the obstacles to cooperation among Mediterranean countries, given the absence of a legitimate state in Libya and the continuation of violence in Syria, seem nearly insurmountable. However, as long as the youth in the region are determined to achieve a brighter future based on shared values, cooperation in the elimination of terrorism and the establishment of peace remains possible.

Figure 2 outlines the alternative multidimensional policy approach to counter-terrorism and eradicate radicalization, tailored for different actors from national governments to regional and global institutions.

Figure 2 | Scheme of multi-dimensional approach to counter-terrorism and fight against radicalization.



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Christina Schori Liang, “Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda”, in *GCSP Policy Papers*, No. 2015/2 (February 2015), <http://www.gcsp.ch/News-Knowledge/Publications/Cyber-Jihad-Understanding-and-Countering-Islamic-State-Propaganda>

7. **ACTIVATING THE POTENTIAL OF MAGHREB COUNTRIES IN REDUCING CURRENT REFUGEE FLOWS TO EUROPE: REDIRECTING THE WAVES**

Haïfa Ben Cheikha

In the wake of the Arab Spring, Europe has witnessed increasing waves of mass immigration from the southern and eastern Mediterranean. In 2016, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 363,401 refugees crossed the Mediterranean and arrived on European shores, while more than 5,000 people perished in the attempt.¹

More than 4.8 million refugees from Syria are currently living in five neighbouring countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.² There have been 224,694 resettlement places offered globally since the start of the Syrian crisis, which equates to a mere 4.7 percent of the total population of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey.³

In spite of the rule of law, democracy and human rights standards that are established in the European countries, a number of opinions have been expressed in opposition to the acceptance of these refugees, creating domestic political problems and fuelling nationalist and extremist discourse. Such problems have taken on an existential meaning, especially since critics of immigration policies were active in advocating for “no” votes in referendums on the new EU constitution in France and the Netherlands. Anti-immigrant sentiments were also prominent in the United Kingdom’s recent Brexit referendum, shaking the whole of the Europe project to its core.⁴ Added to that, the Dublin system⁵ to manage refugees has created more problems than it has resolved.⁶

¹ IOM Missing Migrants Project, *Mediterranean Update 11 April 2017*, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/node/3022>.

² Amnesty International, *Syria’s Refugee Crisis in Numbers*, last updated 20 December 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/02/syrias-refugee-crisis-in-numbers>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Refugee Crisis ‘Decisive’ for Brexit, Will Break EU Apart - Austrian FM”, in *RT News*, 30 June 2016, <https://on.rt.com/7hbz>.

It is undeniable that cultural differences remain the biggest challenge to Europe's welcome of these refugees. Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to examine the potential of a typical North African country such as Tunisia to become an important receiving country for migrants, rather than simply an emigration or transit country.

North African countries have many assets that could help them attract migrants, while preserving their dignity and providing for their safety. These include, among other factors, cultural similarities, general social acceptance of refugees and a low cost of living. These assets will be assessed below.

Europe could enhance the attractiveness of the region still further beyond its natural assets by providing assistance and aid, the costs of which would be less than the immediate burden of receiving and maintaining refugees. Opportunities for a greater European role are significant, and these will form another dimension of the paper's analysis.

According to some, migrants could bring balance to European societies and create an opportunity for Europe to establish cooperative policies with North African countries (mainly Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia; we exclude Libya because of its internal political instability) to create relocation opportunities for those wishing to immigrate.⁷

Many legal, structural and institutional changes need to be made to the laws that govern the North African countries examined in this paper. These reforms will be the focus of the paper's analysis. Moreover, it will also tackle the many fundamental challenges related to the introduction of migrants into the economic, social and political life of these countries and propose ways to meet these domestic challenges through a variety of means. The paper focuses on Tunisia as a case study, but because Tunisia shares many similarities with Morocco and Algeria, the solutions proposed here can also be applied to these other neighbouring North African countries.

⁵ Dublin System consists of the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation. The Dublin Regulation is a EU law that determines the Member State responsible to examine an application for asylum seekers, while the EURODAC is establishes a Europe-wide fingerprinting database for unauthorized entrants to the EU. See European Commission, *Factsheet: The Reform of the Dublin System*, 4 May 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-is-new/news/news/2016/20160504_1_en.

⁶ On the Dublin Regulations, see European Commission, *Factsheet: The Dublin System*, 6 April 2016, <http://europa.eu/!Hm98Yn>.

⁷ Guillaume Guguen and Imed Bensaïed, "Stranded in Tunisia, the Forgotten Refugees of Libya's 2011 Conflict", in *France 24*, 5 August 2014, <http://www.france24.com/en/20140804-stranded-tunisia-forgotten-refugees-libya-2011-conflict>.

The study explores the possibility of relocating migrants and refugees to Tunisia. Many politicians have focused on Turkey as a leading non-European country for the relocation of refugees and migrants, mainly those from Syria. The Islamist-leaning Turkish government is extremely demanding, however, and is using the topic of refugees as leverage in its struggle to join the European Union, showing little concern for the humanitarian dimension of the problem. On the other side, North African countries could be better partners for Europe since the relations between them are more stable and more durable, and the governments are more flexible and open to their European counterparts. North African states can help reduce the large number of migrants crossing into Europe through the central route connecting North Africa with Europe via the Italian island of Lampedusa as well as via the western route from Morocco to Spain.

With regard to Tunisia, engagement and cooperation between Italian and Tunisian authorities dates back to the late 1990s,⁸ when the first initiatives were promoted to assist in the training of Tunisian police and to reinforce control of the maritime border with Italy through technical assistance and closer cooperation between the two countries.⁹

Tunisia needs immigrants for its interior economic balance

Tunisia is in need of immigrants in order to attain economic balance. Illegal migrants cross the southern border with Libya at two main points, called “Benguerden” and “Dhehiba”.¹⁰ Although Tunisia suffers from high unemployment, this mostly affects skilled labour, while unskilled jobs remain vacant, according to national statistics, and many projects are suffering from a lack of workers. Hiring unskilled migrants can bring balance to many sectors such as agriculture, fishing, industry and tourism, among others.

Due to a policy of free and compulsory education that the Tunisian government has pursued since independence, a majority of working-age Tunisians hold university

⁸ Emanuela Paoletti, “Migration Agreements between Italy and North Africa: Domestic Imperatives versus International Norms”, in *Middle East Institute Articles*, 19 December 2012, <http://www.mei.edu/node/2588>.

⁹ Jean-Pierre Cassarino, “Accordo Italia-Tunisia, per che fare?”, in *Affarinternazionali*, 7 April 2011, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=1722>.

¹⁰ Paolo Cuttitta, “The Migration Borderscape of South East Tunisia: Memories from a North African ‘Triple Frontier’”, in *Border Criminologies*, 7 September 2016, <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/node/14026>.

degrees. While many suffer from unemployment and lack of opportunities, they are unlikely to accept unskilled jobs.¹¹

A report released in October 2012 by the Centre tunisien de veille et intelligence économique (CTVIE) found that there were about 120,000 unfilled job opportunities in the Tunisian textile, mechanic and electronic industries.¹² One year earlier, in June 2011, Tunisian consultant Cyril Grislain Karray published a much-debated book entitled *La prochaine guerre en Tunisie* (“The Next War in Tunisia”),¹³ which argued that reducing “exclusion and unemployment” in the country requires a new educational system that is able to meet the needs of the local job market and the global economy.¹⁴

Most observers of the Tunisian situation are sceptical about the idea that Tunisia will welcome many immigrants, especially given that the country is facing major security problems; according to them, more immigration would only further complicate an already existing problem.

In reality, this challenge can be overcome by creating a comprehensive screening system for prospective migrants wishing to enter and settle in Tunisia. Tunisia’s long and porous border with Libya remains a problem, as do the country’s other borders, including along the coast and in the south, where large tracts of land are covered by desert and harsh terrain. Tunisian authorities have recently begun building a border wall along the Tunisia–Libya border and have arranged for the use of new technologies to improve monitoring and the fight against illegal smuggling and trafficking.¹⁵ Yet smugglers continue to cross Tunisia’s borders. Along Tunisia’s border with Algeria, difficult and mountainous terrain also constitutes a challenge for border control, particularly in the light of widespread corruption among border guards and officials.

Screening for potential terrorists or radicalized individuals can be one answer to these security concerns linked to migration. Such screening should focus on

¹¹ In the fourth quarter of 2016, Tunisian unemployment rate was 15.5 percent, and university degree holders make up 31.6 percent of the unemployed. See Tunisian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), *Note sur l’enquête nationale de l’emploi, T4 2016*, February 2017, p. 3-4, <http://www.ins.tn/fr/node/3373>.

¹² I.B, “Les patrons tunisien déplorent 120.000 emplois non satisfaits dans l’industrie”, in *Kapitalis*, 9 October 2012, <http://www.kapitalis.com/economie/12205>.

¹³ Cyril Grislain Karray, *La prochaine guerre en Tunisie. La victoire en cinq batailles*, Tunis, Cérès, 2011.

¹⁴ Lorenzo Kamel, “Radical Militant Groups Are Feeding Off of Tunisia’s Marginalized Youth”, in *Muftah*, 26 June 2015, <http://muftah.org/?p=34522>.

¹⁵ Simon Tomlinson, “Tunisia Announces 100-Mile Wall Will Be Built Along Its Border with Libya in Response to Terror Attack which Claimed 38 Lives”, in *Daily Mail Online*, 8 July 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3153663>.

security dimensions, links to organized crime and terrorism, but should also include health screening for potentially harmful diseases. Migrants could then be classified according to skills and professional experience.

Screening of prospective migrants to be repatriated to North Africa could be conducted on European territory, where EU member states have a long tradition of dealing with immigration. Facilities could be built on Tunisian soil or in Tunisian territorial waters. Border control, smuggling and human trafficking remain challenges in Tunisia and North Africa that need to be addressed.¹⁶ Corruption among border guards, large areas of uncontrolled borders and inefficient equipment should all be considered.

There is a need not only to screen migrants, but also to group them according to their skills, potential threats and special needs.

Meeting the requirements for a friendly legal and economic framework for new immigrants

Tunisian culture bears many similarities to that of many migrants, making social inclusion somewhat easier in Tunisia compared with Europe. The Tunisian labour market is still in need of significant reforms, however, and enhancing the freedom of the convertibility of the dinar, micro-investments and commerce should be priorities. Moreover, there is an urgent need for a special European investment strategy for Tunisia.

Labour market reforms, micro-investment initiatives and commerce

Many economic and legal practices, laws and regulations in Tunisia remain largely unfriendly and at times even hostile to foreigners. These conditions need to change as soon as possible, as they are in contradiction of Tunisia's international commitments relating to economic and investment rights such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

For example, Tunisia still enforces legislation barring foreigners from commerce in Tunisia, with the exception of those who receive authorization from the Minister of

¹⁶ Eya Jrad, "Border Security in Tunisia", in *Arab Reform Initiative Research Papers*, 23 December 2015, p. 7, <http://www.arab-reform.net/en/node/844>

Commerce after undergoing a long and complex process, as decreed in law No. 61-14, dated 30 August 1961.¹⁷

Immigrants also face severe restrictions on their ability to transfer money abroad, as such transfers are tightly restricted by the Tunisian Central Bank. This is based on another old piece of legislation dating from fifty years ago, decree No. 77-608, dated 27 July 1977, and the Code of Exchange of 21 January 1976.¹⁸

Another disastrous piece of legislation that has been in place for more than five decades is the code of labour,¹⁹ which prevents foreigners from working in Tunisia. This legislation was watered down somewhat by legislation to encourage foreign investment in the services and industrial sectors, permitting in very limited cases the employment of immigrants in Tunisia without authorization. However, the prevailing idea is that a migrant can only work in Tunisia after following a complex and almost impossible procedure to obtain the correct authorization from the ministry of social affairs and employment.

Tunisia also needs to reform the law of alienage, which has not been modified since 1968, and make the 1963 Tunisian law of citizenship²⁰ more open and accessible to immigrants.

There is an urgent need to change these laws, otherwise Tunisia will struggle to attract new migrants and investments.

A call for special European investment strategies

It is undeniable that an increase in the Tunisian population will require more investment to absorb the masses needing jobs and to meet the consumption needs of the population.²¹ Tunisia has been experiencing hard times since the Arab Spring as a result of the problems that developed in the wake of political change,

¹⁷ Decree Law No. 61-14 of 30 August 1961 on the conditions governing certain commercial activities, as amended by Law No. 85-84 of 11 August 1985, <http://www.commerce.gov.tn/Fr/Fr/image.php?id=31>.

¹⁸ Decree No. 77-608 of 27 July 1977 setting out the conditions governing application of Law No. 76-18 of 21 January 1976 recasting and codifying the legislation on exchanges and foreign trade governing relations between Tunisia and foreign countries, http://www.finances.gov.tn/domaines/SBMF/cadre_legal/decret77-608-27juillet1977.pdf.

¹⁹ Code of Labour, 30 April 1966, [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/778/Labour Code Tunisia.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/778/Labour_Code_Tunisia.pdf).

²⁰ Code of Citizenship, 28 February 1963, http://www.e-justice.tn/fileadmin/fichiers_site_francais/codes_juridiques/Code_de_la_nationalite_tunisienne.pdf.

²¹ African Development Bank (ADB), *Tunisia: Economic and Social Challenges Beyond the Revolution*, 24 July 2012, p. 14, <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/tunisia-economic-and-social-challenges-beyond-the-revolution-9564>.

mainly with the increase in taxes, security concerns and the increase in the minimum wage.²²

Even private foreign investors do not seem overly eager to invest in Tunisia due to fears related to the social atmosphere and the security challenges that the country has faced since the political change of 2011.²³

Foreign investment by sovereign wealth funds in Tunisia would be the best solution. Foreign investment encouraged and financed by the European Union could also contribute to the creation of jobs in Tunisia for immigrants and Tunisians and to meeting consumption needs, as it would encourage further private investment. In fact, the European Union has already promoted some initiatives regarding trade, and in 2015 European officials mentioned a plan to start negotiations for Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) with Morocco and Tunisia.²⁴

Enhancing economic growth will mean more economic inclusion for migrants, and in the long term will help make Tunisia an attractive destination, not just a transit point or a resettlement destination. The integration process will also prove to be smoother. Migrants will share the same language (Arabic) and religion as the local population.

Distribution of immigrants in the Tunisian space

Tunisia suffers from a significant imbalance in its population distribution, as many are leaving the interior regions to migrate to the bigger coastal cities and the capital in search of skilled jobs and decent medical care. Newcomers need to be attracted to those regions that are suffering from population drainage. This can only be done through the establishment of social facilities and jobs in these areas. This is a medium- to long-term project, and is only feasible in steps and instalments until functioning regions that can welcome more and more migrants are created.

²² UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2015-2016*, Beirut, United Nations, 2016, <https://www.unescwa.org/node/95978>. See also “Arab Spring ‘Cost Region \$600bn’ in Lost Growth, UN Says”, in *BBC News*, 11 November 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37945757>.

²³ USIP, “The Current Situation in Tunisia”, in *USIP Fact Sheets*, 27 April 2016, <https://www.usip.org/node/90921>.

²⁴ Cecilia Malmström, *Modernising Trade Policy - Effectiveness and Responsibility*, Speech at the Meeting of the International Trade Committee of the European Parliament, 13 July 2015, European Commission <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1352>.

One of the solutions suggested in this project is to reinforce small and medium enterprises operating in these regions and encourage the creation of more businesses for the existing population and the newcomers.

This strategy will not only include immigrants in a space where there is no competition for work, but it will also create more balance in the demographic distribution across Tunisian territory. With economic growth, Tunisians will return to those regions as well, thereby helping to enhance development. This will also lessen the pressure on bigger cities, and help promote a better standard of living in both the coastal and interior regions.

There should be legal and administrative means to ensure that immigrants do not leave those regions and settle in the bigger cities. For that reason, a registry and continuous checks on the place of residence of immigrants should be put in place by Tunisian authorities. Repression cannot be the solution; there need to be strong economic reasons for immigrants to stay in the locations to which they are allocated. This requires high living standards and substantial fiscal and financial incentives for them while they are working, investing or conducting their business in those interior regions to which they were allocated. Stability is not meant to imply the immobility of migrants in the national territory, but rather the main place of work, business or life. Individuals could still move around for short holidays or business trips in the region and abroad.

New procedure for tracking illegal or extremist migrants

Some migrants have engaged in illegal activities in their home country. All countries share an international commitment not to shelter criminals. Therefore, substantial efforts must be made to track immigrants, check home country records, identify those with criminal pasts and those who have left their homes for economic opportunities or to flee persecution and violence.

Many migrants arrive from war-torn countries (e.g. Libya, Syria, DRC, Sudan, etc.) where no reliable records exist, while others have fake papers and still others have no papers at all, and therefore there is no government to deal with, all of which makes the task harder. One means to circumvent this issue is through close monitoring of newcomers.

Some migrants could be terrorists, or criminals, but others could be victims of human trafficking and may have arrived against their will. Some children, women

and young men, and people with disabilities can be the most vulnerable people that are trafficked.²⁵ There must be special treatment for those victims, and there need to be efforts to help them either by bringing them back to their countries and families or by including them in economic and social life, with special measures, and special procedures based on their plight as victims.

For this reason, more needs to be done in Tunisia to reform regulations for the fight against human trafficking, in particular Law No. 16-61 of 3 August 2016.²⁶ This needs to be adapted to the reality and the project of relocating migrants.²⁷ Moreover, enhanced regional cooperation between police forces, administrations and civil society organizations will need to be pursued given that the regional dimension is very important in these challenges.

Improving Tunisia's status in the European market: raising the level of Tunisian institutions to European standards

The reforms outlined above necessitate real commitment by the Tunisian government and elected assemblies. For that to occur, there needs to be a motivating force that will boost the Tunisian authorities' will to cooperate and to do more. Modifying and developing the status of Tunisia vis-à-vis the European Union would be an adequate and important encouragement. Increasing the trade of Tunisian goods and Tunisian people to Europe will be a central issue in the new modified status.

More cooperation is needed in areas including the economy, education, the environment, debt rescheduling, training for armed forces and many other fields. This will be necessary in order to raise Tunisia and Tunisian institutions to the level of European ones in order to discourage attempts to leave Tunisia for Europe again. Enhancing the quality of national institutions is an important step. Reducing corruption and making all people equal before the law, and developing a more modern justice system, are important steps that Tunisia should take.

²⁵ Heather Horn, "Where Does Fear of Refugees Come From?", in *The Atlantic*, 27 April 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/refugees-crime-rumors/480171>.

²⁶ Law No. 16-61 of 3 August 2016 on the prevention and fight against human trafficking, <http://legislation-securite.tn/node/54460>.

²⁷ The draft law was finally voted on 22 July 2016 by the Assembly of People's Representatives. See FIDH, *Tunisia Legislates against Trafficking in Persons (TiP)*, 25 July 2016, <https://www.fidh.org/en/impacts/tunisia-legislates-against-trafficking-in-persons-tip>.

Conclusions and recommendations

Tunisia and the European Union need to cooperate to make many changes and to foster closer relations. The European Union and Tunisia urgently need to initiate investment in creating jobs, work on trade relations and modernize investment and labour laws. Equally, Tunisian laws need to change and develop in order to respect the economic rights of migrants.

The distribution of migrants across Tunisian territory, mainly towards the western interior regions, and enhanced means to classify them according to their talents and threat levels (among other criteria) in order to best integrate them into society and the local economy are further priorities, as are improving the fight against organized crime and countering human trafficking.

If these changes are not made, and Tunisia welcomes immigrants as proposed above, it could inflict a great deal of economic, social and political harm on Tunisia. The unemployment rate would increase, as would prices for food, housing and the cost of living in general. This could also negatively impact the outlook of Tunisians, turning them from peaceful and warm people to xenophobic as a result of frustration with the problems associated with the arrival of immigrants; consequently, people would not only target immigrants but also the government, which would be held responsible. If reforms are not made, terrorists will seek bases in Tunisia, perhaps posing as migrants, and this will have disastrous effects on Tunisian democracy and everyday life. Such a reform process would be compatible with the concept of “resilience” that was central to the 2016 EU Global Strategy and its focus on the European neighbourhood.

Relocating immigrants to the Maghreb can be seen as one of the most important tools to sustain the EU’ Global Strategy, since the governance of those masses of migrants can lead to more security and stability in the Mediterranean and enhance growth in the southern Mediterranean. Security screening and economic growth are the most important tools to end extremism and violence, to counter terrorism and to enhance peace in the region.

A growing Maghreb will mean less migration from North Africa to Europe, and sub-Saharan youth will choose to move to Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, instead of moving to Europe and only use North Africa as a transit space. The growth of the Maghreb will benefit North Africa and Europe, and the Maghreb will create a belt to divert the classical routes for migration.

Last but not least, and in the medium to long term, Tunisian institutions should be brought up to the European level in order to improve the status of Tunisia vis-à-vis the European market. This would serve as a kind of political reward and economic

incentive for Tunisian authorities to make these reforms. All these recommendations can be applied to Morocco and Algeria as well, because they share many of the historical, social and to some extent economic assets noted for the Tunisian case.²⁸

These countries are highly influenced by French governance and administrative style in their legal frameworks, and all are influenced by Arab and Muslim traditions. The three countries were subjected to French protection and colonization, and Tunisia and Morocco gained their independence from France at the same date.

Unfortunately, Morocco and Algeria have a dispute related to Western Sahara, a challenge that limits the level of cooperation between the two countries. Notwithstanding this dispute, a degree of respectful cooperation exists.

Another partner in this political project will be Tunisian civil society and non-governmental organizations. These entities can work on multiple levels, ranging from sustaining governmental initiatives and providing assistance to migrants, such as healthcare, education and social inclusion, to observing Tunisian society and trying to stop any possible racial or hate acts or discrimination against the newcomers, as well as defending their rights and their equal treatment, in order to compensate the weakness that those immigrants share when they arrive to another country (lack of knowledge of their rights, lack of knowledge of the laws etc.).

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²⁸ Algeria shares more than 965 km of border with Tunisia, and about 1,600 km with Morocco.

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8. CAN THE EU'S RECURRENT REGIONAL MIGRATION CRISES BE TRANSFORMED FROM A CHALLENGE INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH THE EU AND ITS NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES?

Zied Touzani

After the Second World War, the need for unskilled workers to fuel “*Les Trente Glorieuses*” in Europe led to an easing of immigration policies. By the 1970s, however, economic stagnation had prompted a return to restricted immigration policies. Meanwhile, economic, social and political disparities between Europe and its neighbours pushed people to migrate illegally.

Recent decades have shown the extent to which the EU's borders were permeable. In the 1990s concerns over illegal immigration were focused on that between Morocco and Spain, specifically the Strait of Gibraltar and the Canary Islands. The focus then moved east to the central Mediterranean route between Tunisia, Libya and Italy via the island of Lampedusa. Most recently a new corridor opened up between Turkey and Greece, which quickly outpaced the older Mediterranean routes in the number of new arrivals it delivered. Migration routes have changed over time, but migration waves have always evoked similar reactions in EU countries: intense media coverage, rising social hostility towards new migrants, the heightening of political tensions between and within EU member states and, for political elites, the difficult task of balancing between adopting a humanitarian response and strict application of the law in order to discourage new arrivals. Therefore, year after year, irregular migration has been a major internal and external political issue for EU member states.

The latest cycle of migration flows faced by the EU was triggered by the 2011 Arab uprisings. Three months after the Tunisian revolution, Italy's island of Lampedusa received nearly 23,000 illegal immigrants from Tunisia.¹ These numbers represent a striking increase compared with the total of 459 illegal arrivals in 2010. In 2015,

¹ David Schembri, “Lampedusa Mayor Calls for Tangible European Solidarity”, in *Times of Malta*, 4 April 2011, <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20110404/local/lampedusa-mayor-calls-for-tangible-european-solidarity.358136>.

with diplomatic attempts to resolve the Syrian civil war failing to make progress, the EU was confronted with new waves of migrants, many of whom were asylum seekers and not economic migrants. What distinguishes this refugee crisis from previous crises is the number of new arrivals and the significant impact these have had on EU politics. In 2015, over 1 million migrants arrived by sea to Europe,² while numbers declined to 363,401 in 2016.³

Between 1945 and the present, European migration policies have alternated between the opening and closing of borders and have been characterized by a significant lack of harmonization between the respective policies of European states. At the same time, irregular migration flows have never stopped – they have only varied in volume according to the tension or conflict occurring in the neighbourhood.

From this perspective it is clear that the EU has a strategic interest in promoting politically and economically stable countries in its neighbourhood. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the EU's southern neighbourhood, the socio-economic and political situation six years since the outbreak of the Arab revolutions is dramatic.

Syria is still entangled in a civil war between Bashar Al Assad and parties ranging from secular to extremist that have cost the lives of well over 400,000 people.⁴ Nearly 3 million Syrians have lost their jobs because of the civil war, eliminating the primary source of income of more than 12 million people. Unemployment levels increased from 14.9 percent in 2011 to 57.7 percent at the end of 2014.⁵

In Egypt, after a democratic election won by a Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated political party, a coup led by General Abdel Fattah Al Sisi restored the country to a military dictatorship. In the tourism sector, one of Egypt's economic backbones, revenue dropped from 12.5 billion dollars in 2010 to 6.1 billion dollars in 2015.⁶

² International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Top 363,348 in 2016; Deaths at Sea: 5,079*, 6 January 2017, <https://www.iom.int/node/79932>.

³ International Organization for Migration (IOM) Missing Migrants Project, *Mediterranean Update 11 April 2017*, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/node/3022>. See also UNHCR, *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response - Mediterranean*, last updated 31 March 2017, <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>.

⁴ "Syria Death Toll: UN Envoy Estimates 400,000 Killed", in *Al Jazeera*, 23 April 2016, <http://aje.io/a83y>.

⁵ Ian Black, "Report on Syria Conflict Finds 11.5% of Population Killed or Injured", in *The Guardian*, 11 February 2016, <https://gu.com/p/4gtg2/stw>.

⁶ "Tourism Revenues in Egypt Drop 15% in 2015: Ministry", in *Egyptian Streets*, 20 January 2016, <https://egyptianstreets.com/?p=17955>.

In Tunisia, perceived by many as the only “successful outcome” of the Arab Spring, the unemployment rate reached 15.5 percent in 2016, as high as it was before the revolution.⁷ Between 2010 and 2016, the inflation rate rose by 26.6 points.⁸ Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2015 was still lower than in 2011.⁹ The country’s rank in Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index went from 59th in 2010 to 75rd in 2016.¹⁰ A recent survey shows that while 48 percent of respondents prefer democracy to other forms of government, the number of respondents who describe prosperity as “definitely more important to me” than democracy jumped from just 18 percent in May 2016 to 50 percent in December 2016.¹¹

For a majority of MENA countries the “Arab Spring” became a sort of “Bitter Spring”. According to the EIU Democracy Index, between 2012 and 2015 only one country, Tunisia, improved its rank, moving from 90th place to 57th.¹² In the same interval, countries such as Egypt and Libya fell in the ranking, moving from a classification as “hybrid regimes” to that of “authoritarian regimes”.

This latest migration crisis has had more direct and indirect consequences on the EU than the previous one had. Direct consequences were significantly manifest in the security domain, with rising concern regarding possible terrorist infiltration, most notably from returning fighters affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as was the case for one terrorist involved in the 2016 Paris attacks.¹³ At the internal EU level, the refugee crisis has had significant consequences in countries such as Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway and Sweden, where border controls were temporarily reintroduced or the borders were closed

⁷ See Tunisian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), *Keys Indicators: Unemployment*, <http://beta.ins.tn/en/indicateur-cle>; Tunisian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), *Note sur l'enquête nationale de l'emploi, T4 2016*, February 2017, <http://www.ins.tn/fr/node/3373>.

⁸ Tunisian National Institute of Statistics (NIS), *Keys Indicators: Household Consumer Price Index*, <http://beta.ins.tn/en/indicateur-cle>.

⁹ World Bank Data, *Tunisia*, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/tunisia>.

¹⁰ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index, 2010-2016*, <http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi>.

¹¹ Center for Insights in Survey Research, *Survey of Tunisian Public Opinion. December 6–December 13, 2016*, January 2017, p. 33, <http://www.iri.org/node/4054>.

¹² Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Democracy Index 2015. Democracy in an Age of Anxiety*, January 2016, p. 5, <http://www.yabiladi.com/img/content/EIU-Democracy-Index-2015.pdf>. However, Tunisia slipped by 12 places to 69th in the Democracy Index global ranking in 2016. See EIU, *Democracy Index 2016. Revenge of the “Deplorables”*, January 2017, p. 6, <http://www.polity.org.za/article/democracy-index-2016-revenge-of-the-deplorables-2017-01-26>.

¹³ Matthew Holehouse and Henry Samuel, “Terrorist Ringleader Got into EU as ‘Refugee’”, in *The Telegraph*, 20 November 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/12006892/International-manhunt-underway-after-French-police-let-Paris-attacks-suspect-slip-through-their-fingers.html>.

altogether.¹⁴ The rejection by Poland, Hungary and Slovakia of their respective refugee quotas highlighted the political divisions on this issue.¹⁵ A climax was reached with the Brexit vote in 2016.

One indirect consequence of the refugee crisis is that it is fuelling anti-EU sentiments that are undermining the EU's integration project. In addition, racist and xenophobic or Islamophobic rhetoric and sentiments have increased across the continent. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, declared in June 2016 that a worrying "climate of xenophobia" has taken hold in Europe, as the continent is struggling with the biggest influx of migrants since the Second World War.¹⁶ In 2014, a poll by the Bertelsmann Foundation showed that 61 percent of Germans believe that "Islam is incompatible with the Western world".¹⁷ At the political level, extreme right-wing parties are increasing their share of the popular vote, as evidenced by their recent showing in a number of national elections in Europe. These parties won 35.1 percent of the vote in Austria, 18 percent in Finland and 21 percent in Denmark, and even in Switzerland, a non-EU country, they secured 29 percent of the vote.¹⁸

These results are an expression of European citizens' sense that their political leaders, and the EU more generally, are unable to provide solutions to the current migration crisis.

The EU's response was to strengthen Frontex, the EU border control agency, by providing more funds and personnel. Next came the launch of Operation Triton in the Mediterranean, which replaced a previous Italian rescue mission, Mare Nostrum, and the Greek Poseidon.¹⁹

Another policy pursued by the EU was to deepen its already existing border control policies based on the externalization of migration flows, an example being

¹⁴ "Putting Up Barriers", in *The Economist*, 6 February 2016, <http://www.economist.com/node/21690065>.

¹⁵ Matt Broomfield, "Poland Refuses to Take a Single Refugee Because of 'Security' Fears", in *The Independent*, 9 May 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-refuses-to-take-a-single-refugee-because-of-security-fears-a7020076.html>.

¹⁶ "Worrying 'Climate of Xenophobia' in Europe, Says UN Chief", in *France 24*, 20 June 2016, <http://f24.my/1XyTVtQ>.

¹⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, "Special Study of Islam, 2015", in *Religion Monitor*, January 2015, p. 7, <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/topics/aktuelle-meldungen/2015/januar/religion-monitor>.

¹⁸ Katya Adler, "Is Europe Lurching to the Far Right?", in *BBC News*, 28 April 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36150807>.

¹⁹ FRONTEX, *Frontex and Greece Agree on Operational Plan for Poseidon Rapid Intervention*, 17 December 2015, <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/frontex-and-greece-agree-on-operational-plan-for-poseidon-rapid-intervention-yiSxga>.

the signing of a new partnership framework with Turkey in March 2016.²⁰ The agreement included plans to relocate irregular migrants arriving in Greece to Turkey from March 2016 onwards. Specific resettlement agreements for Syrians were also concluded, providing that “for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek Islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU”. The EU can return asylum seekers to Turkey from the Greek islands if “the person has not already received protection in the third country but the third country can guarantee effective access to protection to the readmitted person”.²¹

In return, the EU promised to give Ankara 6 billion euros to help the estimated 2.7 million Syrians on Turkish soil. As part of the agreement, the EU also promised to negotiate visa liberalization agreements for Turkish citizens wishing to travel to the EU.²²

In the end, the EU chose a short-term and security-oriented response based on the deepening of existing mechanisms.

A new EU approach to migration

We propose an alternative solution that seeks to transform the current crisis into a win-win scenario for both Europe and North African countries and is based on establishing a common EU immigration policy, one with specific mechanisms of preferential treatment for the EU’s neighbours and that considers the interests and concerns of both. EU neighbouring countries are defined by the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which includes: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

EU neighbouring countries could agree to readmit irregular migrants who have reached the EU from their territory, or to accept the repatriation of migrants from other countries. The latter would result in decreased irregular migration to Europe and prevent significant humanitarian crises by creating legal mechanisms for repatriation, thus eliminating a tendency among certain EU member states to use illegal means to return and repatriate migrants. In Germany, for instance, media

²⁰ European Commission, *Migration Partnership Framework. A New Approach to Better Manage Migration*, December 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet_migration_partnership_framework_update13_12_2016_final.pdf.

²¹ European Commission, *Fact Sheet: EU-Turkey Statement: Questions and Answers*, 19 March 2016, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-963_en.htm.

²² Patrick Kingsley, “Refugee Crisis: What Does the EU’s Deal with Turkey Mean?”, in *The Guardian*, 18 March 2016, <https://gu.com/p/4hy5m/stw>.

sources have shown how authorities have paid African embassies to recognize illegal migrants from sub-Saharan Africa as nationals eligible for repatriation in cases where German officials have been unable to determine the national origin of the migrant.²³

In the case of MENA countries, such a reformed EU immigration policy could alleviate social pressure and economic tensions by providing legal avenues for emigration. In addition, a visa liberalization process and, in the long term, the prospect of free access to EU countries for short stays (90 days) would provide youth with new potential opportunities through economic, social and cultural interactions.

The advantage of this solution is that it would deliver a long-term and mutually beneficial outcome for both the EU and its neighbours. At the economic level, unemployed youth from MENA countries would take up unfilled positions in the EU's job market and therefore ultimately help to pay EU pensions. In December 2016, there were almost 2 million vacant posts in the EU labour market.²⁴ This economic immigration would also counterbalance the EU's demographic decline: the German population, for instance, will decline by between 8.9 and 14.4 million by 2060 if nothing is done.²⁵ In addition, new immigrants would contribute to fuelling growth through consumption. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits.²⁶ MENA economies would further benefit from brain gain and remittances from abroad, the amounts of which nowadays outstrip official foreign aid disbursements.

At the political level, migration facilities would strengthen the EU's pressure for democratic enhancement through a "more for more" approach, unveiled following the Arab Spring uprisings.²⁷ This circular migration policy would also balance the low level of financial engagement by the EU with the MENA region following the Arab Spring, which was supposed to help solidify new democratic systems – what

²³ Daniel Mützel, "Der Pass wird passend gemacht", in *Der Freitag*, 26 January 2016, <https://www.freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/der-pass-wird-passend-gemacht>.

²⁴ Eurostat, *Statistics Explained: Job Vacancy Statistics*, updated March 2017, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Job_vacancy_statistics.

²⁵ German Federal Statistical Office, *Germany's Population by 2060. Results of the 13th Coordinated Population Projection*, 28 April 2010, https://www.destatis.de/EN/Publications/Specialized/Population/GermanyPopulation2060_5124206159004.html.

²⁶ OECD, "Is Migration Good for the Economy?", in *OECD Migration Policy Debates*, No. 2 (May 2014), p. 2, [http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/OECD Migration Policy Debates Numero 2.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/OECD_Migration_Policy_Debates_Número_2.pdf)

²⁷ See for instance, European Commission, *The EU's Response to the 'Arab Spring'*, 16 December 2011, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-918_en.htm.

was termed in some circles a “Marshall Plan” for the Mediterranean but which in reality was never put into action.

Finally, the EU’s soft power based on economic opportunities for a generation of job seekers looking to enhance their opportunities in life would help counterbalance ISIS’s ideology based on the rejection of Western values. Within EU institutions, a positive momentum towards a reformed immigration policy is already noticeable. In April 2016, the European Commission published guidelines on a regular migration policy.²⁸ The guidelines include four main pillars: revising the Blue Card Directive, attracting innovative entrepreneurs to the EU, developing a more coherent and effective model for regular immigration, and strengthening cooperation with key origin countries. The document concluded by noting:

The priority set by President Juncker that “Europe needs to manage migration better, in all aspects” – from the humanitarian imperative, the need for solidarity and the demographic and skills challenge – is valid more than ever. The Commission is therefore fully committed to achieving the important objective of shaping an integrated, sustainable and holistic EU migration policy.²⁹

In response to the Arab Spring, the EU proposed through its European Neighbourhood Policy to discuss new “mobility partnerships”, starting with Morocco in 2013 and Tunisia in 2014.³⁰ The partnerships will ease visa restrictions for certain professions (students, researchers, businessmen) and open up the long-term prospects for visa liberalization.³¹

With Europe’s Eastern neighbours, the EU is already implementing a migration policy within its framework of “mobility partnership”. These agreements could ultimately go so far as to provide completely visa-free entrance to the Schengen area.

A potential model for MENA countries could be Moldova. In 2011, Moldova signed a mobility partnership that facilitated procedures, including faster visa processing

²⁸ European Commission, *Towards a Reform of the Common European Asylum System and Enhancing Legal Avenues to Europe* (COM/2016/197), 6 April 2016, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52016DC0197>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁰ Peter Seeberg, “Mobility Partnerships and the EU, Part I: Where Are We Regarding Implementation and What Will Be the Consequences?”, in *Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies News Analysis*, July 2014, http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles/4/B/4/%7B4B436E70-4E30-4E2B-8D82-2CDBDD9926E1%7D060714_Mobility_Seeberg1.pdf.

³¹ Michele Bigoni, “EU Response to the Arab Spring”, in *European Parliamentary Research Service Blog*, 8 November 2012 (updated 17 January 2014), <http://wp.me/p2qdgs-12o>.

times, a reduction in visa fees and a decreased need for supporting documents. Three years later the country signed a visa-free agreement with the EU that exempted Moldovan citizens from needing a visa for short stays (under 90 days) during a six-month period following the date of first entry. Other countries, including Georgia (2016) and Ukraine (2015), have concluded similar agreements.

The argument that economic differences and imbalances justify visa barriers for MENA countries is questionable, because the economic indicators are similar to those of countries recently granted visa-free access to the EU. If we compare GDP per capita in current US dollars in 2015³² and the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2015³³ of countries like Tunisia with 11 million inhabitants (3,822 dollars – 0.725), Morocco with 33 million (2,878 dollars – 0.647) or Lebanon with 4.4 million (8,047 dollars – 0.763), we can see that they outperform some countries granted visa-free agreements with the EU, including Moldova with 3.5 million inhabitants (1,848 dollars – 0.699), Ukraine with 45.4 million (2,115 dollars – 0.743) or Georgia with 3.7 million (3,757 dollars – 0.769).

Moreover, all the countries mentioned above are included in the “high human development” (HDI) category with the exception of Moldova and Morocco, which are ranked in the “medium human development” category.

One can argue that demographic indicators differ between these groups of countries. Fertility rates (2015)³⁴ for Moldova are 1.2, for Georgia 1.8 and for Ukraine 1.5. In comparison, Tunisia scores 2.1, Morocco 2.5 and Lebanon 1.7. Yet the difference is not so pronounced. More pertinent indicators regarding motivations for migration are unemployment rates (2014),³⁵ where again these countries display certain significant similarities: Moldova 5.0 percent, Georgia 11.6 percent, Ukraine 8.9 percent, Tunisia 14.8 percent, Morocco 10.0 percent and Lebanon 6.8 percent.

It is the prerogative of the European Council to propose, and the European Parliament to vote on and finally approve, a reformed EU immigration policy. Major difficulties will arise from the increasing popularity of extreme right-wing parties in Europe and growing negative perceptions of migrants across the continent. Moreover, some of the last member countries to have joined the EU,

³² World Bank, *GDP per capita (current US\$)*, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>.

³³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2016. Human Development for Everyone*, March 2017, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>.

³⁴ World Bank, *Fertility rate, total (births per woman)*, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>.

³⁵ World Bank, *Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)*, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS>.

such as Poland, Hungary and Slovakia in 2004, will have to realize that it is in their interest to adopt an EU migration policy because the best and most sustainable way to counter illegal immigration is through a common legal system that includes approved mechanisms for the repatriation of illegal migrants. Neighbouring countries such as Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia having few or no political or economic interests in the EU's Eastern member states, and these countries will not have a fundamental interest in concluding agreements with them. That is why it is in the interest of the EU's Eastern member states to give a mandate to the EU to negotiate on their behalf.

The impact for EU neighbouring countries will be a significant loss of highly trained people, especially health workers and IT engineers. These losses could, however, be balanced by returning migrants and remittances, with increased savings, skills and international contacts. Putting the issue of brain drain into perspective, one has to admit that if highly skilled workers want to emigrate they will eventually find ways to do so, to Europe or elsewhere, as they have many more opportunities than low- and medium-skilled workers.

Lastly, people tend to underestimate the fact that because of their illegal status, migrants are “trapped” in the EU with only two choices: obtaining legal papers, or being expelled with the consequence of never being able to return to the EU legally, creating a vicious circle for anyone wanting to migrate to the EU that could be countered with a common and holistic EU migration policy. This situation exposes migrants to the risk of violence, abuse, frequent arrests and prison stays. They are also more vulnerable to being forced into the underground economy, where low salaries and lack of rights expose them to even more risks. The European Commission estimated that the underground economy accounts for between 7 and 16 percent of the EU's GDP, or 7 to 19 percent of the total jobs declared.³⁶ Such a reality only benefits criminal networks, from human traffickers, to prostitution rings, drug dealers and other offenders.

Shaping a new vision between the EU and MENA countries

Against a backdrop of growing European scepticism toward more EU integration, amplified by the refugee crisis, the pessimism of MENA youth about their future, and the short-term and Eurocentric nature of EU policies adopted after the Arab

³⁶ European Commission, *Undeclared Work* (COM/98/219), 7 April 1998, p. 5, <http://aei.pitt.edu/5111>; Bernard Farriol, “Conséquences économiques, financières et sociales de l'économie non déclarée”, in *Les avis du CESE*, No. 2014/15 (28 July 2014), p. 9, http://www.lecese.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/Avis/2014/2014_15_consequences_economie_non_declaree.pdf.

Spring, the need for a reformed EU immigration policy is more obvious than ever. Considering that it is better to have legal rather than illegal immigration, and that the phenomenon of migration is here to stay, EU representatives need to show leadership by taking forward-looking, honest, long-term and mutually beneficial initiatives. It is important to understand that we are currently in a lose-lose situation, both for the EU and its neighbouring countries, and that all kinds of extremisms are benefiting from this situation.

That is why the EU and its neighbouring countries need to develop an efficient migration policy that will work on the three phases of migration: pre-migration, migration and post-migration.³⁷

A good starting point is the existing framework of the Blue Card, which will have to be included in a more general immigration policy. The requirements for the Blue Card need to be simplified, particularly those that demand “proof of your salary exceeding by 1.5 times the average salary in the hosting state or for professions in shortage 1.2 times the average salary in the hosting state”,³⁸ which effectively limits immigration to those in just a few highly qualified categories. In addition, administrative and bureaucratic red tape discourages both employees and employers. Besides, three years after its implementation, the current Blue Card system has proven to be inefficient. In 2014, Sweden and the Netherlands issued zero Blue Cards, Belgium 19, Spain 39 and France 597.³⁹ Last but not least, Blue Cards are only available to prospective migrants who have obtained a work placement or been proposed a contract in an EU country.

The EU needs to extend the scope of the Blue Card to include a job-seeking permit valid for at least three years. Selection criteria could be based on a points system. The system should take as an example Canada’s points-based process, in which each applicant is evaluated and given points on criteria such as age, education level, language skills, work experience and job market needs.⁴⁰ The advantage of this system is that it will provide chances for less qualified people to immigrate legally. It is important to provide opportunities for medium- and low-skilled workers, because it is they who actually have fewer chances to migrate legally and therefore are more tempted by illegal routes. Another advantage is that it will

³⁷ European Training Foundation (ETF), *Migrant Support Measures from an Employment and Skills Perspective (MISMES). Global Inventory with a Focus on Countries of Origin*, July 2015, http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/MISMES_global_inventory.

³⁸ See the Besart Bajrami’s website: *How to apply for the EU Blue Card*, <http://www.eu-bluecard.com/how-to-apply>.

³⁹ See the EU Immigration Portal: *EU Blue Card*, http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/bluecard_en.

⁴⁰ See the Government of Canada website: *Six Selection Factors – Federal Skilled Workers*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/apply-factors.asp>.

create a working permit without the need for a contract, allowing migrants to plan their travel with positive prospects of employment.

Inspired by the Canadian immigration system, each country should provide language courses and three months of job counselling for each arriving migrant to enhance his/her chances of finding employment and better integrating into society. This support also helps new migrants feel welcome, a feeling that will play an important role in future integration. Migrant quotas for each EU neighbouring country should also be established.

Such a holistic immigration policy would also include the harmonization of asylum processes. Today, for the majority of irregular migrants the only legal way to remain in the EU is by applying for asylum. As a result, admittance rates for EU asylum seekers have slowed and growing numbers of politicians are becoming uncomfortable with the need to provide political asylum to migrants fleeing war and persecution.

Meanwhile, country-specific agendas for the prospect of visa liberalization will have to be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Potential models for visa liberalization include Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine. Additionally, bilateral discussion on the recognition of university diplomas and qualifications should begin in order to ease the future employability of migrants.

In the medium to long term the EU should publish a precise objective for immigration numbers, a target that would be re-evaluated annually and subdivided between member states. The EU can issue recommendations for each member. In such a system, the majority of migrants would be absorbed by the main EU economies. Another aspect is that the ratio of Blue Cards given to foreigners who are already living in the country should not exceed 40 percent of the quota. In 2014, Germany gave out 7,000 Blue Cards, 4,000 of them to foreigners who were already living in the country. The aim is to make external EU immigration possible and to provide legal avenues for migration, especially for low- and medium-skilled workers. An immigration policy that provides legal means to migrate is crucial. Meanwhile, campaigns promoting the economic benefits of migration should be encouraged, potentially funded by national chambers of commerce or employer federations.

Lastly, the EU should harmonize and enhance its programmes for legal and illegal migrants returning to their home country with labour market reintegration programmes and targeted entrepreneurship and business start-up support.

In the short term, the EU's neighbouring countries will have to sign agreements for the return of illegal migrants entering the EU, whether through their country or

not. Such agreements can be agreed by neighbouring countries in exchange for the prospect of EU visa liberalization.

In the medium and long term, each European neighbouring country will have to create a unique public agency in charge of dealing with its EU partners. These will be tasked with: facilitating and monitoring national emigration processes and the return of illegal migrants from the EU; fixing yearly emigration objectives with the EU and signing individual emigration objectives with EU member states; and making recommendations for developing and implementing new curricula at universities and vocational training centres. These curricula should be oriented to meet the needs of local and EU job markets. Such an agency would also be responsible for providing consultation for prospective migrants to direct them to apply in the country where they will be most likely to secure a permit. Its mission would be capacity building and training for prospective migrants in language, job seeking and departure preparation. Last but not least, these agencies would run missions in each EU country to identify job market needs and tendencies and develop privileged political relations with their institutional counterparts.

Traditional approaches aimed at limiting emigration and encouraging prospective migrants to remain in their home countries have focused on promoting economic growth, development, capacity building and, where needed, peacekeeping missions. For Europe, the implementation of an EU-wide immigration policy with preferences for neighbourhood countries will not resolve the fundamental causes of migration, but it will complement other traditional tools and approaches. The creation of a clear immigration framework with agreed return and repatriation mechanisms will reduce illegal entry to the EU while providing important incentives and opportunities for MENA countries, helping to transform the current crisis into a win-win scenario for the Mediterranean region as a whole.

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Youth are among the most active demographic group to have challenged the authoritarianism of the state before, during and after the 2010-12 Arab uprisings. Yet, youth in the MENA still suffer from the highest unemployment rates in the world and the chronic lack of jobs and opportunities are widely considered a significant factor fuelling radical ideologies in the area. While many studies have focused on the category of "youth" in the Arab world, it is rare to hear how young people themselves view and interpret developments unfolding in their societies. Rarer still is to have these voices contribute to ongoing policy debates on the future of the Mediterranean. This edited volume collects the revised and updated versions of eight policy papers produced by outstanding young scholars and activists from the Middle East and North Africa. Their works, focused on topics such as climate change and environmental degradation, state-society relations, radicalization and the migrant and refugee crisis, were presented during an international conference held at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on 19 January 2017.

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