

# the MENARA **booklet** for Development Agencies and NGOs

Jordi **Quero** & Cristina **Sala** (Eds.)



the  
MENARA  
**booklet**  
for

Development  
Agencies and NGOs

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The *MENARA Booklets* are a series of publications, created under the MENARA Project framework, which provide insights on the Middle East and North Africa regional order. These Booklets translate scholarly-sounded research into helpful insights for practitioners, including humanitarian agencies; development agencies and NGOs; the private sector; and academia. In each of the four Booklets you may find a compendium of articles and extracts covering the most pressing issues for your field of expertise.

The *MENARA Booklet for Development Agencies and NGOs* provides you state-of-the-art and thoughtful analysis which may help your organization to better address challenges and inform your daily decisions. It includes our researchers' main ideas on topics like demographic, economic, energetic and technological transformations in the region; its embeddedness in economic globalization; the governance of migration and border controls; the impact of climate change for regional societies; and the role of global NGOs in dealing with all these issues. All these, read together, would offer a comprehensive picture of the most critical elements affecting development in the region.

Under the framework of the MENARA Project, fourteen research institutions have been carrying out fieldwork in the last three years to improve our understanding of the Middle East and North Africa amid a shifting context. It has studied the geopolitical order in the making, identified the driving forces behind it, shed light on bottom-up dynamics and assessed the implications of these processes on the EU and its policies towards the region. All in all, analysis and ideas from fact-finding missions, interviews, stakeholders meetings and focus groups come together to offer you a valuable outcome.

The extracts presented in this compilation have been modified and adapted by the editors. For the sake of accessibility, we have rid every bibliographic reference and footnote included in the original versions of the articles. For those interested in them, please check the full original versions at [www.menaraproject.eu](http://www.menaraproject.eu). Some other minor editing changes have been introduced to make the document fully coherent (such as changes in names and number of sections and subsections or the elimination of some graphs and infographics). We have tried to respect each author's contributions, trying to be as less intrusive as possible.

We hope that The *MENARA Booklet for Development Agencies and NGOs* is useful and enjoyable for you.

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# Future challenges of climate change in the MENA region

**EDGAR GÖLL**

*MENARA Future Notes, No. 7. (2017)*

Since the 1980s, scientific research on climate change has emphasized that the changes anticipated will have major impacts on and consequences for all world regions. Within the field of scientific future research and future studies climate change is therefore acknowledged to be one of the major “megatrends”. (...) Through interaction with other megatrends and changes, such as demographic change, globalization and urbanization, climate change will very likely pose huge challenges for countries within the MENA region.

The MENA region will be one of those most severely affected by ongoing climate changes. These will be caused by increased average temperatures, less and more erratic precipitation, changing patterns of rainfall, continuing sea-level rise and changes in water supply. All this will happen in a region which already suffers from aridity, recurrent drought and water scarcity. Climate change in the MENA region is expected to affect water resources, sea level, biodiversity, human health, food production, land use and urban planning, and tourism. Each of these threats poses extraordinary challenges for governance and development and calls for major efforts to lessen their negative and dangerous effects.

Water resources in the MENA region are diminishing. Water scarcity is already critical in several areas and will reach severe levels within the MENA region by 2025 (...). Man-made changes are making the situation worse. For example, the widespread construction of dams and unsustainable irrigation practices (which waste about half of the water resources) and high rates of human water consumption (which are well above international standards in some Arab countries) are contributing to making this problem even more acute (...). Another major challenge for parts of the MENA region is sea level rise, because most of the region’s economic activities, agriculture and population centres are located in coastal areas. The high vulnerability of coastal areas to sea level rise results from inundation and the increasing salinity of the soil, coupled with the reduced availability of freshwater resources such as aquifers. Overall, sea level rise of 1 metre would directly impact 41,500 km<sup>2</sup> of MENA coastal lands. The most serious impacts of this can be expected in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE. For example,



the effects for Egypt of a sea level rise of 1 metre – which is likely to occur by the end of the century – would mean that more than 6 million citizens have to be moved elsewhere with all their belongings and the whole infrastructure, and that 4,500 km<sup>2</sup> of precious agricultural land would be lost. (...)

**Sea level rise of 1 metre would directly impact 41,500 km<sup>2</sup> of MENA coastal lands. The most serious impacts of this can be expected in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE**

In the region biodiversity is already deteriorating, and it will be further damaged by intensifying climate change. A 2°C rise in temperature will make extinct up to 40 percent of all existing species in the region. (...) Human health will also be negatively affected by increasing temperatures in the region, mainly owing to changes in geographical distribution of disease vectors such as mosquitoes, waterborne pathogens, water quality and air quality, as well as food availability and quality. It is very likely that cases of infectious diseases such as malaria will increase, mainly in Egypt, Morocco and Sudan. Malaria, which already affects 3 million people annually in the region, will become more prevalent and will affect new territories as higher temperatures reduce the incubation period, spread the range of malaria-bearing mosquitoes and increase their abundance. (...)

So far, land use and urban planning regulations in the MENA region largely ignore basic adaptation requirements to climate change. An estimated 75 percent of buildings and infrastructure in the region are at direct risk of climate change impacts, mainly from sea level rise, higher intensity and frequency of hot days and storm surges. Reliability of transportation systems, energy generation stations, water supply and waste-water networks will be at risk. (...)

As an important sector of the economy for a number of MENA countries, tourism is highly vulnerable to climate change. An increase of 1-4°C in average temperature will cause a drastic decline in the index of tourism comfort all over the region. Areas classified between “good” and “excellent” are likely to become “marginal” to “unfavourable” by the year 2080, mainly because of hotter summers, extreme weather events, water scarcity and ecosystems degradation. In addition, phenomena such as the bleaching of coral reefs will affect tourism in countries in the Red Sea basin, mainly Egypt and Jordan. Beach erosion and sea level rise will affect coastal tourist destinations, mainly in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, especially in locations where sandy beach stretches are narrow and buildings are close to the shoreline. To counter this, options for “alternative tourism” which is less vulnerable to climatic variability, such as cultural tourism, should be explored.

## **DANGEROUS DEFICITS IN THE PREPARATION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE**

There has not been much effort made to prepare the MENA countries for these climate change challenges. For example, no systematic data gathering and research efforts seem to exist regarding the impacts of climate change on health, infrastructure, biodiversity, tourism, water and food production. Reliable records of climate patterns in the region barely exist. The economic impact seems to have been totally ignored, despite the prognosis that the later climate policies are adopted, the costlier the necessary investments will be. In sum, with regard to mitigation or adaptation for climate change, the policy-making of most governments in the region has shown dangerous deficiencies that need to be urgently remedied. Many arenas of governance – from sustainable management of natural resources and monitoring development to risk planning and evaluation of activities – have to be rapidly created. This is badly needed, since almost all countries in the MENA region are among the most vulnerable in the world with regard to the likely impacts of climate change, as previously stated. In addition, latest research suggests that there may be dangerous tipping points. Among these is the further expansion of the Sahara Desert and the further deterioration of the natural environment in Sahel.

# Environmental factors in the MENA region: A SWOT analysis

**MARK MULLIGAN, MARTIN KEULERTZ & MUSA MCKEE**

*MENARA Working Papers, No. 4. (2017)*

## **TRENDS**

### *CLIMATE*

The climate of the MENARA study area is highly spatially and temporally variable with climate systems ranging from tropical humid through hyper-arid and from aseasonal to highly seasonal. Temperature and precipitation for the region indicate mean annual temperature from 16 °C in the north to 31 °C in the south and east, and total annual precipitation from close to zero up to 2000mm.

Precipitation in the region is clearly extremely seasonal in the Sahara and Nile basin and through much of the MENA, whereas parts of North Africa and Turkey are only marginally seasonal. These climate conditions produce some heat constraints, clear water constraints and strong seasonality, which fundamentally affect economy, society and resource security, with potential implications for conflict to occur where and when resources are in scarce supply relative to demand – and where alternative local livelihoods are also not available, triggering migration and conflict over the remaining resources. The strong climatic and economic resource gradient across the region is clearly a driver for migration where that is possible.

### *LAND USE*

Much of the MENARA study area is dominated by non-forest natural land use (semi-arid scrubland to hyper-arid desert), though there are some intensive pastures, forests and water bodies in the upper Nile and some mosaic croplands and intensive pastures in the north-east, especially Turkey, north-west Iran and the Nile valley. Large tracts of the MENARA study area are thus essentially agriculturally barren. Importantly there are seasonal changes to climate and thus vegetation productivity, and this enables some livestock production in these otherwise barren areas. There are also subtle local factors, particularly with respect to slope gradient, elevation and groundwater, that provide other agricultural opportunities in otherwise unsuitable areas.

## WATER

**Water Demand:** As with most parts of the world, the greatest consumptive use of water for the MENARA study area is by evaporation through natural vegetation (99.996 percent), followed by crops (0.002 percent) and pastures (0.003 percent), though this varies from country to country. Parts of the MENARA study area are, however, extensively urbanized, especially Turkey and Iran, with others such as Egypt having significant concentrations of population in a few urban areas. Urban areas create a domestic demand for water, though this does not represent a consumptive water use. They do, however, lead to non-consumptive water use through contamination of water with organic and inorganic contaminants, though the footprint of such water is small relative to that of agricultural non-consumptive (pollution) and consumptive (evaporative) use. Contamination does not consume the water (preventing other uses in the current hydrological cycle) as evaporation by crops does; rather, contaminated water can be used downstream in the current hydrological cycle but may need decontamination (water treatment) for certain uses. Urban demand, though small relative to agriculture, is much more spatially concentrated than water demand for agriculture. (...) Croplands and pastures have complementary distributions, but are both confined to the wetter parts of the region. Agricultural water use is thus highest in the wetter north and east of the region and in the extreme south. Much of the MENARA study area is unsuitable for agriculture and agricultural land resources are thus concentrated, driving a similar concentration of population pressure.

**Water Supply and Infrastructure:** Water balance is the water remaining once evapotranspiration is taken from rainfall. It is thus the amount of water available for the generation of streamflow and all non-evaporative water uses (domestic, industrial, hydropower). According to WaterWorld, the annual water balance in the study area varies from >1600mm to -1600mm locally, with a number of countries with negative local water balances (i.e. more evaporation than rainfall and thus sustained by flows from upstream), for example Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Algeria and Oman. Those with positive water balances at the national scale include Turkey, Lebanon and the contributing areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. There are many water bodies (both reservoirs and lakes) in the East (especially Turkey and Iran). Groundwater reserves are important in North Africa. According to WaterWorld, snow and ice are significant (>5 percent runoff) only in Morocco, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon and the contributing areas of peripheral countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bulgaria and Georgia.

**Transboundary Water:** Many of the basins in the MENARA study area are transboundary, with some like the Nile including as many as fifteen states (including disputed territories according to. This means that many

states are dependent on careful water management in upstream states for their own water supply. This is a potential source of resource conflict, especially within the context of changing flows as a result of climate change or of mega-dam projects that may significantly affect transboundary flows to downstream countries. (...) The Nile clearly stands out, but many other basins in the MENA are also transboundary.

These countries have climatic regimes and territory sizes in relation to the major river basins that they occupy, and they thus have very different contributions to flow. (...) The same is true of the Tigris at Baghdad: some 52 percent of the flow comes from Turkey with much of the remainder (44 percent) produced in Iraq. The country in which the water resource is realized (used) is thus sometimes not the country in which that resource is produced. Egypt generates significant benefit from water resources that flow from upstream countries that are able to gain little from the resources that leave their state boundary. These contributions may also change with climate variability and change.

**Water Infrastructure:** Built water infrastructure includes many small, medium and large dams throughout the region, especially in Coastal North Africa, Turkey and parts of the Gulf. Dams mitigate against seasonal rainfall by allowing the storage of water produced in the wet season for consumption (irrigation, domestic, hydropower) in the dry season. There is clearly significant development of this mitigating infrastructure for water supply in some areas but very poor development in others (reflecting lack of investment and/or lack of rainfall or terraincontrolled suitability for damming). Whilst dams are clearly an important built infrastructure for agricultural, domestic and energy purposes, they can concentrate resource conflict both within and between states, particularly for some of the highly transboundary basins identified above. They are also an unworkable development or policy option for many parts of the MENA region that have insufficient water balance in the wet season to produce viable reservoirs for dry season use. (...)

## **POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHOKE POINTS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT**

### *CONCENTRATION OF PRESSURE AND LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE AS A THREAT TO GOVERNANCE*

The MENA countries have significant population growth and concentration in a largely challenging environment both physically and in terms of infrastructure and socio-economic development. This means that in many places there is an excess of water food and energy demand over supply. This is particularly the case in areas of extreme population concentration,

along rivers and coasts for example, in otherwise dry and climatically challenging environments. This concentration of pressure is a characteristic of these environments and is shown to be more significant in some countries than others. Dense populations in a few areas surrounded by vast expanses of virtually uninhabited land create pressures in the concentrated spaces and challenges in governance over the more remote areas.

**Dense populations in a few areas surrounded by vast expanses of virtually uninhabited land create pressures in the concentrated spaces and challenges in governance over the more remote areas.**

By examining the spatial concentration of SWOT indices we can better understand multi-variable drivers that are spatially concentrated. A high concentration index for strength indicates that strength is highly focused on a few areas with little strength in the surrounding hinterland. This is true for all North African and most Middle Eastern countries, though strength is more widely distributed in Turkey and the South and East Mediterranean. Opportunity is much less clustered overall, but its highest clustering is in Egypt and the South and East Mediterranean.

A low concentration of weakness and threat indicates a weak hinterland and can be seen particularly clearly for weakness in Turkey and the southern Nile countries. A weak hinterland is to be avoided if countries are to develop economically, socially and politically. Weakness is more concentrated in the Gulf countries since they seem not to have this weak hinterland. Threat is most concentrated in Algeria and Iraq and least concentrated (most dispersed) in the southern Nile and north-west African countries. A concentration of threat is more easily managed than a dispersed threat, though of course the magnitude of threat is as important as its dispersion. Both weakness and threat are much less concentrated overall than strength and opportunity, further defining a key challenge of managing the very distinct challenges to urban versus rural populations. Governance and development for concentrated populations and infrastructures is much easier than for highly dispersed populations and infrastructures.

#### *KEY STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS, WITH THEIR IMPLICATIONS*

*Choke Points: Population Growth:* The full SWOT analysis (...) indicates that the periphery of most urban areas has a positive prognosis with opportunity + strength greater than weakness + threat. The urban areas themselves have a lower prognosis largely because of the challenges provided from population growth. A good example is Egypt and the Nile Delta in particular, in which the prognosis index shows a value of around 0.2.

Cairo has a positive prognosis with values of 0.6, but it is periurban areas west of the Nile Delta that currently show great promise as do other periurban areas in the region, though growth in these will clearly create greater pressure over time and may thus undermine their positive prognosis, if not carefully managed.

*Choke Points: Climate Variability and Climate Amelioration:* Though some of the region is expected to become drier under climate change, IPCC multi-model ensembles in the most recent CMIP5 climate simulations show that much of the region will become wetter, and this makes a significant difference to the future opportunities variable (...). Indeed, at a national scale, these are the greatest of all opportunities for countries including Algeria and Saudi Arabia.

*Choke Points: Transboundary Water Conflict:* In a global context, many of the MENARA basins and rivers are some of the most transboundary rivers in the world, sometimes with more than ten nation states sharing an individual watershed. In an environment of significant water shortage and drought, the building of dams and the development of irrigation projects throughout the region provides significant opportunity for growth and development. But, at the same time, this creates the potential for conflict with neighbouring countries, particularly those downstream of large dam projects. The Nile River includes some sixteen states and disputed territories. The Danube includes twenty and the Tigris-Euphrates eight states. This is certainly at the high end globally, with most global basins having fewer than five states within their watershed and many having just one or two.

*Choke Points: Food Balance:* Given the lack of water resources, agricultural expansion is unlikely over much of the region, and where agriculture is viable a careful balance between farming and nature conservation is important for the continued provision of important ecosystem services. Thus, the most viable approach to achieving food security in the MENA region in the short term will be a trade-based approach. This means the MENA region will further increase its dependence on world markets for the import of food to feed the increasing populations. This will require the MENA region to earn enough foreign exchange to procure food from the global market. There are risks in relying on global markets for food security, as became clear in the food crisis of 2008, so these risks need to be carefully managed. Longer-term climate wetting and improvements in agricultural and irrigation technology or of renewable energy available for groundwater pumping and/or desalination may provide new non-renewable or renewable water resources for food production.

# Material factors for the MENA region: Data sources, trends and drivers

**KEULERTZ MARTIN, MARK MULLIGAN, ECKART WOERTZ, EMANUELA MENICHETTI & SVEN BISCOP**

*MENARA Methodology and Concept Papers, No. 3. (2016)*

*Key demographic transformations for the MENA region (1950-Present): Population growth, urbanization, youth and migrations*

The MENA countries have been growing fast. While in the 1950s, the total number of people in the MENA countries totalled 102-134 million, the number almost tripled to 303-339 million in 1990. In terms of population growth, the MENA countries were affected by strong migration patterns. While North African countries grew organically by almost 2-3.5 percent per year, the West Asian countries of the MENARA project experienced significant differences thanks to the political-economic developments in the region. While the Occupied Palestinian Territories saw a net loss of population during the Arab-Israeli wars (with increases seen again later), Jordan and the Gulf states experienced population growth patterns of 10-20 percent growth. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was particularly affected during the Arab-Israeli wars; the Gulf states saw a strong net population increase from 1975-1985 when demand was high for foreign workers in the hydrocarbon industry.

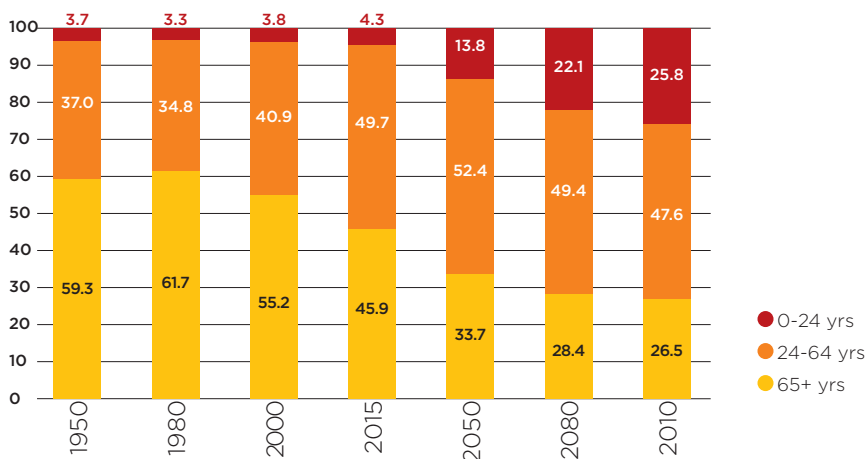
The MENA region's population is growing fast. Its population has doubled in the three decades since 1980. In 2015, the total number of people living in the MENA countries is 493 million. It is expected to add another 110 million people by 2030, which translates into an average annual growth rate of 1.8 percent. This is almost twice the global population growth rate of 1 percent. In 2050, it is estimated that the total number of people living in the MENA countries will be 730 million. It is therefore one of the fastest-growing regions in the world, and this growth will put immense pressure on national resources and the environment.

Another important trend in the demography of MENA countries is rapidly increasing urbanization. The MENA region has the fastest-growing urban populations in the world, with approximately 70 percent of inhabitants living in cities. The urban hotspots are the GCC countries, Egypt and Turkey. The latter two are home to the region's only two mega cities (defined as more than 10 million people), Cairo (18 million) and Istanbul (14 million), which are both growing, yet much less rapidly than their South and East Asian coun-



terparts. While Cairo is predicted to reach 24 million, Istanbul is predicted to grow to 16 million by 2030. However, the MENA region is also home to cities in the second category of large urban settlements (5-10 million inhabitants). These cities are Tehran, Jeddah and Baghdad. In terms of age structure, the MENA region is defined by young people. One-third of the population is younger than 15 years of age. This will further increase population pressures in the region when these youngsters reach childbearing years and enter the labour market.

### AGE STRUCTURAL TRANSITION, MENA COUNTRIES, 1950-2100



The MENA region also has a history of international and regional migration. There are three types of migration patterns. The first is forced migration and internal displacement as a result of crises and conflicts across the region, particularly in Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic. The second is economic migration within the region and transiting through the region, with the particular destinations being Europe, as well as towards Gulf countries. In recent years, North Africa has become a hub for transiting migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, who seek to enter Europe via the illegal and dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean Sea from Libya and Egypt. In addition, Syrian refugees have entered Europe through Turkey, Greece and the Balkans. Third, there is a movement of (regular and irregular) labour migrants both within and from outside the MENA region. These migrants come from Sub-Saharan Africa, East and South Asia and even the countries of the former Soviet Union, seeking employment in GCC countries but also in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco.

## **KEY ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS FOR THE MENA REGION (1960-PRESENT): POPULATION GROWTH, CLIMATE CHANGE, WATER SCARCITY, SOIL DEGRADATION AND FOOD AVAILABILITY**

The environment in the MENA region has been a concern for many scientists and decision-makers in recent decades. As Allan notes, “the MENA region had in practice run out of water [...] in the 1970s”. Water resources (both surface and groundwater) have been gradually depleted, leaving the region heavily dependent on the world market to procure food. These “virtual water imports” have allowed the MENA region to enjoy a “form of food and water security” thanks to readily available food from global food bowls such as North and South America. The MENA region is and will remain the largest importer of staple food commodities such as wheat, soy, sugar, rice and animal feed. Without access to the world market, the MENA region would face a dire future. Although some academics have pointed to climate change as a reason for the outbreak of the war in Syria, one should treat environmental factors with caution. The dismal environmental situation in the MENA region undoubtedly contributes to political, social and economic problems. However, environmental factors are not the root cause of political and social unrest, only contributing factors. The same is true for increasing levels of land degradation. About one-third of Arab land is severely degraded due to overuse of pesticides, mono-cropping and over-exploitation of land resources for grazing and crop growth.

Environmental factors take a heavy toll on the region’s ability to achieve food and nutrition security. Dependence on the world market especially raised eyebrows among decision-makers during the 2007-08 and 2010-11 food price spikes. As some researchers have noted, the volatility of food prices could increase the vulnerability of the region to future price shocks. Arab governments have been among the most agile investors in farmland in developing and industrialized countries. This so-called “land grabbing” has been heavily criticized by the international community due to its murky nature. Although Arab governments were linked to a wave of investments in land in the post-2008 period, very few (if any) investments materialized. Moreover, climate change will also take a toll on the region. Recent studies suggest that a changing climate could lead to increased incidence of heat waves leaving areas such as the Gulf states uninhabitable for human beings. In many ways, environmental factors may be the crucial bottleneck for economic and social development in the coming decades. (...)

Available historical environmental data is scarce. The only database which provides historical data on water resources is Aquastat. Yet the most useful and comprehensive data is available on water resources availability (ground and surface water, water through infrastructure) and water per capita. This data has been collected since 1960, and WP3 intends to

use those indicators. Data on irrigation expansion is scattered and unreliable, while data on crop yields is generally not available. Data on land use change is available via FAOSTAT. For the MENA region, land use change means in particular urbanization. However, urbanization trends have not been mapped by any database. Only raw data is available, which could be mapped by WaterWorld.

An important material environmental factor in MENA countries is soil degradation. The degree of soil degradation and the degree of soil erosion is available from GLASOD, which was launched in 1991. On water, the general trend is declining water availability per capita due to population growth. While most of the MENA countries were abundantly endowed with water resources in the 1960s and 1970s (with the exception of the GCC countries, Palestine and Libya), availability has sharply declined since the 1980s. Other environmental data shows a very alarming current picture. Historical data is mostly non-existent, hence the analysis should focus on current trends and some future indications of how climate change, for example, may worsen environmental factors in the MENA region.

Climate change is a threat multiplier that can increase or decrease the threats posed by water and food shortages and by land degradation. Climate change is sure to have an impact in a region so defined by climatic extremes. Even small changes in rainfall and temperature can make a difference to regions that are already extremely hot and dry. These differences can be positive and negative. For example, rising sea levels may put the Nile Delta in Egypt at risk of flooding. Whilst climate change will increase temperatures globally, changes in rainfall patterns are much more complex and uncertain and some regions may become drier whilst other regions become more wet. This may also change over time, such that increased dryness is followed by increased wetness or vice versa. The key effects of climate change will be to undermine business as usual and to force agriculture, infrastructure and populations to adjust to new and newly changing conditions. No two projections agree on how rainfall will change, so we will need to consider not adaptation to a particular future but adaptability and resilience to any reasonable future. The figures below from the WaterWorld Policy Support System indicate projected increases in rainfall for much of the African MENARA hydrological region, particularly the mid to upper Nile, with decreases in rainfall expected for the North African coast. Combined with increases in temperature (and thus evaporation), these will lead to increases in available water for the southern hydrological region but decreases for the northern hydrological region. Further work is required to understand to what extent these changes balance out over basins and to what extent annual changes are evenly spread or highly seasonal, all of which have important hydrological implications. (...)

Data on water per capita shows that 15 out of 18 MENA countries are experiencing water scarcity. Eight countries are even facing absolute water scarcity below 500 cm<sup>3</sup>/capita. The most water-abundant countries are Iraq, Iran and Turkey. Moreover, Egypt's share of the Nile may further decline due to dam construction in East Africa, which means its water per capita availability may drop further during the timeline of the MENARA project. Despite increasing water scarcity in the MENA region, the Global Hunger Index shows that food availability and nourishment levels have actually increased in all MENA countries. Only Iraq has seen a decrease in food security levels, mostly due to political issues like the multilateral UN embargo that lasted from 1990-2003. Yemen is considered seriously food insecure but has improved from alarmingly food insecure. Egypt, on the other hand, is exposed to moderate food insecurity.

The most important driver of environmental degradation in the MENA countries is population growth and subsequent migration to urban areas. Economic growth in the GCC countries has attracted millions of people from within the region and beyond, which places further constraints on limited natural resources in the hyper-arid areas of the MENA member states. Prime agricultural land has been used for urban development in places such as Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, Iran and Algeria. Due to protectionist policies aimed at food self-sufficiency, the majority of the MENA countries are over-exploiting their environment. Moreover, conflict in Syria, Yemen and Iraq has displaced millions of people, putting environmental constraints on certain hotspots such as Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt.

# **Demographic and economic material factors in the MENA region**

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ECKART WOERTZ**

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## *DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS: EMERGING TRENDS*

From the 1950s, many states across the region have pursued state-led models of development, supported by substantial public investment and often populist social policies. State efforts to extend social welfare provisions, improved per capita physician ratios and life-expectancy, and declining maternal and infant mortality rates helped lead to half a century of rapid population expansion. Other countries, such as Israel and the Gulf states, saw rapid rates of migration from within the region and from Europe, North America and South Asia. However, from the mid-1960s, most countries across the region went through a “demographic transition”, where TFR began to decline, in part related to increased levels of education, family planning, urbanisation and shifting patterns of migration.

The total population of the MENA region has increased fivefold since the 1950s, from just under 110 million in 1950 to 569 million in 2017. Despite generally declining rates of fertility, absolute population numbers are expected to further double to over 1 billion inhabitants by 2100, according to medium variant projections. By the end of the century, therefore, there will be more people in the MENA region than in China, whose population is expected to continue to shrink to just over 1 billion; and more than in Europe, the population of which is expected to recede by approximately 10 percent by 2100.

The largest absolute contribution to the regional increases in population will come from countries that are already experiencing demographic transitions to varying degrees. Egypt, Iraq and Sudan will continue to be prominent population centres across the region, despite a declining TFR. This effect – of increasing absolute population, despite declining rates of fertility – is due to population momentum, which is generated by the high proportion of women of childbearing age – even whilst the number of child births per woman has declined considerably. For example, although family planning policies have by and large been considered successful in Egypt – with fertility rates declining

from five children per woman in 1982 to just over three in 2002 – the population momentum has meant that Egypt's total population tally has continued to increase dramatically and the TFR has started rising again since 2000. Today, Egypt's population already exceeds 97 million, and will remain the most populous country in the region in 2050 with some 154 million inhabitants. Accordingly, Egypt, Iraq and Sudan will become increasingly prominent population centres across the region, in comparison with Turkey, Iran and Morocco for instance, which have lower fertility rates, or smaller nations in the region, such as Mauritania and Yemen, which currently have the highest fertility rates in the region. Egypt, Iraq and Sudan are expected to house 49 percent of the region's total population by 2100 – 199 million, 156 million and 137 million respectively, in comparison to just over 31 percent currently. Together with Syria and Turkey, more than 60 percent of the region's populations will be dependent upon the Nile, Euphrates and Tigris river basins by 2100, compared with 48 percent today. This increased dependence on international rivers, often as downstream riparians, will have significant implications for the viability of supporting the likely increases in agricultural, industrial and municipal water demands, impacting transboundary governance, rural livelihoods and regional food security. Within these absolute increases in population, transitions are also anticipated in the sex ratio and age-specific ratios, which will further influence the implications of these increases.

Exploring total populations by sex reveals that the female population of 54 million in 1950 rose to 277 million by 2017, and is expected to increase further to 504 million by 2100. The male population has increased from 55 million in 1950 to 292 million by 2017, reaching 514 million males by 2100. The male population is thus marginally higher, with a gender ratio of roughly 51 percent male and 49 percent female, more than would naturally occur. (...)

Return migration from outside the region has also been identified as one of the plausible factors contributing to this trend. In addition to the economic opportunities presented by the oil boom of the 2000s, greater travel restrictions from the region to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries following the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York are understood to have been followed by native Arabs returning to the MENA region. Projections beyond 2017 would indicate a decline in the male skewed sex ratio between 2010 and 2100 as inward migration of expatriate male labour force is expected to slow. In part, this downturn in male migration workers bound for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and the subsequent impact on the sex ratio, is understood to be a consequence of lower oil prices and the associated economic impacts. Combined with this, the increased effort to diversify GCC economies away from petro-chemical and industrial to service sectors, and national programmes focusing on encouraging native labour force growth, are expected to further dampen rates of inward migration.

Despite these higher ratios among mostly GCC countries, across the region as a whole, the birth rates of female and male populations between 1950 and 2016 reflected those of the total population. The ratio of male

**In 2015, almost half of the total population were under the age of twenty-four, and more than 60 percent under thirty years old**

survivors to females above the age of retirement for the region has continued to decrease since 1980, partly owing to

the high male death tolls of the Iran–Iraq War (1980–8), the First Gulf War and other conflicts across the region. While age-specific sex ratios appear relatively stable below twenty-five years of age, for age groups above sixty-nine years old these ratios diverge sharply. The recent conflict in Syria, however, has seen an eight-year reduction in life expectancy for men relative to a reduction of just over one year for women. This trend of fewer men surviving to older age than women implies that greater numbers of women are likely to be widowed or simply have proportionally higher levels of dependency among the older age categories than men. (...)

#### *YOUTH BULGES AND LABOUR MARKET*

With the rapid increase in total populations since the 1950s, the MENA region has experienced an exceptional “youth bulge”. As a result of declining fertility, the youth bulge peaked in North Africa in the 1970s and in the Middle East in the 1990s, still the relative size of youth in the overall population remains high for the foreseeable future. The Arab Human Development Report of 2016 was specifically devoted to the role of youth in current Arab societies.

It concluded that the current Arab youth population is “the largest, the most well educated and the most highly urbanised in the history of the Arab region”. In 2015, almost half of the total population were under the age of twenty-four, and more than 60 percent under thirty years old. Despite this trend, large youth populations present particular challenges in developing countries. Correlations between youth unemployment rates, conflict and civil unrest have been drawn, particularly in developing countries where the capacity to generate educational and employment opportunities and avenues for political participation are limited. Education rates improve the potential for inclusion in “legitimate” labour market activity, whilst “incapacitating” youth from engaging in unlawful activity. (...) However, of those under thirty involved in the Arab uprisings that swept across the region in 2011, better educated youth were more likely to participate in protests than the unemployed, as feelings of relative deprivation were particularly prevalent in this demographic subset. Youth unemployment, youth bulges

and education were identified as critical contributing factors leading to the Arab uprisings. Conflict-stricken countries in the region, such as Yemen, Syria and Iraq, are expected to continue to hold large youth populations. Iran, Turkey, Tunisia, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Egypt will instead see their youth as a share of total populations decline at a faster rate, not least owing to faster-ageing populations.

Poorly functioning labour markets and the absence of lawful economic opportunities are likely to make illicit, informal economic activities more attractive. While youth unemployment rates are universally higher than the average unemployment rates of many world regions, the MENA region has significantly higher and indeed widening levels of youth unemployment rates. Similarly, whereas education is seen to contribute positively to the likelihood of employment the world over, the MENA region is distinguished in that those who have obtained higher levels of education face similar levels of unemployment as less-educated people. Effectively mobilizing the increased size of this rapidly expanding labour force is a critical component in determining the broader social implications of population growth across the region, and capturing the potential demographic dividend. Issues of youth unemployment may also more significantly affect countries already afflicted by social conflicts. The character of youth transitions from education to employment, from dependants to heads of households, will be determined by government capacities to provide relevant, quality education and vocational training, health and reproductive health services, and social protection products such as unemployment insurance schemes and income support. And as youth proportions begin to decline across the region, the successful engagement of the youth population in gainful employment will become increasingly important in preparation for demographic ageing. (...)

## **TRANSITIONAL ANALYSIS**

It is important to understand that the MENA region is undergoing highly significant population transitions. The dynamics of demographic transition under way across the region vary, in part owing to changing fertility, mortality and migration statistics – in turn all influenced by the range of social factors that are discussed in this section.

As mentioned previously, despite continued growth in absolute population size, the number of child births per fertile woman have in fact transitioned to a downward trend since the midtwentieth century. (...) Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Yemen and Mauritania still have high TFRs, relative to other MENA states. There are several social factors influencing fertility rates, to varying degrees across different parts of the region. Of these factors, access to education (particularly for women), contraception and urbanisa-



tion are considered to have played key roles in informing TFRs. Increased equal access to education for women correlates with declining fertility rates by increasingly delaying the age many women are married and thus shortening the number of childbearing years and total births.

It has traditionally been understood that greater education and cultural awareness of issues surrounding reproductive health and contraception has been hindered across the region owing to a reluctance towards state intervention in family planning, and social taboos and values. The variegated success of local policymakers in attending to public concerns through community outreach and public discourse has affected the rate of demographic transition of MENA countries differently. The example of Tunisia, for instance, which has shown a greater openness towards providing family planning services for unmarried couples, differs from the case of Iran and Egypt.

In addition to family planning campaigns, fertility rates have also been affected in countries in the region as a result of increased public awareness around reproductive health and infection rates of communicable diseases. In Iran and other Gulf states, the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has increasingly begun to affect communities across the region since 2001 has helped shift public receptiveness to reproductive health issues featuring in public policy.

Such transitions accompanied the increased success of international organisations in delivering effective support, training and family planning services across the region. With greater support and funding for female outreach workers, birth control and rural health clinics and education, rates of fertility have continued to slow across the core population centres of the region.

The regrowth of fertility rates across several MENA countries has been influenced by divergent factors. In Egypt, a strong commitment to the expansion of family planning services to rural areas and educational programmes around reproductive health led to a dramatic decline in TFRs, from five children per woman in 1982, to 3.5 in the 1990s, and further still to just over three by 2002. Since 2005, however, fertility rates increased to more than 3.5 births per woman in 2016, attributable to the deterioration of national family planning efforts of the 1990s. In Israel, government has long supported population growth, not only through incentivizing inbound Jewish migration and Israeli emigrant repatriation, and offering state benefits to mothers, such as free education and child allowances, but also by heavily funding fertility treatment. Such support has been influenced by, amongst other things, debates around religious imperatives and concerns over high fertility rates among the local Arab population. Iran and Turkey are also actively promoting pro-natal policies, after recognizing the future implications of dramatically declining TFRs for ageing populations and the shrinking labour market available to support them, although these policy

efforts are yet to reflect in national TFRs. Rather than reflecting transitions in fertility, absolute population increases in Lebanon and Jordan are more a result of forced migration due to regional conflict. The TFRs of Yemen and Palestine have begun to decline much later than fertility transitions experienced across the rest of the region, at rates reflecting broader regional trends from 1950. (...)

## **ECONOMIC FACTORS: REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

Since population growth is dramatically changing the region, one of the most pressing challenges for internal and external policymakers is to address economic opportunities and risks. The economic challenges in the region have been described as full of “superlatives” because “its workforce has grown at the fastest annual rate in the world (2.7% in the past 10 years)” and youth unemployment is also the highest in the world standing “at around 25% of the population”.

Thanks to a century of exploiting hydrocarbons as its primary asset, the region has seen significant economic development. At the same time hydrocarbons have led to a “rentier state” economic model in large parts of the region. In this system, the economy relies mostly on external rents such as oil and gas revenues as opposed to a strong domestic productive sector. Another feature is that only a small number of the working population is needed to generate rents. Government plays the key role in distributing these external rents, allowing little room for a private sector to thrive. Rents derived from energy exports are used to subsidize food, energy and medical services to a varying degree across the region. The key rentier states are Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, Libya and Algeria, because they possess the largest hydrocarbon endowment. However, even in countries without much in the way of resources such as Syria, Egypt or Lebanon, the effect of the rentier states in the GCC has been felt, owing to remittances. This model also impacts on the dynamism of economies, which are effectively run by the older generation since few people in the economy are needed to maintain this system. As a result of this system, youth inclusion in economic and political activity is low, and this is one of the most significant challenges in the contemporary MENA region. (...)

### *THE MENA LABOUR MARKET*

The labour markets of the MENA region can be best defined by distinguishing those of Qatar, Kuwait, UAE and Bahrain on the one hand, and the rest of the MENA region on the other. While the GCC economies (excluding Oman and Saudi Arabia) are notable exceptions, with low unemployment

of both overall population and the youth, the labour markets in all other countries have in common the fact that unemployment among young people is almost double that of the rest of the population. Arab labour markets in

particular (except for the aforementioned)

**In terms of unemployment, the region is as diverse as it is in terms of GDP**

have several distinct characteristics: first, a growing gap be-

tween the formal and informal labour market; second, a high reliance on the public sector in the formal labour market for secure job creation, which has resulted in an oversized public sector; third, high youth unemployment; fourth weak private sectors; fifth, low and stagnant female labour force inclusion; and sixth, “a rapidly growing but highly distorted educational attainment” with an underrepresentation of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM subjects) among graduates. Desirable jobs in the MENA region are those that provide protection and employment stability or high incomes. However, for job seekers to obtain such jobs does not reflect effort or merit through, for example education and experience, but instead it reflects circumstances over which job seekers have less or no control. These circumstances include gender, location, family connections and parents’ education. The resulting unemployment owing to these institutionalized inequalities has been identified as a “thorny issue” for the entire region.

The average unemployment rate for all age groups in MENA countries was at 14.5 percent in 2016. In terms of unemployment, the region is as diverse as it is in terms of GDP. First, unemployment differs among age groups. This unemployment rate across the different age groups provides a more insightful picture of unemployment trends. (...) The International Labour Organisation uses fifteen years of age and above to identify the working age population, as this is the common age threshold used for this purpose in many countries. While average unemployment rate among above fifteen-year-olds is around 10.6 percent, the average youth unemployment rate is approximately 25 percent. In most MENA countries youth unemployment is much higher than adult unemployment (i.e. the unemployment rate amongst persons older than twenty-five). Most countries in the MENA region suffer from a lack of job creation and thus a lack of opportunities for the young population. Job creation has lagged behind the population growth over the last 30 years. This is a worrying trend.

The average young unemployed person in the Arab countries of the MENA region is male and under twenty-five. A young Arab citizen usually has three options: 1) to wait for an opportunity in the local public sector, which has become less attractive owing to stagnating wages; 2) to emigrate to outside the region (mainly Europe and North America) or inside the region to GCC labour markets; or 3) to work in the informal sector,

which provides little or no security and protection and often pays only dismal salaries. Option 1 often involves personal networks to obtain a job. At the same time, public sector jobs still provide the highest wages despite their stagnation, increasing the wage bill of the public sector. Option 2 requires specific skills such as engineering or medicine to make young people attractive to Western employers. The GCC economies import labour for high-skilled private sector jobs, yet there is hardly any political integration in the economies as non-nationals have limited rights compared with nationals. This means foreign employees have no protection that allows them to remain in GCC countries if they lose their employment. Option 3 is the most unprotected option because the informal sector has by nature very low protection. Therefore, and as Malik and Awadallah point out, the public sector is “the main avenue for job creation”. The employment reality is still almost entirely delegated to the public sector, which is unable to cope with the demographic pressures across the region.

Female inclusion in the labour market is notoriously low in most countries. Only Israel has a relatively even workforce between men and women, with women representing 47 percent of labour in the economy. Turkey and Kuwait have a female workforce share of about 30 percent. All other economies are well below 30 percent. However, the trend has at the same time been towards more gradual involvement of women in the labour force. In particular, Palestine achieved a notable success in almost doubling the percentage of women in the labour force from 1.6 percent in 1990 to 20.3 percent in 2016. Only Egypt (from 26.3 percent to 23.1 percent) and Syria (from 17.5 percent to 14.7 percent) have seen a decline in female involvement in the labour market, yet these have specific national reasons. While Syria’s labour market has been negatively affected by the ongoing war, Egyptian women are discriminated against through poor education opportunities, high rates of illiteracy (37 percent) and social and economic conditions that developed after the Egyptian Revolution in 2011.

The low integration of women negatively affects economic development in the MENA region. Greater rates of female employment are affected by, amongst other factors, access to higher education and increased urbanisation, which have made labour force participation both more attractive to employers and manageable for working mothers. Their greater and more equitable inclusion in urban labour markets could mitigate the otherwise ageing population, allowing for greater levels of employment and resources for financing retirement. Increased participation in the labour market can help respond to shifting demographic patterns by compensating declining numbers of young people relative to the share of the population of retirement age. However, without meaningful transformations in the organisation and operation of national economies, growing female labour force participation will likely mean more people sharing more equitably an

already inadequate supply of employment opportunities. Instead, ensuring both the immediate and longer-term durability, equitability and sustainability of regional economies will help increase women's share in the labour

**Without meaningful transformations in the organisation and operation of national economies, growing female labour force participation will likely mean more people sharing more equitably an already inadequate supply of employment opportunities**

market, and parity in accessing employment opportunities, pay and treatment in the workplace. This will require the generation of new economic opportunities. Mobilizing large

young populations and greater proportions of female and older-aged labour will also help capture the economic advantages of the "demographic dividend".

The final challenge of the MENA labour market is the role of education. With the notable exception of Israel, Lebanon and Turkey, the MENA region has generally low-quality educational systems. At the same time, a skills gap exists between what is taught in schools and universities and what is required by the labour market. For example, 63 percent of Saudi university students complete degrees that are in relatively low demand by the private sector such as agricultural sciences, education services, and humanities and the arts. Despite these challenges, the MENA region has also experienced positive news. Governments have increased their spending on education to 5.3 percent of GDP on average. Girls in schools outperform their male counterparts in subjects such as maths. At the same time, net enrolment rates have increased to almost 92 percent across the region. However, the region needs greater investment in STEM subjects to prepare students for jobs required by a changing private sector.

The resulting picture of the labour markets has been described as an "authoritarian bargain social contract" between regimes and societies to politically appease populations in the region. Such a contract only works if the public sector has the financial means to invest in job creation. (...)

#### *GOVERNMENT DEBT IN MENA COUNTRIES*

Given the reliance on the public sector to provide jobs in the region, the wage bill is having significant impacts on public finances and therefore public debt. This section illustrates the financial health of the public sector to show that the current social contract is unsustainable in the MENA region. There has been increased interest in public debt as a macroeconomic indicator, particularly after private debt was bailed out by states in the West after the financial crisis of 2008/9. Government debt differs in the four cat-

egories of countries. RRLA and RPLP countries have few to no significant problems with government debt, since this is low or in the range of the 60 percent threshold of GDP/debt ratio that is widely seen as important for long-term financial stability and has been made one of three stability criteria of the Eurozone's Maastricht. All RRLA and RPLP countries have seen a decline in public debt since the 1990s, with a relatively healthy outlook for the coming years.

In the RRLP countries, public debt correlates with oil revenues and political events. It was higher during the 1990s when oil prices were low, then it was significantly reduced to levels below 40 percent GDP/debt ratio in the 2000s when oil prices spiked. Only Bahrain had a debt ratio of 62 percent in 2015, owing to its vulnerable economic position with limited savings, high borrowing and low cash reserves. At the same time, it is expected to see further increases of external debt to 83 percent in 2016. The government has begun to address fiscal health by curbing spending, cutting subsidies and by increasing taxes. The one-sided reliance on oil revenues makes the region's economies vulnerable to external shocks and renewed spikes in public indebtedness. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Libya borrowed more extensively when faced with political crises such as the Gulf War in 1991 and the Libyan regime change in 2011. However, their debt levels have returned to levels below 40 percent, but are set to rise as the decline in oil prices since 2014 has caused large budget deficits.

The most indebted countries are in the RPLA grouping. No data is available for Syria. Despite decreases since the 1990s, government debt in the RPLA countries is well beyond the 60 percent threshold, with the notable exception of Tunisia where it is at 53 percent. Lebanon tops the list. It has the fourth-highest debt of all countries in the world at 139 percent of GDP (after Japan, Zimbabwe and Italy). It stands out as the most indebted MENA region economy. Lebanon's public debt was spurred by post-civil war reconstruction measures, which were largely financed by external and internal borrowing.

Jordanian, Egyptian and Mauritanian GDP/debt ratios are just below 100 percent of GDP, causing similar concerns about the financial health of public finances. In sum, the RPLA countries are the most vulnerable. These are not only challenged by the need for job creation to tackle youth unemployment, but their social contract is also severely challenged by high government debt. There have been frequent calls for measures to tackle escalating public debt in RPLA countries to avoid government bankruptcy. Proposed measures include tax reform, privatisation of publicly owned companies, reduction of fuel and food subsidies, public-private partnerships in infrastructure investment and more fiscal discipline of governments. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has conceded that governments need to be supported to deal with the refugee crisis in the

region. A “Greek solution” involving austerity measures is unlikely to take place in the coming years in order to avoid defaults, as long as RPLA economies such as Lebanon, Jordan and to lesser extent Egypt play such an instrumental role in mitigating the refugee crisis in the MENA region. At present, the IMF has called for grants and conditional loans for countries exposed to high refugee inflows. However, a debt haircut together with long-term measures to promote private sector jobs growth will be inevitable sooner or later. This brings us to the final section on trade and globalisation. It will shed light on how the MENA region has utilised (or not) opportunities through international trade and the global economy, and how oil dependence figures in its longterm development prospects. (...)

### *EXPORT AND IMPORT TRENDS*

The region's share of global exports fell from 2.3 percent in 1990 to 1.8 percent in 2008. The key export commodities are still oil and gas. It comes as no surprise that the RRLA and RRLP countries are leading this trend. However, mineral fuels exports in the economies of Egypt, Yemen and Sudan in the RPLA grouping have also played a highly significant role. Turkey and Israel on the other hand, as RPLA and RPLP countries respectively, have the most diversified economies, which is reflected in their OECD status. At the same time, MENA economies are key global importers of machinery, manufactured goods and food. While food imports can be explained owing to the lack of readily available land and water resources in the region, the significance of machinery and manufactured goods shows the lack of economic diversification and heavy reliance on the assembly of intermediate goods in the case of Turkey. Too much reliance on oil and too little emphasis on economies with broader economic foundations, such as strong industrial production and service industries, amplify the youth unemployment challenge.

MENA countries lag behind globally in terms of trade integration and investment flows. Henry and Springborg have pointed out that the MENA region has fallen behind other world regions in the age of globalisation, especially emerging markets in Asia, but also in Latin America. This assessment chimes with the resource curse literature. Economies of resource abundant countries not only tend to focus on non-tradables as a result of Dutch disease and a real effective appreciation of the exchange rate; they also develop political structures that are hampering economic development, such as resource capture by elites, corruption, rent seeking and educational shortcomings.

An analysis of trade pattern indeed reveals a heavy concentration of oil and gas exports of many countries in the MENA, while imports are dominated by manufactured goods. Yet there are some striking differences and

also evidence of diversification. Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar have built up thriving heavy industries in petrochemicals and aluminum. Dubai has pioneered diversification into trade, logistics, services and tourism and has inspired copycat projects in other Gulf countries, but also beyond in such unlikely places as the Kurdistan region of Iraq and Morocco. Morocco has the largest global phosphate reserves. Like the Gulf countries in the case of petrochemicals, it has moved further up the value chain by investing in fertilizer production and other chemical industries. There is considerable light manufacturing in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and above all Turkey, ranging from car manufacturing and car supplies to textiles and food processing.



# Embeddedness of the MENA in economic globalization processes

**ECKART WOERTZ & IRENE MARTÍNEZ**

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Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries are laggards in terms of trade integration and investment flows. Henry and Springborg and other scholars have pointed out that the MENA region has fallen behind other world regions in the age of globalization, especially emerging markets in Asia, but also in Latin America. This assessment chimes in with the resource curse literature. Economies of resource abundant countries tend to focus on non-tradables as a result of Dutch disease and an effective appreciation of the exchange rate. They also maintain political structures and practices that are hampering economic development, such as resource capture by elites, corruption, rent seeking and educational shortcomings.

An analysis of trade patterns reveals a prevalence of oil and gas exports in many countries of the MENA, while manufactured goods dominate the import side of their balance sheets. Yet there are some striking differences and also evidence of diversification. Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar have built up thriving heavy industries in petrochemicals and aluminum. Dubai has pioneered diversification into trade, logistics, services and tourism and has inspired copycat projects in other Gulf countries, but also beyond, in such unlikely places as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Morocco. Morocco has the largest global phosphate reserves. It has moved up the value chain by investing in fertilizer production and other chemical industries, as the Gulf countries have done in the case of petrochemicals. There is considerable light manufacturing in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and above all Turkey, ranging from car manufacturing and car supplies to textiles and food processing.

Henry and Springborg observe considerable differences in MENA states' interaction with economic globalization, ranging from "bunker states" that concentrate economic prerogatives in the hands of the state (Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan and Yemen) and "bully praetorian states" that leave some room for initiative to the private sector and associated rent seeking activities (Egypt, Tunisia and Iran) to the globalizing monarchies in the Gulf, Morocco and Jordan and precarious democracies in Lebanon, Turkey and Israel. The MENA region is more diverse than it often seems. A differentiation according to various levels of resource and labour endowments is necessary, ranging from the resource abundant/ labour poor states

(Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], Libya) to the resource abundant/ labour abundant ones (Algeria, Iraq, Iran) and the resource poor labour abundant countries (Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon). As mineral production in Syria, Yemen and Sudan has been affected by conflict and maturing oil fields, the status of these countries increasingly resembles that of resourcepoor/ labour-abundant countries, too. Turkey and Israel, the only Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in the region, are set apart by higher incomes and their diversified economic structures. (...)

**Gulf countries sought to move beyond the upstream sector and enhance the value chain of their oil production by investing in downstream industries and distribution networks**

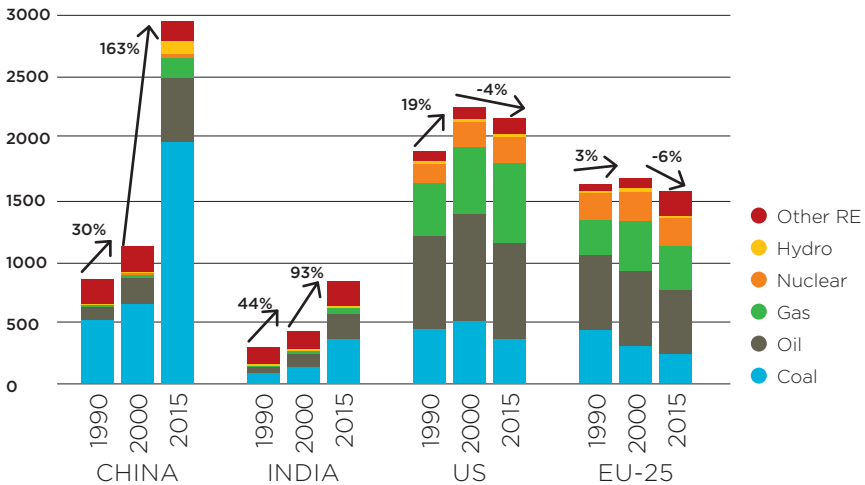
**GLOBAL EMBEDDEDNESS: HEAVY INDUSTRIES (GULF, TURKEY AND MOROCCO)**

In the 1970s the nationalization of oil industries in the MENA heralded the end of vertically integrated international oil companies. Spot markets for oil and petroleum products developed to mediate between formerly integrated parts of the supply chain. Gulf countries sought to move beyond the upstream sector and enhance the value chain of their oil production by investing in downstream industries and distribution networks. They established major petrochemical companies such as Saudi Arabia's SABIC and the UAE's Borouge. Such companies have undertaken foreign acquisitions and joint ventures. SABIC's takeover of British Huntsman Petrochemicals, US GE Plastics and Dutch DSM and investments of the Abu Dhabi-based International Petroleum Investment Company (IPIC) in Austrian Borealis and Spanish CEPSA are cases in point. Petroleum demand for transport has levelled out or is declining in OECD countries.

It might suffer further with the proliferation of electric mobility, not only in the OECD countries, but also in emerging markets such as China, as some interlocutors of the business community pointed out during our interviews in Kuwait. In contrast, demand for petrochemicals is projected to grow over the coming decades. As their use does not immediately lead to harmful emissions they are not as controversial in climate debates as the burning of hydrocarbons in transport and industry. Hence the diversification strategy into petrochemicals offers longer-term perspectives for the Gulf countries. Saudi Aramco, for example, has sought to integrate refining and petrochemical production more closely with its Rabigh deep conversion refinery that it has built in a joint venture with Japanese Sumitomo.

Since the 1980s there has been a dramatic shift of global petrochemical production capacities from OECD countries to emerging markets, especially the Gulf countries and Asia. OECD countries had a 75 per cent market share in 1980. This share declined to 37 per cent in 2010, while the share of the Middle East and China grew to 13 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. This trend in the Gulf region is buoyed up by access to cheap feedstock, but also by increasing demand in the region and the proximity to the booming Asian market. The industry has increasingly moved towards more value added and naphta-based production. Natural gasbased ethane is no longer readily available as a result of rising domestic natural gas consumption. This has led to natural gas shortages and import needs in every Gulf country except for Qatar. So far petrochemical growth rates in the Middle East and Asia continue to be stronger than in OECD countries, even after the shale revolution has led to a reinvigoration of the US petrochemical industry in the Gulf of Mexico, as a former Italian energy executive pointed out in our interviews. The concentration of petrochemical industries in the Gulf also offers potential advantages for carbon capture and sequestration, as plants are in close vicinity to oil fields where the injection of carbon dioxide could be used to maintain reservoir pressure.

**ENERGY DEMAND CHANGE IN MAJOR MARKETS**



Beyond petrochemicals, other energy-intensive heavy industries have also contributed to economic diversification. The Gulf countries doubled their aluminum production between 2010 and 2017 and are now the second largest

producer after China, which dominates global markets with a share of 55 per cent. The UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are the largest producers, followed by Qatar and Oman; only Kuwait has no aluminum production. Together Gulf countries represent over 8 per cent of global production. They have also reduced their import dependence on steel.

**The MENA region is rich in oil and gas, but poor in iron ore, coal and other minerals that have played crucial roles in industrialization processes**

The MENA region is rich in oil and gas, but poor in iron ore, coal and other minerals that have played crucial roles in industrialization processes. To safeguard feedstock supplies Gulf countries have acquired access to mining production of alumina and iron ore in distant places such as Guinea, India and Mauritania. Turkey has chosen a different approach. It has become the largest global importer of scrap metal to feed its steel industry, which has doubled production since 2004.

The MENA region is an important source of global fertilizer production. It (mainly Israel and Jordan) produces 10 per cent of world potash and nitrogen-based ammonia and 25 per cent of phosphates, a figure that does not even include the recently launched Al-Jalamid project in Saudi Arabia. The dominance of the MENA in the phosphate sector is likely to grow. Morocco alone commands threequarters of global reserves according to the International Fertilizer Development Center and the US Geological Survey (USGS), which have massively upgraded their reserve estimates for the country. Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have also significant reserves, and in Iraq's Al Anbar province phosphates amounting to 9 per cent of the global reserve base have been discovered. This makes Iraq the second most resource-rich country after Morocco. MENA's dominance in global phosphate reserves is much more pronounced than its well-reported share of global oil and gas reserves. Phosphorus is an essential macronutrient for fertilizers and, as it is an element, it cannot be substituted, unlike the production of nitrogen fertilizer from natural gas for example. Phosphorus is essential for global food security. Hence the MENA dominance of global phosphate reserves carries longterm strategic implications. As with Gulf petrochemicals, Morocco and Saudi Arabia have sought to enhance the value chain of a primary commodity by moving downstream and producing more value-added products such as fertilizers and phosphoric acid.

The large energy needs of domestic heavy industries contribute to skyrocketing domestic energy consumption in Gulf countries, alongside residential demand. Except for Qatar, all Gulf countries have a natural gas shortage. As a remedy they have recourse to liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports or burn fuel and crude oil in power plants. The domestic demand growth threatens to compromise oil exports and revenues. This has led to diversifi-

cation attempts into renewables and nuclear energy, especially in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The introduction of these new sources in the local energy mix entails close cooperation with international providers and presents another aspect of integration in economic globalization dynamics.

### **GLOBAL EMBEDDEDNESS: FINANCE (GULF, LEBANON, MOROCCO, TURKEY)**

Until 1975 Lebanon was a major banking hub in the region, but in the wake of Lebanon's civil war and the oil boom, this distinction has passed on to the Gulf countries. Bahrain and the UAE have established bespoke international financial centres to attract business. Qatar has tried to do the same and the formerly closed stock market of Saudi Arabia was opened to foreign investors in 2015. MSCI upgraded the stock markets of UAE and Qatar in 2013 and included them in its emerging market index. This led to increased interest by international investors, although some of them chose not to invest and allow for the minimal tracking error, given the small share of both countries in the MSCI index, as interlocutors of the Kuwaiti stock exchange pointed out in our interviews.

Globally, financial markets have on average a balanced structure of equity, bond and bank financing. In comparison, MENA financial markets are heavily skewed towards bank financing, with a share of around 60 per cent. Bond markets are especially underdeveloped. While bank financing dominates, access to it depends on political connections. A practice of name lending is widespread. Receiving bank loans can be challenging for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Bond and equity markets have grown, however. Gulf stock markets have opened up internationally and bonds from the Gulf countries have enjoyed considerable interest from international investors in an environment of low interest rates. Despite these examples of disintermediation, bank lending remains prevalent across the MENA. In Turkey over 90 per cent of financial assets are held by banks. The role of capital markets in Turkey is limited and non-bank financial institutions are underdeveloped, notwithstanding the country's level of economic development and its OECD status. However, in recent years, foreign banks have gained more access to Turkey's financial sector as a result of a series of acquisitions. This limits the risk of market concentration as market power is more evenly distributed between private domestic, foreign-owned and state-owned banks.

Lebanon is a special case, as it relies on capital inflows, mostly from overseas Lebanese and Gulf countries to finance its huge current account deficit. Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows alone were 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 and as high as 12.3 per cent in 2005. Lebanon has a very substantial stock of FDIs compared with its small pop-

ulation and GDP size. The Gulf countries dominate FDI stocks in the region with their capital-intensive projects in heavy industries. Turkey also has high levels, but its stocks have decreased since 2010.

This leading group is followed by Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco. Dubai Islamic Bank was the first modern Islamic bank

**MENA financial markets are heavily skewed towards bank financing, with a share of around 60 per cent. Bond markets are especially underdeveloped**

when it was founded in 1975. Today Islamic banking has developed into an important niche market in the Gulf, which is the largest Islamic banking centre in the world, ahead of Malaysia, Iran and Western Europe. With around 15 per cent annual growth Islamic banking is one of the fastest growing sectors of the industry. This growth comes from a low statistical base and will probably slowdown in the future. Yet there is considerable growth momentum today, given the large Muslim populations with growing interest in this kind of banking. Internationalization of the industry, however, is hampered by different national regulatory standards and divergent views on details of Sharia compliance in key markets such as Malaysia and the Gulf. The closure of HSBC's Islamic banking division Amanah in six key markets, among them Dubai, to where it had moved its headquarters only a few years before, is indicative of limits to growth and profitability in the sector.

The term sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) was first coined by Andrew Rozanov in 2005. Since then this type of investor class has witnessed steep growth in the wake of the oil boom of the 2000s and large current account surpluses in Asian exporter nations. However, it still trails far behind the assets of Western banks, pension funds and insurance companies. Apart from Libya all MENA SWFs are located in the Gulf region. Algeria and Iran manage their more modest foreign assets mainly via their respective central banks, as does Saudi Arabia with the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency. Older and larger funds such as the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and the Kuwait Investment Authority follow a more passive portfolio investment approach, while others such as Mubadala and the relatively young Qatar Investment Authority undertake strategic investments, can pursue controlling stakes in companies and also invest in private equity.

According to Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute data, the Middle East's SWF assets represented 37 per cent of global SWF assets in 2014. The main recipient of these investments has been the European Union (48 per cent), with about half of that share going to the UK. The US and Asia followed with 16.6 per cent 10.4 per cent respectively. China and Taiwan accounted for over threequarters of the Asian investment share.

Morocco is an interesting case of financial south-south globalization. It has sought to establish itself as an intermediary between Africa and Europe and has strengthened business relations with sub-Saharan Africa

**The Middle East had a 9.6 per cent share of the international passengers market in 2016. Gulf airlines lead global aviation growth, both in terms of new airline capacity and revenue passenger kilometers**

(SSA). SSA is the only region of the world with which Morocco has a trade surplus. Moroccan companies have established themselves in strategic sectors such as telecommunication, pharmaceuticals and agro-alimentary industries. Before 2005, Moroccan banks had only a limited presence in SSA, focusing on Guinea, Mali and the Central African Republic. Since then there has been rapid expansion, helped by the retrenchment of French banks in SSA, the increase of trade flows from Morocco to West Africa and the weak activity in the Moroccan domestic market. The overseas expansion of Moroccan banks has relied on the acquisition of local banks, whose local deposits largely fund the newly acquired subsidiaries. The assets of Moroccan banks in SSA typically range between 3 and 7 per cent of host countries' GDP, with the largest concentrations in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Gabon. Morocco's push into SSA has helped Casablanca to become a regional financial centre. In the MENA it is ranked right behind Dubai and Abu Dhabi and ahead of Tel Aviv. Most remarkably, Casablanca is also rated first in Africa, unseating Johannesburg. (...)

**GLOBAL EMBEDDEDNESS: LOGISTICS (GULF, EGYPT, MOROCCO, TURKEY)**

In terms of logistics five developments in the MENA stand out: (1) The rise of super-connector airlines in the Gulf and Turkey, (2) Morocco's interconnections with SSA, (3) the rise of container traffic in the Gulf, (4) the lasting importance of the Suez Canal and other chokepoints for global trade and (5) Turkey's importance as a gas and trade transit hub.

Gulf airlines are a mixed bag. Many are only of regional importance and can be rather sleepy operations, such as Saudia Airlines, Gulf Air or Kuwait Airways, but the three airlines that have pursued the super-connector business model have developed into major players in global aviation: Emirates Airlines, Qatar Airways and Etihad. Their business strategies aim at becoming transit hubs for the long-haul routes between Europe and Asia. Two billion people live within four hours' flying time from the Gulf and twice as many within seven hours.

Since 2006, Emirates Airlines has tripled its passenger numbers and Etihad and Qatar Airways have seen even steeper growth. The Middle

East had a 9.6 per cent share of the international passengers market in 2016. Gulf airlines lead global aviation growth, both in terms of new airline capacity and revenue passenger kilometers, a measure that reflects how many of an airline's available seats were actually sold. The average age of their fleets (5.4–6.4 years) is less than half that of their American and European competitors and the three super connector airlines constantly rank among the top ten airlines in global rankings. The sector is crucial for economic diversification and feeds other related sectors, such as tourism and trade services. A study by Oxford Economics in 2014 quantified the direct and indirect contribution of aviation to Dubai's GDP at 26.7 per cent of GDP and 21 per cent of employment. Turkish Airlines, too, has adopted the super-connector model. Like the Gulf airlines it seeks to conquer market share in transit traffic between Europe and Asia. With many exotic destinations in Central Asia and Africa it is now the airline with most destinations globally. Its passenger numbers skyrocketed within a decade from 17 million in 2006 to 61 million in 2015.

The regional competition between the super-connector airlines has raised questions about their long-term growth prospects. It has been doubted whether Qatar Airways is in fact profitable and there have been reports about a possible merger between Emirates and the smaller Etihad that the companies denied. Established airlines in the US and Europe that have been ruffled by the Gulf carriers' success have blamed them for thriving on fuel subsidies, low wages and unfair labour practices and have lobbied their governments to undertake protectionist and retaliatory measures. The Gulf carriers have denied such accusations but clearly feel the political headwinds. More danger could come from the economic front: with growth in global aviation it becomes increasingly profitable to provide direct connections between smaller destinations, making the whole super-connector model potentially superfluous. Many of the new plane orders of airlines now encompass planes for such medium sized connections, rather than huge airplanes for super-connections such as the Airbus 380 or the Boeing Dreamliner. Airlines that are domiciled in countries with large domestic markets in Europe, North America and Asia also have entered a number of alliances that could threaten the Gulf airlines that are domiciled in city states without such domestic market advantages.

Super-connectors apart, Morocco increased its air traffic by 160 per cent in the wake of the EU-Morocco open skies agreement of 2006 and has become a regional hub for air traffic in Africa. The national air carrier, Royal Air Maroc (RAM), developed its network of African flight destinations from six in 2003 to 30 in 2014 and from these 30 cities there are 45 more connections to other countries in Africa, making Morocco a hub between Africa and Europe and attracting logistics companies such as DHL. Currently 55 per cent of RAM's destinations are to African countries and they



provide 25 per cent of the company's turnover. Apart from its geographical location fertilizer exports are a major reason for Morocco's interest in Africa as the representative of a Moroccan research institute pointed out in one of our interviews. African fertilizer usage per hectare trails way behind other world regions. The continent will need to use more fertilizer to increase agricultural production and feed its rapidly growing population. The state-owned phosphate company OCP launched a bespoke subsidiary for Africa in 2016. It hopes to replicate the steep growth of its fertilizer exports to other agricultural producers such as Brazil and India.

Led by Jebel Ali Port in Dubai, some Gulf countries have developed into major shipping hubs, especially for container traffic. Jebel Ali is a primary entry point to the Gulf and the wider MENA market. Other significant ports include Jeddah, on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast and Khor Fakkan on UAE's coast with the Indian Ocean. Sharjah, the neighbouring emirate of Dubai, also has a large harbour. In 2015, Jebel Ali was the world's ninth busiest container port with 15.6 million TEU, only surpassed by Singapore and Chinese ports and ahead of European ports such as Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg and Valencia, which were more important operators only a decade ago. With the completion of the East-West railway line in Saudi Arabia, over time Jeddah may be able to compete more efficiently with Jebel Ali. Currently Jeddah ranks 36th world wide in terms of container volume (4.2 million TEU), Port Said in Egypt 41st (3.6 million TEU) and Sharjah in the UAE 44th (3.4 million TEU).

When the Suez Canal was completed in 1869 it revolutionized global trade by cutting the distance between Europe and Asia by 43 per cent. For Egypt it is a major source of hard currency revenues and a catalyst for FDI in sectors and economic zones that develop around it. Around 10 per cent of the world's shipping traffic and 22 per cent of its container traffic passes through the canal. The same is true for 5.6 per cent of global oil and petroleum product supplies, which is equivalent to 9.2 per cent of the world's maritime oil traffic. Due to its strategic location, the Suez Canal has become one of the world's most important chokepoints for food and oil trade. A recent report by Chatham House highlights its importance for trade between Europe and several Asian economies. One-third of South Korea's wheat and maize is imported via the Suez Canal and MENA wheat imports that pass through the canal grew by 120 per cent between 2000 and 2015. The Suez Canal also forms part of one of China's One Belt One Road maritime routes. There are only limited alternatives as the detour around the Cape of Good Hope is time- and fuel-consuming and thus expensive. The Netherlands and the Mediterranean countries of Europe also rely heavily on trade via the canal.

The New Suez Canal is expected to increase direct revenues from shipping, but world trade figures are still sluggish and falling oil prices have

made it more attractive for some ships to take the detour via the Cape to avoid the canal's hefty transit fees. To increase the economic impact of the canal, Egyptian authorities are initiating new economic zones, factories and logistics facilities around it.

With the Blue Stream pipeline Turkey has developed into an important destination for Russian gas. The expected completion of the Trans-Adriatic pipeline in 2020 and possible future pipeline projects could transform Turkey into a gas trading hub between Russia, Central Asia and Europe. Middle Eastern gas from Iran, Iraq and the Levant could also be fed into the Turkish transit system, depending on the development of reservoirs, international agreements and the security situation. If the abandoned South Stream pipeline project via the Black Sea to Bulgaria is replaced with a successor project, Russian gas transits to Europe via Turkey could also increase. Such a successor project is currently being discussed between Turkey and Russia. Via the Strait of Bosphorus Turkey is also the primary access point for trade from the Black Sea region, most notably the substantial wheat and barley exports of Russia and Ukraine that have superseded European and US exports in recent years. (...)

## **GLOBAL EMBEDDEDNESS: AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD TRADE (ALL MENA)**

The MENA region is the world's largest net importer of cereals. Its agricultural production cannot be increased substantially for lack of water and arable land, while its population growth will only level out after 2050. The reliance on food imports will persist and even grow, especially for water intensive cereals and fodder products. The widespread rhetoric of self-sufficiency and efforts to increase cereal production are not sufficient to counter this trend. In many cases such efforts will fall short for lack of the necessary natural resource endowments. Saudi Arabia actually phased out its wheat production between 2008 and 2015.

This import dependence is perceived as a strategic liability by MENA countries, especially at times of conflict or market turbulence. This was the case in the wake of the global food crisis of 2007/2008 when agricultural exporter nations such as Argentina, India, Vietnam and Russia declared export restrictions out of concern for their own food security. Beside the traditional grain exporter countries (North America, Eurasia, Argentina and Australia), tropical countries such as Brazil (poultry, corn and soybeans), Malaysia and Indonesia (palm oil) and rice exporters such as Pakistan, India and Thailand have gained increased prominence over the past two decades.

To ameliorate concerns about import dependency the cash-rich oil exporters among the MENA countries announced agricultural investments

abroad in the wake of the global food crisis of 2007/2008. They hoped to gain privileged bilateral access to food production, often in food insecure countries such as Sudan or Pakistan. Actual implementation of such controversial projects has fallen short of the media announcements. Many projects were not launched at all or only at a fraction of the announced scale. When the Gulf countries actually put money on the table it was rather for established agricultural export nations such as Australia or Argentina and in the downstream sectors of food processing and distribution. Saudi state-owned SALIC, for example, joined forces with international grain trader Bunge in 2015 and took over a majority stake in the former Canadian Wheat Board when it was privatized. The upstream acquisition of farmland was less interesting by comparison, as it is politically controversial and economically challenging in many developing countries.

Beside the deep integration of MENA countries in global food and cereal markets via the import side, some of them are also major exporters of fruit and vegetables. Turkey and Morocco are the only MENA countries that have an agricultural trade surplus in value terms. Like the other MENA countries they are cereal net importers, but export other foodstuffs. Turkey is the seventh largest agricultural economy globally. It is the world's biggest producer of hazelnuts, apricots, figs, cherries, quinces, raisins and poppy seeds, the second largest producer of melons, watermelons, strawberries and leeks and the third largest of lentils, apples, cucumbers, green beans, green peppers, chestnuts and pistachios. Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt are also substantial exporters of fruit and vegetables to the EU. Morocco is also one of the world's largest producers of strawberries. Tunisia increasingly manages to develop direct marketing channels for its olives, instead of wholesaling them to Italian olive oil producers. Despite considerable trade liberalization with the EU, quantitative restrictions for some agricultural products remain in place. MENA producers also struggle with EU food safety standards that have to be overcome to access European markets. In our interviews a Kuwaiti investment official was skeptical whether Morocco and Tunisia would be able to grow their agricultural production without better water management because of growing water scarcity. He also questioned whether the North African countries had benefitted as much from their improved market access to the EU as initially expected.

# The MENA region in the global energy markets

**EMANUELA MENICETTI, ABDELGHANI EL GHARRAS, BARTHÉLÉMY DUHAMEL & SOHBET KARBUZ**

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## **HOW CAN RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES HELP MENA COUNTRIES RETAIN THEIR LEADERSHIP POSITION IN GLOBAL ENERGY MARKETS?**

As highlighted earlier, meeting the rapidly growing domestic energy demand, particularly for electricity, is a real challenge facing all MENA countries. The main conundrum is that increased domestic energy demand would mean that less spare export capacity would be available for export, thereby diminishing the importance of the MENA region in global energy markets. Addressing this challenge with demand side management, including energy efficiency measures, could eventually slow this growth, but more is needed. Alternative energy sources, in particular the deployment of renewable energy technologies on a wider scale, could address this challenge and thereby help MENA countries (oil and gas rich countries in particular) retain their important role in global energy markets.

The region is well suited to the development of renewable energy technologies for different applications. As far as solar energy technologies are concerned, most of the countries are located in the so-called sunbelt, with global horizontal irradiance (GHI) values ranging from 1,600 kilowatt hours per square metre per year (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/y) in coastal areas of the Mediterranean to 2,600 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/y in the desert, and direct normal irradiance (DNI) varying from 1,800 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/y to more than 2,800 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/y. This is one of the best endowed areas of the world with respect to solar energy for both solar photovoltaic (PV) and concentrating solar power (CSP) applications. The potential for wind energy is also very high in several countries of the Mediterranean such as Morocco, Egypt and Turkey, as well as Iran, with more moderate - but still promising - potential in the GCC countries and Iraq.

Despite this significant potential, the pace of deployment has been very slow in many countries with the exception of a few such as Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, Jordan, Israel and the UAE. While leading countries (mentioned earlier) are keeping up with this momentum, others are finally realizing this potential and are thereby pushing ahead with their national renewable energy plans albeit at a slow pace.

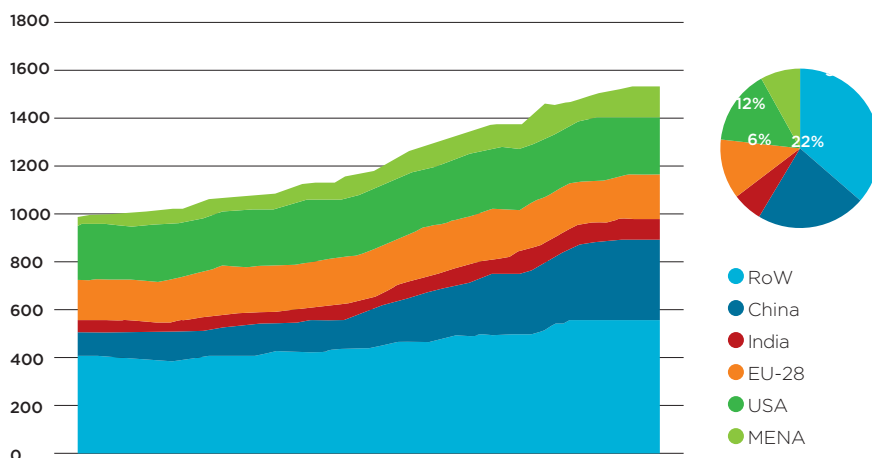
However, there are several obstacles to the deployment of renewables in the MENA countries that need to be overcome, including weak grid infrastructure, regulatory barriers, access to finance and, most importantly, subsidies to conventional energy. In the GCC countries, for example, the low penetration of renewable energy technologies can be attributed to institutional inertia, no clear separation of roles and responsibilities at the institutional level and the absence of dedicated policies and regulations.

Renewables' role in the energy mix (about 35 Mtoe - equivalent to about 3 per cent of TPES - in the whole region) has been negligible in most MENA countries, especially in hydrocarbon exporting countries. Hydropower is still the main renewable energy in the MENA region, reaching 9 Mtoe in 2015. However, in addition to biomass, the development of other renewable energy sources, mainly wind and solar, has progressed significantly, reaching more than 27 Mtoe for the whole MENA region in 2015. The deployment and significance of renewable energy is particularly notable in the power sector. As far as installed electric capacity is concerned, more than 11 GW of non-hydro installed capacity were in place as of 2016, distributed among the following: wind (7.5 GW), solar PV (1.7 GW), geothermal (0.775 GW), biomass and waste (0.650 GW) and solar CSP (0.347 GW). Hydropower capacity alone totaled about 49 GW in 2016.

A number of countries have made significant progress in implementing renewable energy projects (excluding hydro). In the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Tunisia lead the renewable energy market in the region. Renewable installed capacity in Turkey stands at more than 11 GW (mainly wind energy, but most of the installed PV capacity was completed in 2017). Morocco is on track to achieve its 2020 renewable energy targets with more than 1.2 GW existing capacity in place. A number of large-scale projects are either under construction or under development, including the 850 megawatt (MW) wind project and the ongoing construction of the second, third and fourth phases of the Ouarzazate Noor solar complex as well as other solar projects. With more than 800 MW in place, Egypt is making good progress in its renewable energy programme, including the 2 GW PV under the Feed-in Tariffs scheme. Jordan is also advancing on its renewable energy projects, especially solar PV. After its slow uptake of the Tunisian Solar Plan, renewable energy investments are, finally, gaining momentum in Tunisia, with the recent pre-qualification calls for tender for wind and solar photovoltaics projects announced in May 2018, which would give new impetus to renewable energy projects. Israel is also making good progress in meeting its renewable energy targets, especially solar PV, with the highest installed capacity in the

region, but also CSP projects. While Algeria has fallen short of its ambitions (although it has achieved important milestones, including several off-grid PV installations in 2016 and 2017 in the south of the country), the political situation in Libya has prevented progress on the implementation of renewables.

### TOTAL PRIMARY ENERGY DEMAND, BY REGION/COUNTRY



Despite high ambitions, progress in the renewable energy market in the other GCC countries is still lagging. Nevertheless, the UAE is leading the renewable energy market with an existing installed capacity of 357 MW, and with very large-scale solar projects. The 200 MW first stage of the 800 MW third phase of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park has been inaugurated, with the third and fourth phases totaling 600 MW to be commissioned in 2019 and 2020. In addition, the first stage of the CSP 700 MW fourth phase is envisaged to be commissioned by 2020. After long delays, the Saudi National Renewable Energy Program finally awarded its first 300 MW solar PV project at Sakaka to ACWA Power in early 2018, which is expected to be operational by 2019. The Saudi National Renewable Energy Program intends to install a capacity of 9.5 GW by 2023, with the aim of also developing a local manufacturing industry, but the speed of implementation is quite slow. In comparison, the estimated renewable energy potential is 200 GW. Through the development of renewables and the expansion of the grid, this could potentially help Saudi Arabia play an important role in the regional renewable energy market. However, a clear strategy is needed.

Currently, there are several obstacles to the development of renewables in the region. Therefore, an enabling environment is key to the wider development and deployment of renewable energy technologies and to attracting investments to the sector. In order to encourage the deployment of projects, a number of countries have adopted a mix of supporting tools, including renewable energy plans and objectives, tendering, price mechanisms (feed-in tariffs and feed-in premiums), quota systems and tax incentives as well as long-term power-purchase agreements (PPA) - the latter is undoubtedly one of the unlocking measures for renewables potential. In particular, government backed tenders have resulted in some of the most cost-effective projects at the global level for solar and wind, with record low prices in Morocco and the UAE. The world record low price of 73 USD/MWh for CSP with storage of the giant 700 MW project in Dubai announced in September 2017 might promote uptake of the CSP market in the future in the whole region. In Morocco, record bids of around 30 USD/MWh for the 850 MW wind project are among the lowest prices announced for wind energy in the world.

Despite encouraging progress, and in order to maintain momentum, further changes are needed in order for MENA countries to be able to exploit their renewable energy potential and position themselves as sustainable energy champions. Although the amount of progress made varies by country, the main transformations required should occur at the following levels: (1) mandatory renewable energy targets set within a stated deadline; (2) establishment of an institutional framework with clear allocation of roles and responsibilities to allow for a transparent market; (3) definition of fair rules to guarantee market access to independent power producers; (4) adoption of policy support measures for renewable energy projects based on the project scale, the degree of maturity of the technology and the type of application (electricity vs other use); (5) gradual phase out of subsidies for conventional energy technologies; (6) accurate market design and overall assessment of the impact of renewable energy's increasing share on the grid; and (7) access to finance and ease of raising capital, especially access to lower-cost finance, which will be necessary for the wider deployment of renewable energy technologies.

# Technological trends in the MENA region: The cases of digitalization and information and communications technology (ICT)

**EDGAR GÖLL & JAKOB ZWIERS**

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## **ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FOR TECHNOLOGIES**

Economic growth in the MENA region has changed again lately, due to the influence of various factors.

*Economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is expected to rebound to an average 2 percent in 2018 from an average 1.4 percent in 2017. [...] The mild rebound in regional growth reflects the positive impact of reforms and stabilization policies undertaken in many countries in tandem with the recent pick up in oil prices and oil production and rising external demand.*

Although the outlook for MENA remains positive, there are still geopolitical tensions, challenges due to the displacement of people, including refugees, and the rising level of debt in the region that urgently have to be addressed. There will also be an increase of young people entering the labour market in the coming decades. Hi-tech jobs in the services sector are especially likely to emerge due to rapid technological change. Therefore, several MENA countries have already developed economic strategies to benefit from this new, disruptive technology. A fast-growing pool of university graduates in combination with heavy penetration of social media and smartphones can serve as a basis for the development of a digital sector wherein new jobs can be created.

According to the World Bank, the key factors in several MENA countries (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia and Jordan) limiting development are a lack of effective competition and appropriate regulation. The report recommends promoting facilities-based competition, addressing underserved areas of the country, applying new models of infrastructure supply and implementing measures to lower deployment costs. Nevertheless, this paper suggests that the governmental use and control over the extension



and maintenance of ICT infrastructure need to be assessed separately. A number of governments of the MENA region have already taken steps to encourage Internet proliferation and accessibility, mainly in order to boost economic development. But large investments for (digital) infrastructure

**In the Middle East, online shopping seems to be reaching a whole new level**

development as well as investments in the ICT sector are still necessary.

In terms of economic development MENA countries can be split into two sub-groups: oil and nonoil countries show strong differences in regard to ICT impact on regional growth. The different sub-regions reveal a high positive effect of ICT on growth for the oil-MENA countries (Gulf states). Therefore, a significant growth payoff from ICT can be acknowledged only for the oil-MENA countries. This is mainly because these countries succeed in their investment categories and quality choices as well as in capturing and forming the required qualifications for human capital that together form an essential background to benefitting from ICT.

A number of countries in the MENA region – including Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Jordan, UAE and Tunisia – have successfully positioned themselves in the market of global ICT-enabled services and ICT outsourcing. For example, Egypt, as a popular destination for ICT outsourcing, currently supports 90,000 directly related jobs and is growing at 7.5 per cent annually, partly driven by business from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Meanwhile, in Turkey more than 80,000 workers are employed in the ICT sector, which produces assets of 1.6 billion US dollars.

In some regions and countries, for example in Palestine, a vibrant start-up culture has been shaped by vanguard persons and groups. Startups appear where there are innovative business opportunities for achieving economic development, despite impediments such as power cuts, poor Internet infrastructure and political restrictions. Nevertheless, significant external conditions such as the blockade of Gaza by the government of Israel hinder and obstruct overall economic development (i.e. the manufacturing sector) in this case. “Due to the blockade in place since 2007, Gaza’s exports, according to World Bank’s Country Director for West Bank and Gaza, Steen Lau Jorgensen, ‘virtually disappeared’ and the manufacturing sector has shrunk by as much as 60%”. With new business models focusing on digital solutions and hardware development, young Palestinian entrepreneurs fill the gap that the government is unable to deal with and provide a sense of economic independence – from Israeli influence as well as dependency on foreign aid. The startup boom in Palestine has been catalysed by an abundance of accelerators, incubators and venture capital funds through which new forms of economic progress are fostered via the means of innovation within ICT and digital development.

In the Middle East, online shopping seems to be reaching a whole new level. “Websites in Egypt, Jordan, and throughout the Gulf are making online ordering faster and easier than ever – allowing customers to use centralized websites to order from their favorite restaurant menus and product catalogs”. Alongside website ordering, bilingual websites assist expatriates in using e-commerce. With the aid of virtual and augmented reality technology, fully immersive retail experiences could soon be possible – allowing consumers to navigate around a virtual store.

In many African countries, FinTech has gained high economic relevance in various respects and can even become an economic game-changer under certain conditions and in particular areas –especially in bringing digital, mobile financial infrastructure into rural areas and promoting progress of the digital industry, creating new jobs as a result. Online payments facilitate transactions fluidly across geographic borders. At this point, the situation is not clear enough to assess the potentials and resonance of such developments within the MENA region.

Another growing sector in the Middle East is mobile gaming. Between 2015 and 2022, the mobile game development industry in the Middle East “is predicted to grow from \$680 million to \$2.3 billion”. Currently, just 1 per cent of the content in local app stores is available in Arabic. Therefore, private investors as well as governments, including Iran, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, “are sponsoring hubs to create mobile games tailored to local language and culture”.

## **AUTOMATIZATION AND THE JOB MARKET**

Due to the high levels of unemployment in the MENA region, as well as the deficits in the education systems and social security in combination with the state of demographic development, the MENA states are under considerable social pressure. Among the 100 million young men and women in the region, unemployment and under-employment are very high: almost a third of active youth in the Arab world are unemployed.

*Young Arab women are especially excluded from labor markets, as more than two-thirds of women between the ages of 15 and 29 are outside the labor market, the highest rate in the world. Lack of jobs especially for the young has been a characteristic of the region's economic growth performance in the past fifty years.*

Economic growth in the Arab region in recent decades has not been able to absorb the growing needs and expectations from the surging numbers of youth. “The frustration among Arab youth entering the job market is compounded by social exclusion, as the lack of job opportunities results in lack of access to housing and marriage, which hinders the transition to

independent adulthood". The region's population, currently estimated at about 400 million, is expected to reach 600 million by 2050. More than half of the population is under 30 years old. Thus, the social and job pressure is ever increasing while education, unemployment and food prices are still rising. The latest labour market data show that the unemployment rate remained stubbornly high in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia in 2016. Forty per cent of the region's unemployed are young jobseekers. Real GDP growth in MENA is projected to stay at its lowest level for the second consecutive year, at around 2 per cent in 2018, a percentage point less than that predicted in April 2018. "Youth unemployment in the MENA region stands at 31% and university graduates are making up nearly 30% of the total unemployed pool".

The WEF's "Future of Jobs" analysis found that, by 2020, 21 per cent of core skills in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and 41 per cent of those in Turkey will be different compared to skills that were needed in 2015. With regards to the continuous automatization and digitalization in most economies of the MENA region, it has been estimated that "41% of all work activities in Kuwait are susceptible to automation, as are 46% in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, 47% in the UAE, 49% in Egypt, 50% in Morocco and Turkey and 52% in Qatar".

Furthermore, "[s]ome of the most common types of high-skilled employment in the MENA region include commercial bankers, corporate finance specialists and accountants, schoolteachers and academics, engineers, quality assurance professionals and information technology consultants".

With increasing Internet access there will be growing opportunities for specific business models, including for women working from home via the Internet, who otherwise might have difficulty in finding adequate jobs. Nevertheless, this kind of option needs specific cultural conditions. With regards to the requisite cultural conditions for employment and job creation, there are countries and sub-regions where the attraction of employment within state institutions is still much higher among the young generation as compared to employment in the private sector (one example being Saudi Arabia).

But most highly educated young people try to escape abroad or they give up on finding the right employment because of the lack of potential for personal career, change and development. Possible reactions to this scenario can be migration or aggression against a corrupt establishment. Karake Shalhoub and Al Qasimi argue that, by simplifying business procedures, cyber activities reduce the cost for businesses of complying with domestic and international trade regulations and reduce the cost of corruption.

New technologies are being selectively integrated in more and more educational institutions.

*Educators are increasingly turning to tech to make learning both accessible and relevant to young mindsets, in preparation for a globally competitive workforce ready to take on tomorrow's challenges. The rise of new media is changing how we learn and communicate. Gaming, animation, and virtual networks demand a new style of literacy and promote new models for collaboration and communication.*

New digital formats could engage audiences of all ages, helping them gain new knowledge and augmenting skills – even in difficult socio-political states such as Syria. These digital formats are particularly needed in the MENA region because of its unemployment rate, which is the highest of any region in the world due to insufficient education systems. There is especially a rising demand for “higher-order analytical skills and advanced digital literacy, as well as strengths in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects, in particular computer programming”. MENA countries graduate fewer students in STEM per year compared to other regions. Therefore, investments in the sector of “techucation” are to be expected. Within the MENARA project, one conclusion is: “MENA economies need greater investment in STEM subject skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to prepare the younger generation for labour market demands”. In particular, the problem of Internet access has to be approached more systematically in order to proliferate digital opportunities and to prevent a digital divide in society. Today, one in three Internet users worldwide is younger than 18 years old. However, at the same time 29 per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 – especially in Africa and in Arab states – do not have Internet access.

# **The governance of migration and border controls in the European-North African context**

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With the substantive growth of migration from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region to Europe after the Arab uprisings, the issues of refugees, migration and border controls have moved to the top of the agenda of European policy-makers (and publics), as well as of the international community at large. A number of studies have highlighted the leverage, or the potential leverage, that MENA states have been acquiring vis-à-vis European states on the issue of migration over the last decade. Considering the high degree of interdependence between the two sides, the leverage held by MENA countries mainly results from Europe's attempts to co-opt MENA governments in the management of migration flows to Europe and thus to "socialize" MENA states. After the Arab uprisings, Europe's incapacity or inability to manage the influx of refugees and migrants internally, together with the threat and urgency ascribed to the "migration crisis" in Europe, only added to the power of MENA states to impose conditions on Europe.

Against this backdrop, this paper identifies a number of trends in the responses of MENA states to the issues of migration and border controls, particularly vis-à-vis Europe, by focusing on two interrelated aspects. First, it highlights the rather usual approach of states to "localize" international norms and practices in the realm of migration management, that is, to adapt and modify these norms according to domestic preferences and conditions. Examples are provided here from the western Mediterranean, especially North African countries. Second, we discuss the ever-growing tendency to criminalize migration and the ever-diminishing attention paid to human rights that have characterized the international governance of migration in recent years. In the light of these major trends, the paper concludes by assessing the embeddedness of the region in the international governance of migration.

## **LOCALIZING NORMS**

The socialization of non-Western countries has often been sought by the Western community in order to claim the universalism and "effectiveness" of liberal values. There is a growing literature which sets out to uncover the

rationale behind this claim as well as the mechanisms aimed at exporting rules and practices in various regional settings. The main contribution of this very diverse body of literature is to draw attention to the fact that there is no stable point from which to observe international systems and analyse socialization, because we are dealing with dynamics of communication and multiple meanings for the actors involved. Various scholars have thus examined the ways in which socialization has been biased towards a predominantly Western structure-oriented approach, which discards the identity and the agency of those who are meant to be socialized. This biased approach also dismisses the voices of the socializees, treating them as “resistant” or “defective”. Epstein rightly remarks that, once the socialization process takes place, change in the “adopter population” is simply depoliticized by conventional constructivist scholarship. Rejection of certain norms by the socializee is all too often “infantilized” or dismissed as a form of unmotivated “resistance” or defection. However, it may well result from a domestically localized and historically specific set of values that policy-makers should consider.

In other words, not only do socializees have a clear vision about what they want to attain through cooperation, they also turn out to be active borrowers able to reshape the reception of global norms. Here, the notion of congruence introduced by Acharya when dealing with norm localization is of paramount importance to realize that transferred norms may be re-adapted to local conditions. Localization makes “an outside norm congruent with a pre-existing local normative order”. This process thus is not necessarily a response to demands for new norms imposed from the outside. Rather, it is a proactive strategy aimed at accommodating foreign norms and ideas to local sensitivities. Under certain conditions, local norms and administrative traditions are strong enough to ensure the selective reception of global norms, with a view to limiting their domestic social and political costs. Local norms and traditions may also be sufficiently robust to integrate the global norms into existing local systems, with a view to buttressing their authority and command.

It is important to realize that the agency of socializees and their “cognitive priors” have usually been “ignored or assumed away with simplifying assumptions”, and a growing body of literature has started to pay attention to these flaws. Indeed, despite their permeability to external influences, non-Western countries have never been passive recipients. Nor can their varied capacity for “local” readjustment when faced with external pressures from their foreign “partners” be dismissed. Norm localization thus invites us to rethink a host of assumptions in international relations. Firstly, instead of detecting signs of “resistance”, we may hypothesize that socializees are motivated by cost minimization because of their “cognitive priors”. Secondly, local structures and beliefs may be used as domestic sources of legitimation for the selective borrowing and modification of international

norms. Thirdly, localization sets out to analyse the extent to which, and the conditions under which, external ideas may be “simultaneously adapted to meet local practices”. Finally, by shedding light on local practices and political structures, a focus on localization processes of international norms un-

**Playing the efficiency card in border control, and renewing or strengthening strategic alliances with major Western powers, have been key factors motivating MENA countries' involvement in the abovementioned regional consultative processes**

covers a new investigative area beyond the mere assumption that international norms are, or ought to be, internalized.

This local readjustment involves two interrelated dimensions. The first relates to the ability of the norm-recipient country to locally readjust the effects and scope of external norms transfers. The second pertains to the desire of norm-making countries and institutions to demonstrate that a transfer has effectively taken place through incentives, pressure, learning or emulation, even if each actor knows that acceptance does not always lead to implementation. Therefore, it is not so much a matter of resisting external influences or rules, as of trying to understand why normmaking countries accept local readjustments. This double-edged effect is illustrated in the next chapter with reference to the gradual involvement of some MENA countries in the international and European management of borders and migration. (...)

## **MIGRATION MANAGEMENT RE-APPROPRIATED**

Playing the efficiency card in border control, and renewing or strengthening strategic alliances with major Western powers, have been key factors motivating MENA countries' involvement in the abovementioned regional consultative processes. For example, the managerial centrality of the state, which constitutes the cornerstone of the IAMM, has enabled the Tunisian leadership to reinforce existing forms of control exercised by the authorities over society in general and over Tunisian nationals living abroad. Indeed, the concepts of “management” and “control”, as defined in the IAMM, were consistent with the desire of the former regime to discipline any form of dissent, both in Tunisia and abroad. The fight against so-called “illegal” migration allowed the regime to conceal the real causes of migration from Tunisia and to silence those who had been excluded from the Tunisian “economic miracle”. The latter were generally described in the media as individuals attracted by the dream of the European El Dorado. This paternalistic and infantilizing vision, which was repeatedly adopted in Europe, made it possible to divert public attention from the real motives driving migrants' departure, namely underemployment, poverty, social discontent and political violence.

The constant reference to European pull factors also served as a rationale for the implementation of a system of control and domination over Tunisian society, with the backing of Europe and its member states. For example, Tunisian Law 2004-06, dated 3 February 2004, clearly illustrated the ambivalent use by the Tunisian authorities of the managerial discourse in the field of migration control. Strongly supported by the European Union following the adoption of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the establishment of action plans and a road map, this law punished “those who have provided information for, planned, facilitated, assisted, acted as intermediary in or organized the smuggling of a person in and out of Tunisian territory by land, sea or air, even if no payment was received”. On the one hand, it reflected the willingness of the Tunisian government to tackle the “clandestine exits” of its citizens while responding to European calls for enhanced cooperation on the matter. On the other hand, and more ambiguously, its scope encompassed not only irregular Tunisian migrants, but also those who remained in the country and who would have been aware of clandestine exits without reporting them to the authorities.

As noted by Hamza Meddeb, by adopting Law 2004-06, the Tunisian authorities “create deviance by extending the scope of the law to social categories living on the margins of legality. [...] The adoption of this law allows the regime to ensure at low cost its domination and to reinforce its authority with fear”. While it is true that this skilful readjustment of policy transfers from the Europe Union to Tunisia existed in other policy areas, such as trade liberalization, economic reforms, the promotion of civil society and democratization, the support that Law 2004-06 received from Europe, to the detriment of fundamental freedoms, reflected the strength of an image which the regime was able to disseminate abroad, especially with reference to the fight against religious extremism and international terrorism. As long as it could capitalize on this image, the regime knew that attempts to readjust locally policy transfers and practices from abroad would be tolerated by the EU and by its member states, either explicitly or tacitly.

Territoriality remains a key explanatory notion of past and current policy developments in North African countries. It not only refers to the space where legitimate power and legal rules are applied by the state and its law enforcement authorities. It also pertains to an area where state-society relationships can be reconfigured, altered, if not reinvigorated to overcome domestic social and political divisions.

It could even be argued that claims for territorial integrity in North Africa have been used by the sovereign as an asset to embolden its own political and symbolic centrality in a context marked by the perceptible retrenchment of the state from the economy, especially when domestic political and social tensions loom large. For example, in Morocco, domestic politics,



territoriality, identity and regime stability have become closely intertwined to forge a nationalistic sense of unity among “previously hostile forces behind the monarchy”. From the mid-2000s up to the early 2010s, Morocco’s reinforced cooperation on border controls and deportation with Spain

**while the reinforced militarization of Algeria’s borders with Morocco and Libya has been presented as an attempt to counter cross-border arms-trafficking and people-smuggling, it has invariably been conducive to the centrality of military power in Algeria’s domestic political apparatus**

alienated the country from its traditional sub-Saharan African partners (especially Senegal, Mali, Niger and Côte-d’Ivoire). Subsequently, the collapse of the re-

gime of Muammar Gaddafi and the declining influence of Libya in sub-Saharan Africa opened a new window of opportunity. Morocco reactivated its “African strategy” based on a form of soft power which, incidentally, turned out to be consonant with its desire to co-opt some sub-Saharan countries with a view to narrowing Algeria’s African playground and to buttressing the territorial claims of Morocco on Western Sahara.

Moreover, while the reinforced militarization of Algeria’s borders with Morocco and Libya has been presented as an attempt to counter cross-border arms-trafficking and people-smuggling, it has invariably been conducive to the centrality of military power in Algeria’s domestic political apparatus (the Sulta) and to opaque foreign alliances with strategic European countries, especially France, Belgium and Italy, against jihadist movements encroaching on the whole North African region. Border management implies not only a logic of inclusion and exclusion. It also engineers a sense of allegiance to the ruling authority (be it a king or a head of government), especially when territorial integrity is presented as being threatened.

In a similar vein, the former Tunisian regime of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali was quick to understand that appearing to be an efficient player in the field of border management would not only increase its international legitimacy in the West but also reinforce the power of the ruling party while concealing mounting social discontent and repression at the domestic level.

North African states’ involvement in the reinforced control of migration and of their national borders has often been tantamount to an attempt to harness domestic territorial, societal and political challenges. In this connection, the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on 2 February 2017 between Italy and the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) headed by Prime Minister Fayeze Al-Sarraj is no exception. The MoU has been officially presented as an attempt to stem migration flows en route to the EU and to reinforce the control of Libya’s southern borders with technological material and financial support from Italy and the EU. That being

said, one is entitled to view the hasty signature of the MoU as an attempt by the GNA to buttress its international legitimacy in the West at a time when Al-Sarraj's leadership is being increasingly challenged domestically. It could even be argued that the quest for international legitimacy and military support from the West has been the major driver for the signing of the MoU despite the overt reticence of local municipal officials, who are wary of its disruptive implications for the country's deepening civil war.

The above examples demonstrate that reinforced cooperation on migration and border controls implies the re-codification of external relations. Moreover, it invariably brings about a reformulation of the relations between the parties involved. Today, unprecedented patterns of interconnectedness among countries located in the western Mediterranean have consolidated so dramatically that any unilateral form of conditionality (be it soft or coercive) must be carefully evaluated lest a whole framework of cooperation be jeopardized. In their bilateral interactions with MENA countries, Western countries have learned that conditionalities cannot be equated with pressures when it comes to cooperating with empowered "partner" countries, which MENA countries certainly are. Using an oxymoron, it is possible to argue that, in recent decades, cooperation on border and migration controls has become a central priority in MENA-EU relations. While being central, this priority has however remained peripheral to other strategic issue areas including the fight against international terrorism and the reinforced control of land and maritime borders. Among many others, these are critical priorities on which some North African countries have managed to capitalize to varying degrees.

There is no question that the responsiveness of North African countries to the securitization of migration policies, including the adoption of legal provisions criminalizing irregular migration and border crossing, has been shaped by their respective domestic and regional concerns. Far from adopting passively the guidelines and rules transferred from the West, they adaptively and selectively transposed them to buttress their own position domestically and internationally.

Moreover, the perceptible militarization of the region has fed into the criminalization of migration policies, just as the criminalization of the "unmanaged" mobility of people (be they citizens or foreigners) has fed into the centrality of states and their law enforcement agencies. To date, the establishment of transgovernmental channels (linking MENA officials from the ministries of the Interior and Defence with their European counterparts) has resulted in the conclusion of various bilateral security agreements and arrangements and in the provision of technological and logistical military equipment. Exchanges of information and technical cooperation in the field of identification – for example, using the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) – constitute key elements. While

it is true that identification constitutes a challenge when it comes to accelerating the removal of undocumented migrants who are found in an irregular situation in Western countries, in MENA countries, as elsewhere, cooperation on identification not only raises a host of legitimate questions about the potential use of computerized personal data, it also calls into question the various factors that motivated it and justified it. To be sure, transgovernmentalism and its modus operandi contribute to making the long-sought reform of MENA countries' security sectors a daunting challenge, especially in Tunisia.

# **Migration dynamics in play in Morocco: Trafficking and political relationships and their implications at the regional level**

**MEHDI LAHLOU**

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The increasing number of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa passing through Morocco on their way to Europe during the first nine months of 2018 has again made it one of the most important migratory corridors in the Mediterranean. As of 30 September, nearly 37,000 people had emigrated in an irregular way between Africa and Europe via the western Mediterranean migration route in 2018. Thus Morocco became the first country of departure for migrants from Africa in 2018, while Spain became the most important gateway to Europe.

For Spain, this development revived fears generated by the events of autumn 2005, when hundreds of migrants breached, for the first time, the security fences between its cities in the North of Africa (Ceuta and Melilla) and the rest of Morocco. It also recalled the arrival of 32,000 migrants, primarily from Mauritania and Senegal, in the Canary Islands from May to September 2006.

In that sense, the history of irregular migration between Africa and Europe seems to have been repeated since the beginning of the current century. Following the humanitarian crisis and security chaos in Syria that began in 2011, and the resulting refugee crisis, which lasted until mid-2016, African migratory corridors between Libya and Italy again took the lead during 2016 and 2017, shifting to the route between Morocco and Spain in 2018. Thus the situation in the Mediterranean has reverted to its previous state as recorded between 2000 and 2005, with the majority of migration originating in Africa, mainly around the Straits of Gibraltar.

## **RECENT MIGRATION TRENDS TO AND FROM MOROCCO**

The spread of the Arab uprisings through North Africa and the Middle East provoked numerous and deep changes in security policy, producing, inter alia, waves of refugees at the borders of countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and, especially hard hit, Libya and Syria. This led to a mass exodus

of sub-Saharan (and Tunisian) migrants, initially from Libya and Tunisia, followed by a wave of hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing civil war, with a peak in 2015.

Between 2012 and 2015, two trends were evident in the Mediterranean space. Firstly, a spectacular increase occurred in the total number of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe from the east and south of the Med-

**The history of irregular migration between Africa and Europe seems to have been repeated since the beginning of the current century**

iterranean. Secondly, despite a slight increase in the number of irregular migrants using the western

Mediterranean route since 2012, this route's share of migration became almost marginal, accounting for only 0.39 per cent in 2015, against 7.75 per cent four years earlier.

At the beginning of 2016, however, the migratory route between Turkey and Greece was closed after an agreement was signed between the EU and Turkey on 18 March 2016. This recalled the events of 2006, when a similar agreement was made with Senegal regarding the Canary Islands. As a direct result of the agreement between the EU and Turkey, according to a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the total number of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2016 was 363,348, split almost evenly between Italy and Greece, with much smaller numbers arriving in Malta, Cyprus and Spain. The number of arrivals that year to Greece totalled 173,561 migrants and refugees – only 20 per cent as many as in 2015, when the number reached 853,650. The same trend is confirmed by data published by the IOM for the period between 2014 and 2018.

The migration data from the first ten months of 2018 follow the same trend: the IOM reported that as of 10 October, 88,049 migrants and refugees had entered Europe by sea in 2018, compared with 142,301 on the same date in 2017.

These important changes in the pattern of migrant and refugee arrivals in Europe between 2015 and 2016 due to the shift of migratory routes to the west of the Mediterranean led to increasing flows of migration towards Spain, via Morocco, particularly from 2016 to 2018. The share of migrants utilising the western Mediterranean route increased from 0.39 per cent to about 45 per cent in just three years. One of every two migrants crossing the Mediterranean in the direction of Europe takes the sea route between Morocco and Spain, strongly indicating that all border control systems set up between the two countries in recent years have failed. This shift was to a certain extent unforeseeable. It is evidence, in particular, of the fact that there are multiple links and relations between the choice of migratory route and the reasons for the displacement of people, especially when in relation to human mobility from south to north. (...)

## THE NEW MOROCCAN MIGRATION POLICY

On 10 September 2013, Morocco's King Mohamed VI held a meeting with his Minister of Home Affairs and a number of human rights representatives (among them the National Council of Human Rights, CNDH) to initiate a new "migration and asylum policy" for foreign residents of the kingdom, espe-

cially aimed at illegal migrants.<sup>5</sup> This announcement was considered a turning point in Morocco's human rights approach to irregular

immigrants, mainly sub-Saharan Africans from countries such as Mali, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, but also refugees from Libya and Syria.

The new migration policy comprises three main elements: (1) an exceptional regularization process for immigrants, carried out in 2014 (this operation benefited nearly 45,000 migrants); (2) extended power for the UNHCR to grant the right of asylum to a greater number of asylum seekers in Morocco; (3) new laws allowing for better integration of migrants and asylum-seekers into Moroccan society, as well as increased emphasis on the fight against human trafficking and traffickers. By the end of 2014 – the final date of the first exceptional regularization operation – the number of validated requests for regularization reached 17,916 out of a total of 27,332 requests, as noted above. A second operation followed between 2016 and 2017, involving around 24,000 irregular migrants. In terms of asylum, however, the UNHCR has recognized relatively few refugees in Morocco. There were 853 UNHCR-recognized refugees, with 2,178 asylum seekers' cases pending as of September 2013.

Concerning the other objectives of the new initiative, the Ministry in Charge of the Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs worked out a National Strategy of Immigration and Asylum. This strategy, adopted by a Government Council held in December 2014, aims at ensuring better social integration of immigrants and better management of the migration flow within the framework of a "coherent, overall, humanistic and responsible policy".

This strategic vision is founded on three main objectives: (i) to facilitate the integration of the new regularized immigrants; (ii) to establish an adapted institutional and regulation framework; and (iii) to manage migration flows in a way that maintains respect for human rights. This new policy was aimed first of all at protecting migrants from the various forms of

**Women are among the most vulnerable migrants, as they are constantly targeted by sexual violence. But an increasingly young migrant population, comprising children migrating independently of their families, are also frequently victims of violence**

trafficking to which they can fall victim. However, although many migrants whom we met in the course of our research expressed satisfaction with the implementation of this policy, the reality on the ground does not seem to have changed for many of them.

## **MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKERS OF MIGRANTS**

Most people in charge of associations of migrants whom we met in the course of our field research – in Rabat and in Dakhla, in the far south of Morocco – reported that since 2014 internal movement within Morocco has been relatively easy. When it comes to migration of foreign migrants from the northern part of Morocco, these migrants operate within their national communities, in particular when they conduct “massive attacks” on the security fences around Ceuta and Melilla, as happened again in the summer of 2018.

Moroccans willing to migrate as foreign migrants can also be “helped” by traffickers in other situations, in particular to migrate to Libya and beyond. Some traffickers are only Moroccans, acting independently, while others may belong to criminal organizations comprised of Moroccans, Nigerians or migrants from Côte d’Ivoire. Our field research was not able to confirm this information, but a Moroccan government spokesman reported on 6 September that “security services in Morocco put more than 54,000 attempts at clandestine immigration in failure in 2018, dismantled 74 criminal networks active in the field of human trafficking and illegal immigration and seized 1,900 boats”.

Further, the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie reported in December 2017 that it had “dismantled a five-person organized criminal group involved in illegal emigration to Europe through Libya, and in other serious crimes, including kidnapping and money laundering”. The authorities declared also that they had been “after these gang since September 2017, following the arrest of two masterminds of illegal emigration in Beni Mellal, a city located in center Morocco [one of the most important regions of departure to Italy]. The two criminals were apprehended for their involvement in a large network that operates at both the national and international levels”. The investigations “led to the arrest of five individuals, one of whom [had] acted as an intermediary between the main organizers and the potential illegal immigrants”. The enquiry also uncovered “the gang’s involvement in a network of illicit financial transactions that collected funds from candidates [for irregular migration] and transferred them to Libya, to then be smuggled to Italy”. The public press agency, Maghreb Arab Press (MAP), which reported the news, indicated that a total of 3,000 such financial transactions were conducted between 2015 and September 2017.

## MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING: ABUSE OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A January 2017 report by the European Commission stated that

*a worrying trend is that the number of vulnerable migrants, especially women and minors, is increasing. Among the 181,000 migrants who disembarked in Italy, around 24,000 were women (13%, almost half of whom from Nigeria), and around 28,000 were minors (15%), of which the vast majority (91%) were unaccompanied. This represents an increased share from 2015 (10%), with a growing proportion of unaccompanied minors (75% in 2015). The top five nationalities of unaccompanied minors are: Eritrean (15%), Gambian (13%), Nigerian (12%), Egyptian (10%), and Guinean (10%).*

The statistics regarding the gender make-up of migrants who arrived in Italy in 2016 also document the occurrence of diverse forms of violence against women and very young people in the course of migration, as much in the countries of transit as in the host societies, mainly in the south. Women are among the most vulnerable migrants, as they are constantly targeted by sexual violence. But an increasingly young migrant population, comprising children migrating independently of their families, are also frequently victims of violence.

Women from sub-Saharan Africa are considered by human trafficking networks as a valuable commodity to be exploited through prostitution. Since the beginning of this century, these women often have not paid for their journey or for “protection” but rather have fallen into the clutches of migrants, mostly from their own communities, who have proclaimed themselves leaders and claimed full rights over them. These women usually travel in groups, under the protection of “their” men, who keep them in secret and not easily accessible places. In exchange for such “protection”, the women must provide sexual services to anyone introduced to them, mainly the inhabitants of the cities of transit or other migrants.

The international non-governmental organization (NGO) Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) and many other human rights organizations have been particularly responsive to this issue, as their teams have dealt with numerous cases of abortions that have caused bleeding, usually as the result of the use of abortion drugs. This phenomenon is evidence of a large number of unwanted pregnancies and, therefore, high levels of sexual exploitation of women, mainly within irregular migrant communities.

Between 2010 and 2012, MSF treated 697 survivors of sexual violence in Morocco, including 122 in Oujda and 575 in Rabat. Among the survivors who were willing to provide information, “almost three quarters had experienced more than one incident of sexual violence and half said they had experienced multiple incidents involving different attackers”. Moreover, according to MSF’s analysis, approximately 35 per cent (about 240



persons) of the survivors of sexual violence assisted by MSF between 2010 and 2012 were victims of human trafficking networks. "These patients are particularly vulnerable as they have little or no control over their sexual and reproductive health, have limited freedom of movement and are often kept captive and subjected to continuous exploitation and sexual, physical and psychological violence".

That being said, women sometimes use pregnancy as a means of protection against harassment. Similarly, there is the perception that pregnancy ensures safe conduct once a woman reaches Europe. A number of factors, such as high rates of dependency on irregular migration networks and lack of protection against human traffickers (and the perpetrators of sexual violence), increase the vulnerability of women, who are often forced to live in unhealthy conditions and to be sexually promiscuous, and are subjected to prostitution and forced labour. Inevitably, exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as tuberculosis, is very high.

NGOs have collected testimonies indicating that when migrant women get sick, they often lose the support of their protector and are abandoned, and in some cases even disappear. It is now common in the streets of Rabat, Tangiers, Fez, Marrakech and Casablanca to see women carrying young babies begging on the street or at the doors of mosques and cemeteries. In many cases, those who initially brought them to Morocco have abandoned them, and the women find themselves unable either to continue their journey, or to return to the places they left.

Another phenomenon that seemed to have emerged by the middle of the last decade in Rabat and many other Moroccan cities, and which remains a persistent problem, is prostitution of very young migrant girls (from twelve to fourteen years old) who left their countries alone with "protectors", who turned into human traffickers in Morocco. Compounding these issues is the blatantly xenophobic and racist attitude of many social groups in the transit countries, including the middle class. The precarious conditions and poverty in which the migrant population lives no longer evoke pity or compassion, but only rejection.

# The implications of the Syrian War for new regional orders in the Middle East

**RAMI G. KHOURI**

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It is not surprising that the land of Syria, which was a pivotal international and regional battleground a century ago both during and after the First World War I, today is again a regional and international battleground: literally a field of active military battles among a much wider range of warring parties. As political and military leaders from Alexander the Great and Napoleon to King Faisal up through to Vladimir Putin have all understood, this reflects Syria's historical geopolitical position as a strategic pivot around which regional and international powers have routinely competed for influence or hegemonic control of the Levant region and wider Western Asia. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War and the assertion of British and French colonial control in the Levant gave Syria new strategic relevance a century ago, which it has maintained until today, occasionally adjusting its alliances and priorities as regional geo-strategic and military conditions required.

Syria's history in its modern Middle Eastern setting reflects a pendulum-like legacy, in which Syria and the Middle East in turn shape and re-shape each other within the context of international interventions. For instance, on the one hand, Western colonial interests and regional power intrigue in the Middle East shaped Syria a century ago and carved out its modern borders. On the other hand, during the postcolonial period, Syrian sovereign policies reshaped regional relations for half a century, until regional and foreign forces quickly exploited the indigenous non-violent Syrian uprising that challenged the state starting in early 2011. Syria was then reshaped by these dynamics, particularly when these forces physically entered the picture militarily and politically to generate all-out war and the fracturing of the Syrian state.

The main focus of this paper, then, is to analyse how, in particular, events in Syria during 2011-18 have helped shape new regional dynamics and orders in the Middle East. The consequences of the seven-year-long Syrian war will now become clearer and are likely to have an impact in different ways across the region for years to come. Syria represents one of the sharpest recent examples of the interplay among local, regional and inter-

national powers whose strategic interests are constantly evolving. Syria has been at the receiving end of those dynamics since 2011, and in the imminent post-war period, the legacy and lessons of what occurred in Syria will once again reshape other parts of the Middle East. (...)

## **KEY DYNAMICS**

Syria is not unique in most respects of its recent history, as it captures the past century of erratic state-building within individual Arab countries. Half a dozen other Arab states have also fractured in recent years, and others face serious internal and regional stresses in the political, economic, environmental and security realms. The Syrian war, however, seems to reflect some important new geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East that are likely to ripple across the region for years to come. Four in particular are noteworthy:

- 1) The direct, long-term intervention simultaneously of regional and foreign powers in Arab internal affairs, using military, political and economic means, which led to the reconfiguration of the role of such powers across the region, that is, the emergence of a more influential Russia, the expansion of direct Turkish and Iranian influence in Arab affairs, and the apparent downgrading of US intervention in Syria and Iraq in favour of focusing on confronting Iran.
- 2) The critical role of non-state actors in the form of militias and paramilitary groups that represent domestic as well as foreign interests. In some cases the lines between domestic and foreign were blurred, such as the many foreign fighters that joined the Free Syrian Army, which also enjoyed foreign state support, as well as the People's Protection Forces (YPG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northern Syria that included Syrian, Kurdish and occasionally other non-Syrian elements among their fighters or supporters.
- 3) The sheer number of foreign fighting forces that simultaneously fought on the ground or in the air, or did so indirectly by arming, financing and training fighting forces in Syria since 2012: we can count at least twenty different states and major NSAs (e.g., Hezbollah, Free Syrian Army, Islamic State, al Qaeda, Ahrar el-Sham, YPG, SDF), and the number reaches into the several hundreds if the many smaller tribal, Islamist and secular rebel groups are counted. The transformation of an important Arab country into a virtual open international battleground where any state or NSA could join the fight to defeat or save the ruling government sets a precedent that could reverberate across the entire Middle East in forms that have appeared in Syria, or in new ones that we may not yet recognize today.
- 4) The fierce, often gruesome ways in which most local and foreign actors on both sides fought. These included using chemical weapons, ethnic

cleansing, civilian massacres, barbaric torture and killing methods, starvation sieges and other acts that some international human rights organizations have called war crimes. The prolonged ferocity of the fighting signalled the unacceptably high

cost of losing for key protagonists, especially the Syrian government, Iran and Hezbol-

**Syria's history in its modern Middle Eastern setting reflects a pendulum-like legacy, in which Syria and the Middle East in turn shape and reshape each other within the context of international interventions**

lah, whose tripartite alliance revealed a determination to prevail at any cost over the forces that sought to weaken them. Russia intervened fiercely because of what it saw as the imperative of maintaining the Assad government in power, given the pivotal role of Syria in Moscow's reassertion and expansion of its strategic interests across the Middle East. The international community reacted for the most part with a few intermittent practical responses to the sustained military brutality against both armed elements and civilians. It remains to be seen if these patterns will define the future acceptable behaviour of governments and rebels within states, as well as of foreign forces that join the fray.

## THE GAME-CHANGER: NEW TRANSNATIONAL ALLIANCES

An overarching new development that largely determined the outcome of Syria's war, and which is likely to impact the region for years, was the formation of coalitions among many different kinds of actors. These included big and medium-sized regional powers, local state and non-state actors and international powers. The key regional powers are Turkey, Iran, Israel, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and Hezbollah; local actors include the Syrian state, assorted militant or moderate Islamist/jihadi forces, Kurdish groups, local and transnational paramilitary groups, and the states of Jordan and Lebanon, whose actions are very localized, unlike, for example, the regional impact of Hezbollah; and the international powers are mainly Russia, the United States, Great Britain and France.

The most important such alliances were the Russia-Syria-Iran-Hezbollah collaboration that preserved Assad's rule, and the counter-alliance against Assad and his allies that comprised fluctuating combinations of the USA, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkey, Qatar, Israel, the UK and France, most importantly. Different members of the anti-Assad alliance aimed to overthrow the Damascus government for varying reasons, but nevertheless they collectively supported the anti-Assad forces. Some supported opposition groups in order to overthrow the autocratic Damascus regime and support populist democratic aspirations. Others did so to promote

their direct national interests, or to weaken the regional reach of Iran and Hezbollah by breaking up their tripartite alliance with Syria. The Russia-Turkey-Iran collaboration was a new alliance among states that created a new negotiating process in Astana and Sochi that paralleled the Syrian Geneva negotiations; sometimes other states joined in, such as Jordan did when these four countries established short-lived “de-escalation zones” in 2018 that helped wind down the war. If the war experience is any guide, the post-war years will continue to see large and small states working together with NSAs in both enduring and temporary alliances in order to improve their strategic positions and national interests, rather than acting on their own.

The legacy of the Syrian war is likely to prod external powers that seek to intervene to achieve certain desired goals in the future to use direct, sustained, military intervention inside Arab states, in close coordination with NSAs, while staying the course on the ground for years. Russia-Iran-Hezbollah did this very successfully in Syria, though obviously at great cost to Syria and themselves. Merely sending arms and offering training and indirect support to the rebels, as the anti-Assad coalition did, would now appear to be a more questionable strategy in the face of a decisive grouping such as the one that supported Assad. The poor track record of the USA, European countries including the UK and France, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar in supporting the anti-Assad rebellion might resonate with them in future instances in which they might contemplate supporting anti-government rebels in other countries. Such rebels themselves who might seek support from abroad are likely, in turn, to ask their foreign backers for a long-term commitment of substantive support, including a sustained on-the-ground presence, in view of the Syrian experience.

## **LESSONS FROM TURKISH AND AMERICAN POLICIES**

The Syrian Kurdish experience, in particular, will resonate for years in the minds of political actors across the region, due to the policies pursued by the USA and Turkey. The erratic track record of American support to Kurdish groups – such as the SDF, which is led by the YPG and its parent Democratic Union Party (PYD) – reflects how the United States’ short- and medium-term goals changed in the face of heightened direct Turkish intervention in northern Syria. The outcome of the jockeying for power in northern Syria among the Damascus government, Kurdish groups (notably the YPG-dominated and US-backed SDF) and Turkey proved less significant for direct American national interests, it seems, which is why Washington adjusted its support to the PYD/YPG Kurds in order to balance its more important ties with Turkey.

For its part, Turkey proved to be a strong regional power that could intervene when it saw the need to do so. In this case, its national interest was to prevent the creation of an autonomous Kurdish proto-state in northern Syria. Turkey also showed that strong regional powers could evolve and change their positions as circumstances required. As Syrian Kurdish groups such as the YPG in 2017

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defeated Islamic State and others in parts of northern Syria, and expanded the areas under PYD/Kurdish control, Turkey did not hesitate to change its previously harshly anti-Assad tone; it spoke less about removing Assad from power and entered into northern Syria militarily to prevent the formation of a single large contiguous Syrian-Kurdish region. During talks with Iran and Russia, Ankara also agreed to the definition of de-escalation zones in strategically important Idlib in the north-west and elsewhere around the country. Turkey's national interest was more sharply clarified, with less focus on removing Assad from power and more emphasis on preventing PYD-dominated Syrian Kurds from controlling the entire north. By mid-2018 it was evident that predominantly Kurdish groups in the north such as the SDF were exploring negotiations with the Assad government to end the war and prevent permanent Turkish control of lands in the northwest of the country. (...)

## PRAGMATISM AMONG REGIONAL ACTORS

Some states exhibited bold pragmatism during the Syrian war years as they adjusted and even reversed some of their policies in the light of events on the ground. Caught between the two main camps of states that broadly pursue pro-Iranian or pro-Saudi positions, several small and large states have pursued more pragmatic policies that have allowed them to navigate among these groupings and pursue their own strategic interests. Countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Qatar, Jordan and even Russia sometimes have taken strong actions to support or to weaken Syria's government; yet they have also negotiated, or even reached, military, commercial, technological or logistical transport arrangements with a range of countries in both camps. Russian and Turkish hot-and-cold ties with Israel are a good example of this, as is the complex matrix of multi-sectoral relations and interests that link Russia, Turkey, Iran and Israel. As the war was winding down in mid-2018, Syrian government forces with Russian support were attacking rebel

positions in the south near Deraa – at the same time as the Russians were negotiating with rebels and with the Jordanian government to achieve an end of hostilities and allow refugees to return to their home regions. Simultaneously, Russian officials were in touch with Israeli and Iranian officials to discuss those states' interests in the situation in southern Syria.

This aspect of the Syrian war, which might resonate across the region for years to come, is that a foreign power's sustained military presence on the ground coupled with decisive diplomatic contacts with all concerned parties has allowed it to assume a pivotal role in the unfolding events as Russia has just shown the world. The contrast with Washington's unsuccessful policies in Syria and the Arab-Israeli conflict is striking, and hints to regional powers how they might more effectively combine their military and political assets in forging successful foreign policies.

Turkey and Qatar also both supported anti-Assad efforts during the early years of the war in Syria, then eventually accommodated themselves to the continuity of the Damascus government when it was clear that Assad would remain in power; and Turkey indirectly coordinated with the Syrian government when the Russia-Turkey-Iran group established de-escalation zones in several parts of Syria in 2017-18. Turkey and Qatar seem to have expected that the government that would replace the Assad regime would be dominated by less extremist rebels with whom they have long been friendly. When their anticipations did not materialize, they stopped actively supporting rebel groups, and in Turkey's case turned their attention to direct and proxy military campaigns in northern Syria to block the formation of a PYD-dominated Kurdish proto-state.

A corollary to Russia's growing impact in the region due to the Syrian war has been the emergence of Russia-Turkey-Iran as a powerful grouping of countries that can impact some key issues in the region; these include future constitutional arrangements in Syria and Iraq, the status of Kurdish groups within Arab states, energy policy coordination in volatile times, Israeli-Iranian tensions and Middle Eastern states' procurement of nuclear and defensive missile technologies, to mention only the most obvious ones.

An intriguing development in the Syrian war that could reverberate globally in the future was the Russia-Iran-Turkey group's ability to establish a parallel track of diplomacy towards the end of the Syrian war, alongside and linked to the track managed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and its successive mediators since the Geneva I talks in June 2012. In May 2015, Russia-Turkey-Iran launched in Astana, Kazakhstan, a series of consultations and negotiations that would continue to meet in Moscow, Geneva, Vienna, Sochi and other locations. This effort shifted the centre of gravity of the peace negotiations from the UNSC to the Moscow-led camp, at a time when Russia's military was actively attacking anti-Assad targets

throughout Syria. The Astana talks eventually led to agreement on four de-escalation zones in Syria that temporarily reduced the fighting, while Moscow also took the lead in moving the negotiators towards creating a reconciliatory draft constitution for the post-war years.

The Astana process and the United Nations both repeatedly affirmed that the two tracks complemented each other, yet neither achieved its aims of ending the war and creating a political agreement for post-war transition and governance in Syria. The significant residue from this experience is that strong alliances of powerful and decisive actors that put their troops on the ground can create negotiating structures that achieve two aims: they temporarily bypass existing talks and forums in the UN or elsewhere, and they remove the constraints of UNSC vetoes that diplomacy often encounters. It will not be lost on anyone that the three decisive actors who managed the Astana process diplomacy were all directly involved in the fighting on several fronts.

## **DEEP STATES WILL PERSIST**

Middle Eastern states with strong, decisive and usually authoritarian governments – such as Egypt and Algeria, for example – might conclude from the Syrian war that they can emulate Assad's use of brutal force against his own people and cities in the assault against local and foreign rebels. Egypt's harsh military measures, curfews, arrests and demolitions of entire neighbourhoods in Sinai is an example where a deeply entrenched, authoritarian Arab state is using immense and disproportionate force against home-grown rebels, with two notable results: the rebel threat does not seem to be disappearing in the face of persistent military attacks against it, and the rest of the world does not seem to care much about what is taking place inside Egypt in this respect. The war in Yemen is another example of Arab states (Saudi Arabia and the UAE) with foreign support (the USA and UK) using disproportionate military force against a much poorer, weaker target for years on end, without any significant objection from the rest of the world, beyond the occasional arms sales embargo by some European states including Norway and Germany; others in Europe may join the embargo, following a pan-European parliamentary vote to do so.

Not only did most of the world respond in a low-key manner to Syria's hardline military response to rebels and civilians alike; some countries, including the USA and Russia, directly participated in the fighting that assumed brutal proportions in Raqqa, Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta and other places. This raises an issue that only started to be seriously considered globally and regionally in early 2018: what forms of reconstruction will take place in Syria after the fighting ends? Who will provide most of the financing? Who will manage the process of planning the rebuilding and distribut-



ing lucrative contracts? The lesson from the war again suggests that those countries whose troops fight on the ground for years on end will control the post-war process in all its political and commercial dimensions.

We will need many years to discern the nature of the future Syria. Specifically, will post-war reconciliation and agreement on a new constitutional transitional process lead to a Syria whose political governance will perpetuate the top-heavy, centralized state model of the last fifty years of Assad family rule? Or will it open a path towards more participatory and accountable governance? Most indicators to date suggest that the world broadly accepts President Assad remaining in power – if the war ends, and Syria's 12 million refugees and internally displaced nationals can resume a normal life. This conclusion derives from foreign states' behaviour during the war years, the governance and power trends in areas that were under state control in 2018, and the prevalent international indifference to how Syria emerges from its war. In other words, the message that will be heard clearly across the Middle East is that the world will not care or intervene if you brutally attack your own people or weaker neighbours, as long as you do not use chemical weapons, carry out localized genocides against minorities or threaten the world with terrorism or refugees.

This highlights a bigger issue that permeates most Arab countries (with the exception of wealthy energy producers) with top-heavy central governments that monopolize power: they suffer the same vulnerabilities that surfaced to drive the 2011 Arab uprisings and that hardline Islamists and foreign countries exploited in Syria to generate a full-blown war. These vulnerabilities comprise disenfranchised citizens who suffer increasingly difficult life conditions in the socio-economic, political and material realms, and who eventually rebel against the state's policies. The uprisings, including Syria's, have generated discussions across the region since 2011 about whether top-heavy Arab autocratic systems might respond to their citizens' stirrings. The common issues that defined most uprisings, including Syria's, still prevail across the region and have deteriorated in most cases; these include vulnerabilities in socio-economic disparities, state legitimacy, citizen dignity, coherent national identity, environmental viability and sustainable economic development.

Syria's war experience suggests that hardline military responses to citizen political activism are a viable, if costly, option for Arab states that must decide whether to address their weaknesses through structural reforms in the direction of good governance or through repression anchored in "security" imperatives. Syria's recent experience (along with that of Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Yemen) indicates that most foreign countries will support harsh clampdowns on citizen rights across the Arab region if these are contextualized in the wider context of the "war on terror" or the battle to roll back Iranian influence.

## UNCERTAINTY FUTURE FOR ISLAMISTS

The Syrian war was the most important recent laboratory in the Arab region for the conduct of Islamist groups and their acceptance among Syrian society. Syria tested both militants such as al Qaeda and Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and more pragmatic and non-violent “moderates” such as the Muslim Brotherhood and dozens of smaller local and national groups. How the full range of Islamists fared in Syria should impact how they are perceived by populations and governments across the Middle East. The war years have resulted in double-edged consequences for Islamists of all kinds, whose anti-government activism, like that of secular opposition forces, seems likely to end in failure. Tens of thousands of hard-line jihadists in the al Qaeda or ISIS mould had five to six years in Syria to organize, train, coordinate and plan for the future, and some remain openly or covertly active there in pockets in the north-west and the south-east – though these will almost certainly be wiped out by state action by 2019.

Post-war Syria presents massive new constraints to new attempts by such groups that may seek to repeat the recent attempts to carve out territorial domains where they effectively enjoy sovereignty, as witnessed in the case of ISIS and, to a lesser extent, al Qaeda and its local Syrian offshoots including Jabhat al-Nusra and Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham. The Syrian experience suggests that for regional and global powers, countering growing threats from militant jihadists anchored in self-proclaimed statelets will remain a higher priority than addressing the threats that emanate from vicious states or collapsing socio-economic orders.

Beyond the fate of the hardline jihadi Islamists, the Syrian war also leaves unclear the fate of the “moderate” and more pragmatic Islamists, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, that have usually been willing to engage in political activity according to rules set by the state (Morocco, Kuwait, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan are good examples in recent decades). These have faced harsh crackdowns since 2013 in Egypt and the UAE in particular, while their support from Turkey and Qatar remains erratic. Their failure to make headway as elements in the Syrian opposition leaves them as a future unknown quantity in Arab political life. This might portend new rivalries within Sunni Arab communities across the region, where different political Islamists that will emerge in these countries might try to gain legitimacy and ruling authority, which would reflect in part the Islamists’ poor showing in Syria.

# The international NGO triangle in the MENA region

**MÁTÉ SZALAI**

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The growing role of non-state actors (NSAs) has been an important feature of the globalized international order, especially in the post-bipolar era. Due to systemic changes taking place in recent decades, such entities have achieved indisputable relevance in decision-making and the management of economic and social affairs on the local, national and international level. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been no exception, especially in the light of the regional instability caused by the Arab uprisings in 2011.

Since the beginning of the decade, a wide range of NSAs have appeared or emerged as central players in different conflicts. The process of transnationalization and the emergence of non-state actors represents a field in which the embeddedness of the Middle Eastern regional system in the global system should be analysed. This paper focuses on the role of two types of entities through which such dynamics will be investigated. Firstly, “global” non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will be researched, namely those INGOs (international non-governmental organizations) that are not founded by individuals or organizations from the MENA region, but do operate in the MENA region. Secondly, to investigate the process from the other direction (namely how Middle Eastern NSAs affect the global order), Middle Eastern NGOs with considerable activity outside the region will be analysed. While the transnational arena is dominated by non-state actors, the role of states is considerable and should also be included in the investigation. (...)

The main argument of the paper is that beyond the state-level dimension, the transnational field has witnessed a process of integration of the Middle Eastern domestic and regional orders in the global order. More importantly, this process not only exposes the MENA to global developments but also strengthens the agency of Middle Eastern actors to influence the global agenda. The major question in this regard is the extent to which this agency belongs to independent organizations or, on the contrary, whether they are just another tool for Middle Eastern states to pursue their interests on the global level.

## **TRANSNATIONALIZATION IN WORLD POLITICS AND IN THE MENA REGION**

One of the core features of the post-bipolar global order has been the shrinking leverage of the modern state. Primarily due to the technological, economic and social changes that took place in the second half of the 20th century, the Westphalian state lost its perceived monopoly not just in international affairs, but in domestic affairs as well. This process was accompanied by the necessary rise of different types of non-state actors which can play, among others, supportive, complementary, competitive or disruptive roles vis-à-vis the state in which they operate.

This process led to a phenomenon often described as transnationalization, which “refers to overlapping ties and linkages of non-state actors between various national states”. This essentially reflects the “movement of people, information, and goods in the global arena [...], a movement of culture, a globalization of meaning”. In this framework, transnational relations equal “contacts, coalitions, and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments”. The phenomenon does not erase the role of nation-states, but it does reshape the environment in which they operate and form their domestic and foreign policies.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are one of the primary players in this new transnationalized global world order. NGOs can be defined as “autonomous organisations that are non-governmental, that is, they are not instrumentalities of government; and non-profit, that is not distributing revenue as income to owners; and formal, legal entities”. Based on this very broad definition, a wide range of different entities can be labelled as NGOs, “irrespective of their forms, formal status or aims”.

Naturally, an NGO whose activities transcend national borders, or that operates in a country different from that in which it is based, can be called an international NGO, or INGO. The first such entity was created in 1840, and by 1915 their number reached 1,080. Developments in the 20th century paved the way for the creation and growing importance of INGOs- by 1990, there were more than 30,000 such entities. The main reasons behind this huge rise include the decline of state power, the articulation of global and international problems (which cannot be dealt with by a single nation-state), the denationalization of multinational corporations and, last but not least, developments in communications and information technologies.

Despite the limited attention paid to them in public discourse and in the literature, “INGOs have a profound impact on international law, international regime formation, national politics and the quality of life within individual countries”, and thus they have become an integral part of the global

order and global governance in almost all fields of politics. In 2000, approximately half of the world's INGOs pursued activities in either economic development and infrastructure or research, but many also worked to provide social services, policy advocacy, cultural and recreational goods, religious, educational, environmental or health issues, or general politics and defence.

Perceptions of INGOs differ in the literature and have been harshly criticized by certain actors. Generally, "in an era of privatization and democratization, international policy makers hypothesize that NGOs can articulate political liberalism, complement private sector initiatives and extend a social safety net to supplement or replace government services". On the other hand, they can be seen as inseparable from the European and American cultural and political context in international politics, being a "small and elite collection of [...] organizations which are based in the most powerful political and cultural capitals of the West". Consequently, a very common and recurring critique of the work of INGOs is that despite their advertised independence, they actually promote a partisan political agenda. "They present themselves as apolitical, as not interested in the political character of a state, although they clearly seek to vindicate liberal values in non-Western societies". From this perspective, they are very similar to interest groups, as they "rely on the same range of tactics, including inside lobbying, public education, protest and demonstration, and judicial action, in roughly the same proportion as traditional interest groups". Even if one agrees with the general activities and aims of INGOs, several reservations can be expressed regarding their practical operation, including the "lack of regulation, amateurism, lack of co-ordination with the public sector, duplication, competition for resources, sub-standard work, and lack of sustainability".

Another problem associated with the rise of NGOs is the spread of GONGOs, namely government-sponsored non-governmental organizations. Perceiving the process of transnationalization and the growing role of the non-state sector, several governments have overseen and initiated the creation of NGOs which, either directly or through funding, work as a foreign policy tool and lack real agency. Nevertheless, one should not overgeneralize the phenomenon of GONGOs – some can be benign, some are irrelevant, but many can be dangerous by serving as a disguised tool controlled by states. The differentiation of NGOs from GONGOs can be problematic not just for society, but also for other states and international organizations.

Transnationalization and the growing role of NGOs and INGOs has affected the MENA region as well. In the 1990s, their number grew exponentially due to the "confluence of wide-ranging [...] domestic and international trends", including:

- education and urbanization, and the transnational movement of information and knowledge;
- national state policies aimed at suppressing or co-opting non-state actors and opposition parties, both of which can lead to the strengthening of NGOs;
- the changing policies of traditional international development aid actors (including international organizations and Western INGOs) which shows the trend to provide material and non-material resources not just to state actors but more and more to non-state actors; and, in parallel,
- the shifting strategy of global state actors to rely more and more on non-state actors in achieving their foreign policy goals, not just in the MENA region but all over the world, a shift we can call the “neo-democratization approach” or the “extension of the neoliberal world order”.

Naturally, in a region where state structures are inherently weak in many respects, the presence of NGOs is not surprising. The constant and often violent rivalry between elite groups in MENA countries vying for control over the state and state institutions does not incentivize politicians to provide for the needs of society in terms of representation and material and non-material welfare to a greater extent than is necessary to secure some form of legitimacy. This creates a constant demand from the side of society for non-state actors and also creates the possibility for INGOs and donor actors to play a role in domestic politics and the civil sphere of a given country.

In response, the states – perceiving their weakness all over the world, including in the MENA region – tried to prevent NGOs from gaining strength. As Rouven Symank observes,

*Today, however, this momentum [of NGOs] – or at least the perception of its dynamics – has fundamentally changed. In a climate of re-emerging nationalism and protectionism, several NGOs and Member States of the UN have complained about an increasingly restrictive stance towards civil society and argue that the principles of the UN are being undermined by such trends. Numerous articles write about “crack-downs” on civil society not only in Russia and China, but also in Egypt, Azerbaijan, and, more recently, Turkey.*

The backlash against NGOs in the MENA region actually started years before the Arab uprisings. In 1996, the Ministries of Interior Committee of the League of Arab Nations identified NGOs (and human rights NGOs in particular) as a threat to their national security. Subsequently MENA governments implemented an increasingly aggressive and diverse toolkit to harass civil activists. As a result, according to Pitner, local NGOs had three options: to obtain funding from government bodies and draw closer to the state itself; to collect money from foreign actors and circumvent

the state; or to set a specific, independent agenda and accept subsidies only from partners that totally respected their autonomy. Forcing NGOs to find international partners had a very interesting and unintentional

**Although the role of non-state actors has increased significantly in the MENA region since 2011, the state institutions, sensing their loss of power, can easily fight back**

effect, namely that it accelerated the integration of the MENA region into the global order and created a dynamic and

asymmetric net of relations between various actors which we describe as the “INGO triangle”.

### **THE “INGO TRIANGLE”**

In order to interpret the role, activities and dilemmas of INGOs operating in the MENA region through case studies and thus to shed light on the effects of the transnationalization of global politics on the regional and domestic orders, a simplified model labelled the “INGO triangle” will be used in the investigation.

This model is essentially a network of three vertices, with each vertex representing an actor. The first is the non-state actor we will examine here – an NGO receiving support or funds from abroad, or an INGO operating in different countries. The second is the host state (HS), namely the MENA country or the extra-regional country in which the examined NGO is operating. The third vortex is the foreign partner (FP) of the first actor – a state or intergovernmental institution that subsidizes the NGO/INGO, for example, or an INGO that cooperates with the NGO in question. Naturally, oftentimes an NGO/INGO has several foreign partners at the same time, so we can include multiple actors in this vortex.

In this network, we can identify three edges which represent the interactions between the different actors. The three types of connections are characterized by different dynamics:

- (i) The NGO/INGO and the host state: several factors affect the relationship between the HS and the NGO/INGO. The attitude of the HS towards the NGO/INGO is essentially based on a political decision about whether the activities of the specific NGO/INGO can be regarded as posing a political challenge to the government. If not, several other possibilities remain: they can complement the activities of the state or even support and strengthen its position in the country (by helping to conduct its functions or providing legitimacy). Although the role of non-state actors has increased significantly in the MENA region since 2011, the state institutions, sensing their loss of power, can easily fight back. Therefore, paradoxically, the weakness of states does not necessarily translate into

peaceful coexistence, but often results in harsh crackdowns on the civil sphere. The political decision made by the HS is hugely dependent on the sector in which the NGO/INGO operates –in politically sensitive fields (e.g., human rights, gender equality, sexual and reproductive rights, legislation, security, etc.) the chance of the NGO/INGO being securitized is much higher than in other areas, for example education (e.g., providing free English language lessons), culture or the economy.

- (ii) The NGO/INGO and the foreign partner: in this case, we can expect a cooperative relationship between the NGO/INGO and the FP (although not exclusively). The interaction between these actors can be modelled as an interaction based on the perception of common interests – the FP provides material or non-material resources to the NGO/INGO, while the latter usually accepts a specific framework of aims, *modus operandi* or other kinds of donor requirements. The exact flexibility of this framework of aims and the remaining leverage of the recipient NGO/INGO vary significantly – if the aims and operational philosophy of the actors overlap perfectly, there is no additional political burden put on the NGO/INGO (which is the perfect scenario for them), but in practice, the recipient often has to fulfil some donor expectations. In addition, the FP might require information sharing, administrative work or other forms of output from the NGO/INGO. In some cases, especially if the foreign partner is a non-MENA state and the examined INGO is seated in this non-MENA state, the relationship can be strained as well, especially if there is a change of government in the non-MENA state or if political disagreements exist between the two actors.
- (iii) The host state and the foreign partner: from the perspective of the present study, the most interesting question regarding the relationship between the HS and FP is how the dynamics between these two actors affect the position and the circumstances of the NGO/INGO in the host state or *vis-à-vis* the foreign partner. Naturally, if the HS and the FP maintain hostile relations (for example, Syria and the United States), the NGO/INGO which operates in the former but receives funds from the latter faces difficult dilemmas in its activity, for example whether it should disclose the existence of its relationship with the FP. This is especially difficult if the FP requires all of its partners to publish the origins of the subsidies it provides. Naturally, the question is more sensitive if the foreign partner is a state and not an international organization in which the host state is also a member. That is why the United Nations and other global international governmental organizations (IGOs) can serve as a less sensitive foreign partner for NGOs. From another perspective, both the FP and the HS can use the NGO/INGO to their advantage, thus corrupting the work of the NGO/INGO to become a foreign policy tool.



The three interactions (NGO/INGO-HS; NGO/INGO-FP; HS-FP) do not exist independently from each other, but continuously affect one another. Neither the host state nor the foreign partner has complete oversight over the relationship between the NGO/INGO and the third member of the triangle. Thus, if the HS and the FP have a bad relationship, both might be suspicious of the NGO/INGO and perceive it in the context of their bilateral relationship (even as a GONGO). In examining specific cases, one has to take these dynamics into account. (...)

### **CASE STUDY: THE GLOBAL CENTRE FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT**

The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect was established in February 2008 with the primary aim to contribute to the general acceptance among societies globally of the responsibility to protect (R2P) norm.

The R2P is one of the most discussed norms to have emerged in the 21st century, although its exact meaning, scope and applicability are widely debated. The basis of the content of the norm is twofold (see UN General Assembly Resolution 60/1). Firstly, it proclaims that “each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”. Secondly, it also suggests that

*the international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.*

Contrary to popular belief, the R2P doctrine does not create a new legal foundation for intervention, as the UN General Assembly resolution cited above clearly states that the responsibility of the international community should be exercised in accordance with the UN Charter.

While the first practical application of the norm took place in 2011 in the form of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973 (which provided legal grounds for the intervention of Western powers in the Libyan civil war by the creation of a no-fly zone), the exact position of R2P is not fixed in the international legal system.

While the creators of the norm hoped for universal acceptance, many debate the moral and practical logic behind the R2P doctrine. David Bosco argues that the idea is structurally flawed as its success will always be “ambiguous and debatable”.

Nonetheless, the R2P attracted the attention of many scholars, policy-makers and activists who thought that if the norm became a generally accepted one, it could have a positive effect on international politics. Many

state and non-state actors championed the R2P doctrine and started to actively promote it on the global level. As Peter Hilpold rightly observes, the scope of the transnational “alliance” that has formed to promote the R2P doctrine, which includes different actors from different spheres and regions, is quite unique in the international system.

One such entity is the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P). According to its mission statement, the goal of the organization is “to promote universal acceptance and effective operational implementation of the norm of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’” and it “seeks to transform the principle [...] into a practical guide for action in the face of mass atrocities”. The GCR2P’s activities include providing advocacy and recommendations, conducting research and reports while also cooperating with other state and non-state actors to operationalize the R2P doctrine. In this way, the GCR2P is among the actors contributing to international politics, mostly through “pressing for action, research, policy analysis and idea-mongering”.

GCR2P represents the NGO/INGO in the INGO triangle, but it has many connections in terms of both host states and foreign partners. The INGO monitors fifteen countries, but its work has been most visible in the case of Iraq since July 2013. In terms of foreign partners, GCR2P operates from New York and Geneva, but according to its website it receives financial support from nineteen states, as well as from several foundations and individuals. Most of its reports and public recommendations are made specifically to the United Kingdom, so it could be a fair choice for its primary foreign partner. Moreover, the list of patrons of the institution includes, among others, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Desmond Tutu and former Jordanian Crown Prince El Hassan bin Talal. In this case the relationship between the FPs and the HS (Iraq) is officially cordial, therefore we can expect limited tension regarding the work of the GCR2P in the country, even if the work of the INGO relates to a politically sensitive topic.

Since the beginning of 2013, the GCR2P has published twenty-seven “Atrocity Alerts” to monitor the humanitarian crisis in Iraq. These reports are sent to all permanent representatives to the UN, so they have the potential to shape the understanding of states about the situation in Iraq. During the summer of 2014, the GCR2P contributed to the ongoing debate about a possible intervention in Iraq, eventually proclaiming that the activities of the international coalition against the Islamic State (IS) were in accordance with the R2P norm. Later, the GCR2P played a watchdog role and monitored the atrocities committed not just by the Islamic State but also those of the American-led intervention and the Iraqi government. In February 2017, they raised the issue of collective punishment in the fight against the Islamic State. In many cases, both the Iraqi central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) were open to engaging with the GCR2P regarding cases related to the atrocities committed by the IS.

**TABLE SIGNATORIES TO MULTILATERAL ARMS CONTROL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS**



	NonProliferation Treaty (NPT)	Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)	Geneva Protocol	Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)	Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)	Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC)	Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)
Algeria	1995	1996/2003	1992	1993/1995	2001		
Bahrain	1998	1996/2004	1988	1993/1997	1988		
Egypt	1968/1981	1996	1925/1928		1972		
Iran	1968/1970	1996	1929	1993/1997	1972/1973	2002	
Iraq	1968/1969	2008/2013	1931	2009	1972/1991		
<b>Israel</b>		1996	1969	1993		2002	
Jordan	1968/1970	1996/1998	1977	1997	1972/1975		
Kuwait	1968/1989	1996/2003	1971	1993/1997	1972/1972		
Lebanon	1968/1970	2005/2008	1969	2008	1972/1975	2002	
Libya	1968/1975	2001/2004	1971	2004	1982		
Mauritania	1993	1996/2003		1993/1998		2002	
Morocco	1968/1970	1996/2000	1970	1993/1995	1972/2002		
Oman	1997	1990/2001		1993/1998	1992		
Qatar	1989	1996/1997	1976	1993/1997	1972/1975		
S. Arabia	1988		1971	1993/1996	1972/1972		
Somalia	1968/1970			2013	1972		
Sudan	1968/1973	2004/2004	1980	1999	2003		
Syria	1968/1969		1968	2013*	1972	2002	
Tunisia	1968/1970	1996/2004	1967	1993/1997	1972/1973	2002	
Turkey	1969/1980	1996/2000	1929	1993/1997	1972/1974		
UAE	1995	1996/2000		1993/2000	1972/2008		
Yemen	1968/1986	1996	1971	1993/2000	1972/1979		

Signed and ratified
  Signed but not ratified
  Not signed

\* Assad's government sent a letter to the United Nations Secretary General announcing that his government had signed a decree providing the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention

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Compilation & analysis: Erzsébet R6zsa & Oriol Farres.

The most visible achievement of the GCR2P's work regarding Iraq is its contribution to UN Security Council Resolution 2379, which requests "the Secretary-General to establish an Investigative Team, headed by a Special Adviser, to support domestic efforts to hold" the Islamic State "accountable by collecting, preserving, and storing evidence in Iraq of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide [...] to the highest possible standards". The Investigative Team respects the sovereignty of Iraq; therefore, this act was not securitized by the Iraqi government. The role of GCR2P in the process is, naturally, not completely visible; nonetheless, according to their account they "worked closely [...] with the Iraqi and UK governments and with other UN Security Council members, for the establishment of the investigative mechanism". The creation of an Investigative Team was in line with the previous work of the GCR2P in raising the topic of bringing jihadists to justice in Iraq. For example, in September 2016 (one year before the adoption of UNSCR 2379), the GCR2P issued a joint statement with Amnesty International and Yazda in which they called on the UN Security Council to assist "in providing justice for the victims of Da'esh's mass atrocity crimes by working with Iraq and other states to establish a relevant mechanism of international justice".

After the adaptation of UNSCR 2379, the Centre criticized the "limited focus" of the resolution, arguing that the investigative body should not concentrate only on the atrocities committed by the Islamic State, but on those of other actors as well, especially if they were the result of sectarian violence. In this regard, the statement is clearly meant to criticize the Iraqi Defence Forces and to urge the government (and the international community) to investigate these crimes as well. In addition, they recommended "the government of Iraq [to] adopt enabling legislation to incorporate genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity into domestic law".

All in all, the GCR2P demonstrates a clear case of an NGO working on issues related to security and humanitarian intervention at the international level. Its primary aim is to shape the international agenda and to help the Iraqi state through legislation. Its relationship with both the HS and the FP seems cordial, as no critical public statements have been found. Nonetheless, the GCR2P has been criticized in the Middle Eastern media, especially in relation to its endorsement of the US-led intervention in Iraq in 2014. According to the argument, "This is the most recent of many examples of justifications for the bombing that have been made in terms of the Responsibility to Protect." In this regard, the GCR2P is credited with discursive power when it comes to framing a specific intervention. From a broader perspective, this watchdog role helps the actual operationalization of the R2P doctrine and provides the theoretical concept with substance (especially with regard to its practical requirements).

The role and activities of GCR2P represent an example of two interesting developments regarding the embeddedness of the MENA regional system in the global order. Firstly, it shows how global NGOs can contribute to the diffusion of a norm appearing on the global agenda in both the regional (MENA) and the domestic (Iraq) sphere. Secondly, such global NGOs can use their successes and activities in the region to strengthen the role of the norm on the global level. Both processes strengthen what we can call the “normative integration” of the MENA system into the global order, which means the acceptance, introduction, formation and alteration of global norms by regional actors.

# ANNEX 1

## Analysis of the MENARA fact-finding missions (2018)

Mustafa Kaymaz, Anna Busquest & Eduard Soler i Lecha

This report aims to provide an analysis of the interviews conducted under the scope of the MENARA Fact-Finding Missions. Three questions were asked to each respondent: (1) Which are the traditional or new actors that will shape the future of the Middle East and North Africa? Why? (2) Which are according to you the three main risks and the three main opportunities that the MENA region is facing? (3) Do you envisage a more or a less active European Union in the MENA region in the years to come? And what would you expect from it? This report was produced to make quantifiable and analyzable the responses given to these three open-ended questions. (...)

### THE SAMPLE

There are 269 respondents in the sample. In addition to their responses to the said three questions, the dataset contains information on gender, country where the interview was conducted, region of origin, age and professional category. The distribution of respondents is as follows:

**Gender:** Although respondents are not representative of the population, it reflects the male-dominated elite class. Nevertheless, the number of female respondents in the sample will allow us to make comparisons. This variable will enable us to see if there are gender differences in perceptions regarding influential actors, risks and opportunities, and the role of and expectations from the EU.

Gender	Frequency	%
Female	53	19.70
Male	191	71.00
Missing	25	9.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

**Country:** The country data shown in Table 2 represents where the interviews were conducted. This variable will help us identify the effect of geography on one's perceptions. We've grouped them in sub-regions when relevant.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Egypt	24	8.92
External (UK, Hungary, Russia, Canada, India, Switzerland, USA, China, Italy, Spain, Belgium, France)	66	24.54
Gulf (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman)	27	10.04
Iran	15	5.58
Levant (Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Israel)	51	18.96
Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya)	54	20.07
Sahel (Mali)	21	7.81
Turkey	11	4.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Region of origin:** This indicates whether a respondent is originally from the MENA or other regions (Non-MENA). This variable will help us understand differences, if any, between people of the region and external observers (e.g. diplomats).

<b>Region</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
MENA	173	64.31
Non-MENA	84	31.23
Missing	12	4.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Age Group:** Despite not representing the predominantly young demography of the region, the sample is representative of the age group of the decision-makers both in and out of the region. Nevertheless, it contains a significant number of young people which data will provide us if any, the generational gaps and differences of perceptions and expectations.

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
18-35	75	27.88
35-65	182	67.66
Over 65	12	4.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100.00</b>

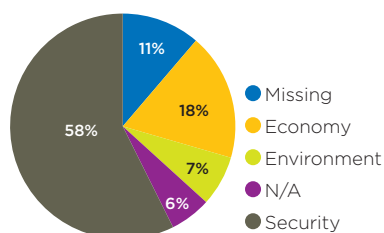
**Professional Category:** Next table indicates the professional categories of the respondents. It includes close numbers of the civil and public sectors. This variable will provide insights into the differences, if any, among people of various areas such as public officials, private sectors, and members of civil society, intellectuals, opinion makers, and activists.

Professional Category	Frequency	%
CSO, Intellectuals and Opinion-Makers, and Activists	115	42.75
Private Sector	22	8.18
State and Government Officials	130	48.33
Others	2	0.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100.00</b>

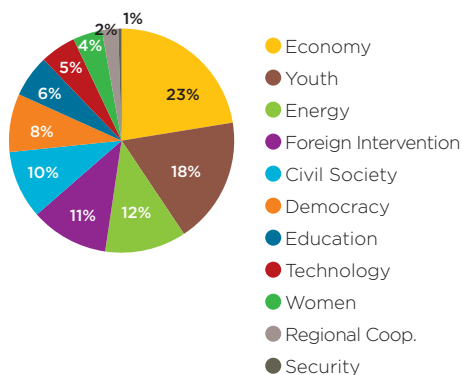
### WHICH ARE ACCORDING TO YOU THE THREE MAIN RISKS AND THE THREE MAIN OPPORTUNITIES THAT THE MENA REGION IS FACING?

We first categorized the risks provided by the respondents into three groups: economy (such as to poverty, income inequality, lack of diversification, decreasing oil prices, etc.), environment (such as while climate change, water scarcity, etc.), and security conflicts and wars, nuclear power competition, foreign intervention, armed non-state actors, etc.). In case the respondent did not provide any risks or opportunities, the answer was coded as N/A. We then codified the opportunities in their order provided by each respondent. Then, we followed the same procedure as we did in the first question to combine the risks and opportunities under separate variables. After removing empty cells, as some respondents provide only one or two risks and/or opportunities, our sample increased from 269 to 373. Missing cases occurred due to the respondents who provided only opportunities or risks.

#### RISKS MENTIONED



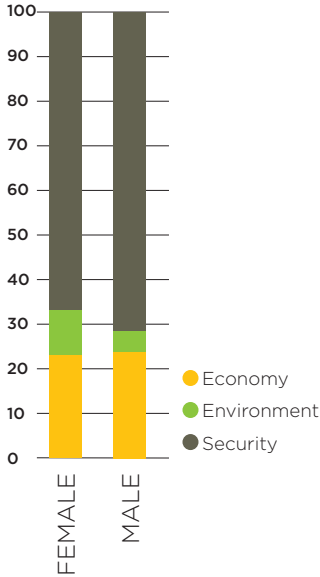
#### OPPORTUNITIES MENTIONED



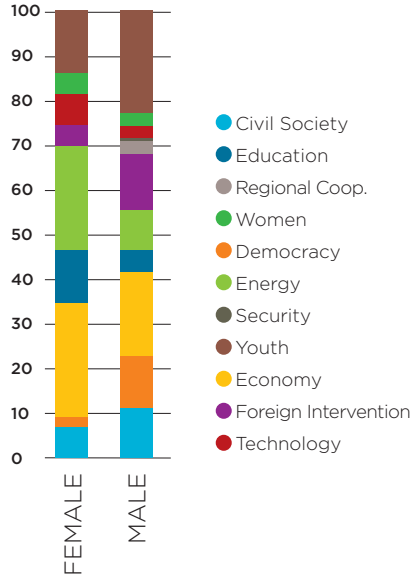


- a. Gender and risk/opportunities:** The proportion of environmental concerns is slightly higher among female respondents than that among males. Democracy's and youth's proportions are higher among males compared than that among females while economic opportunities, education, and energy have higher percentages among females.
- b. Location of interviews and risk/opportunities:** Environmental concerns are absent in interviews conducted in Turkey and less mentioned in Gulf countries and Iran while their proportion is the highest in Egypt. Civil society as an opportunity has a higher proportion in the interviews conducted in Iran, Turkey, Maghreb, and External countries while having a lower proportion in the Gulf, Levant, and Egypt. Democracy also has a higher percentage in Iran, Turkey, and the Sahel but a lower percentage in Egypt, the Maghreb, and Levant. Economic opportunities have higher proportions in Egypt, the Levant, and Gulf and lower proportions in the Sahel and Turkey. Energy, on the other hand, has higher percentages in the External, Maghreb and Sahel, countries but lower percentages in Iran and the Gulf and is completely absent in Egypt. While women's proportion is higher in Egypt, they are not mentioned in the Levant, Iran, and Turkey.
- c. Age group and risk/opportunities:** The risk distributions are almost identical among age groups 18-35 and 35-65 while the percentages of economic and environmental risks are slightly higher among those over 65. Compared to the age groups 18-35 and 35-65, the proportions of economic opportunities are lower among those over 65. Education, on the other hand, has a lower percentage among the age group 35-65. Another interesting finding is that foreign intervention is mentioned as not perceived as opportunity by younger and older respondents. Regional cooperation's percentage is higher among the age group 35-65 but lower among the age group 18-35 while being absent among those over 65. Finally, it is interesting that youth has a higher proportion among the age group 35-65 than both age groups 18-35 and over 65.
- d. Professional category and risk/opportunities:** The 'CSO members, intellectuals, opinion-makers, and activists' and 'state and government officials' have similar risk distributions while the private sector category has a slightly higher percentage of security risks at the expense of environmental risks. Civil society is absent in the private sector category while the economy has a higher proportion in the same group. Compared to the other two groups, the 'state and government officials' category has a lower percentage for democracy as an opportunity. Foreign intervention, on the other hand, is absent in the private sector category. Finally, compared to the other two groups, the CSO members, intellectuals, opinion-makers, and activists have lower percentages for women and youth.

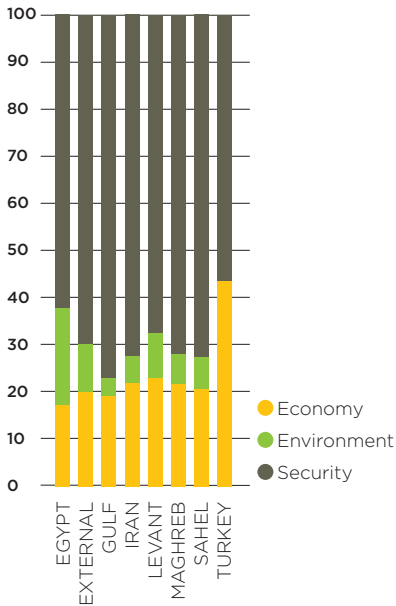
### RISKS BY GENDER



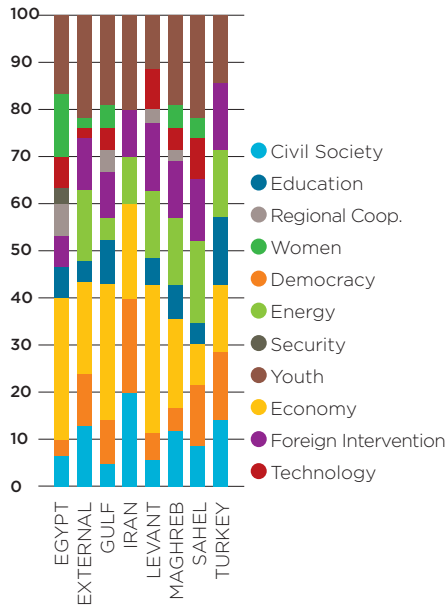
### OPPORTUNITIES BY GENDER



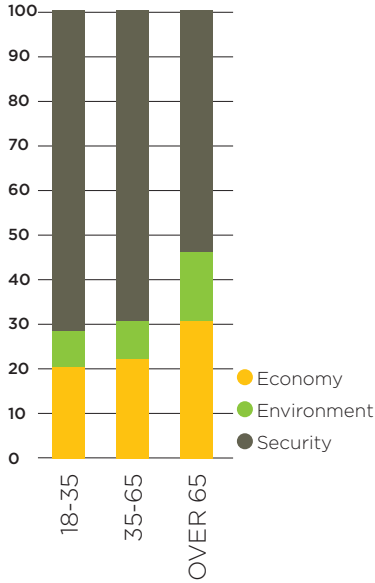
### RISKS BY COUNTRY



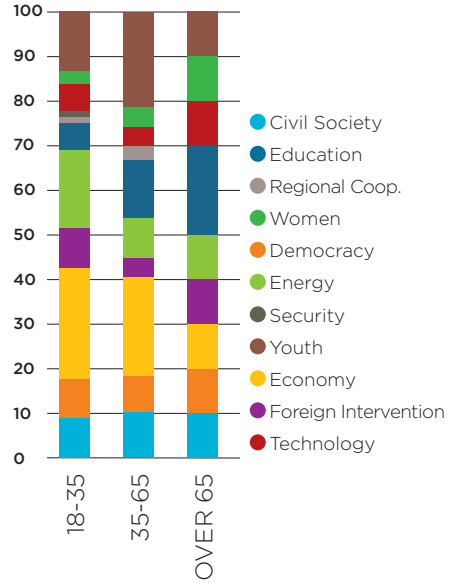
### OPPORTUNITIES BY COUNTRY



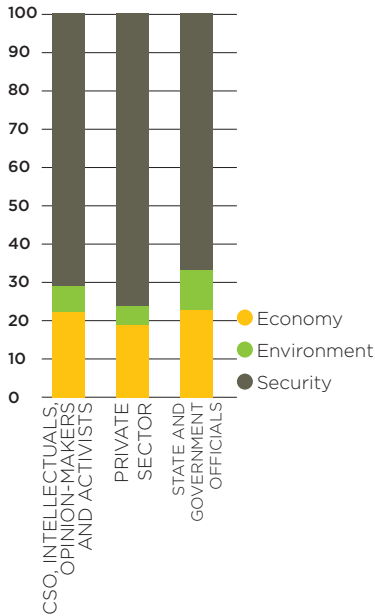
### RISKS BY AGE GROUP



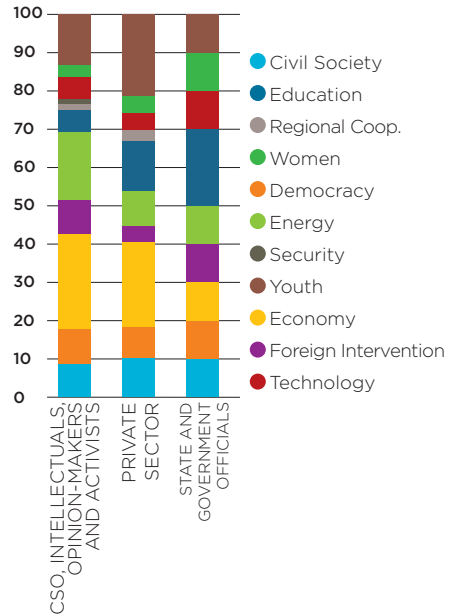
### OPPORTUNITIES BY AGE GROUP



### RISKS BY PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY



### OPPORTUNITIES BY PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY



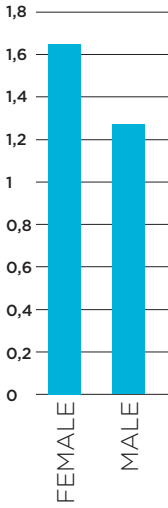
## WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF HOPE ON THE FUTURE OF THE MENA REGION?

This section provides the level of hope observed among the participants as to the future of the MENA region. We codified the responses that either mentions that “there is no opportunity” or list risks without mentioning opportunities as “0”. If the number of risks provided is higher than that of opportunities, the code is “1”. Code “2” means that the respondent listed equal numbers of risks and opportunities. The responses containing a higher number of opportunities than risks were given “3” while those mentioning only opportunities but no risks were coded as “4.” Finally “N/A” means the respondent did not give an answer to the question.

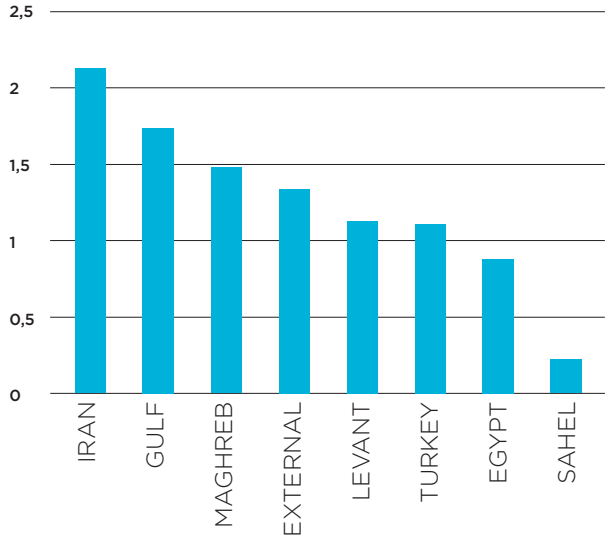
The average level of hope in our sample is 1.29 that is a view closer to pessimism but still containing elements of hope. The following tables and figures show the average level of hope among subgroups of responses based on the gender, region of origin, age group, and professional category of respondents as well as the country where the interview was conducted.

- a. Gender and average level of hope: The level of hope among female respondents was above the general average while being lower among males.
- b. Location of interview and average level of hope: The level of hope was highest in interviews conducted in Iran and the Gulf while it was lowest in Egypt and the Sahel.
- c. Region of origin and average level of hope: The levels of hope among those of MENA origins and external observers were close to the general average while it was slightly higher among the former and lower the latter.
- d. Age group and average level of hope: The level of hope among those over 65 was lower than the general average while it was slightly higher than the average among the age group 35-65.
- e. Professional category and average level of hope: There is a more hopeful private sector and a less optimistic state and government sector.

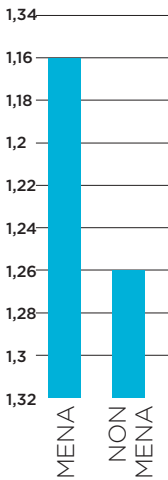
**LEVEL OF HOPE BY GENDER**



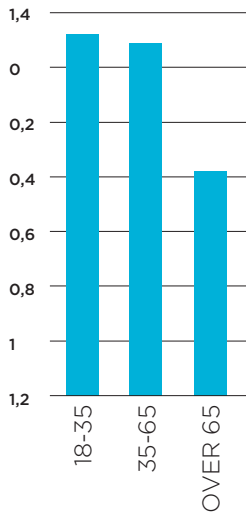
**LEVEL OF HOPE BY COUNTRY**



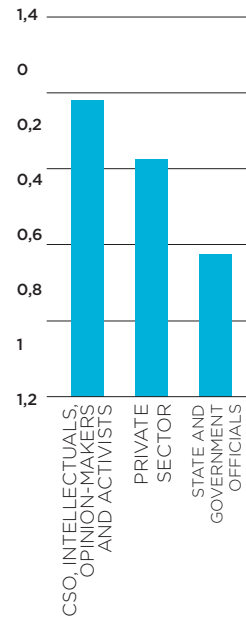
**LEVEL OF HOPE BY REGION**



**LEVEL OF HOPE BY AGE GROUP**



**LEVEL OF HOPE BY PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY**





**Middle East and North Africa  
Regional Architecture: Mapping  
geopolitical shifts, regional order  
and domestic transformations**

**(MENARA)** is a research project that aims to shed light on domestic dynamics and bottom-up perspectives in the Middle East and North Africa amid increasingly volatile and uncertain times.

**MENARA** maps the driving variables and forces behind these dynamics and poses a single all-encompassing research question: Will the geopolitical future of the region be marked by either centrifugal or centripetal dynamics or a combination of both? In answering this question, the project is articulated around three levels of analysis (domestic, regional and global) and outlines future scenarios for 2025 and 2050. Its final objective is to provide EU Member States policy makers with valuable insights.

**MENARA** is carried out by a consortium of leading research institutions in the field of international relations, identity and religion politics, history, political sociology, demography, energy, economy, military and environmental studies.



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This work reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.