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Background Paper

YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN TUNISIA, EGYPT, ALGERIA, MOROCCO AND LEBANON

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Contents

Introduction

This background paper came out of a collaborative writing process. The paper was in the beginning titled as "*youth mobilization and political participation",* and reformulated through the process to the form of "*youth political engagement*" (where "youth engagement" is many times enough). This new main concept was collectively seen to fit better the diverse ways of youth engagement, preserving recognition of different activities and ways to engage also outside the formal (political) institutions. This formulation allows us to explore in different locations and settings, boundaries of youth political engagement.

Therefore, we propose that the definition of "youth political engagement" should be left open for each of research team's analytical objectives in different spaces and times. For example, playing football, wearing a veil, searching for a job or young people's sexual behaviour can also be politically engaged decisions. One of the results in the SAHWA project could be to identify the criteria that allow us to talk about youth engagement in Arab Mediterranean countries and the ways young people actively conduct/argue/perform these in their everyday lives.

The concept of "Arab Spring" was also collectively seen as a problematic concept[1]. As it is a Western media concept, orientalist, lumping all North-African countries, uncritically reproduced phrase pointing incorrectly to "Arab" even many other citizens in addition to Arabs were involved in the mobilizations / awakenings / demands for recognizing different rights to human dignity. And it was not only a season of spring (referring weakly to Eastern-European revolutions like "Prague Spring") either. It all started at the winter time. Dropping the term "Arab Spring" and actively searching for something more accurate is suggested as a starting point for SAHWA research project.

Emma Murphy (2012) has pointed out how "Arab youth" is not a single social category and proposes combining various paradigms. This way "Arab youth becomes visible as a lived and shared generational narrative of the exclusion and marginalization which have resulted from post-independence state failures in the political, economic and social realms. Their subsequent informal and alternative formats for protest and action reveal the links between the local and the global of youth narratives" (ibid., 5).

This background paper consists of three parts. In the first section the diversity of youth engagement is introduced with an overall frame of youth engagements by introducing a cross-table of conventional and non-conventional youth engagements in local, national and transnational/global levels. This cross-table aims to shed light to the everyday-life politics of ordinary young citizens (see Bayat 2009) as well as to different ways young people use their political knowledge and expertise inside different political institutions – also as voters. This framework is proposed to support awareness of the wide diversity of youth political

[1] See for example:
- "Please reconsider the term Arab Spring" http://www.huffingtonpost.com/maytha-alhassen/please-reconsider-arab-sp_b_1268971.html
- Drop the Orientalist term 'Arab Spring' http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Columnist/2011/Aug-17/146410-drop-the-orientalist-term-arab-spring.ashx#axzz3CA7JhIIR
- The 'Arab Spring' and other American seasons: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201282972539153865.html

engagement in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Lebanon. In addition to the main research questions, some further research questions are provided under different types of youth engagement. In the second section Elizabeth Saleh and Fadma Ait Mous provides perspectives to the earlier studies on youth political engagement in two of the five Sawha project countries, Lebanon and Morocco.

PART 1. Diversity of youth political engagement (Sofia Laine)

As justified in the project application for SAHWA, Work Package 3 (WP3) deals with "Youth empowerment: mobilization, social movements, political participation and social media". The aim of this WP is to generate new knowledge on patterns of youth mobilizations, social organizations and other forms of political engagement. The common starting point for the entire research project is the turning year 2010/2011. This WP focus more on processes and forms of activism from the 2010/2011 until the present time, rather than empirical explanations of concrete mobilizations.

To start with the concept of political participation, Jan W. van Deth defines (2001, 5) it as:

> First political participation refers to people in their role as *citizens* and not, say, as politicians or civil servants. Second, political participation is understood as an *activity* ('action') – simply watching television or claiming to be curious about politics does not constitute participation. Third, the activities of citizens we define as political participation should be *voluntary* and not ordered by the ruling class or obliged under some law or rule. Finally, political participation *concerns government and politics* in a broad sense of these words ('political system') and is neither restricted to specific phases (such as parliamentary decision making, or the 'input' side of the political system), nor to specific levels or areas […]. (Italics in the original version)

To shortly open the concepts marked with italics, the first one (i.e. citizen) shows how the concept of political participation is many times strongly interwoven with the citizenship discussion. According to the definition of the multi-level citizenship, individuals are able to be simultaneously members of different political communities at a variety of spatial scales (from local to global) and of various non-territorial social groups, such as religions, sexual minorities or ethnic diasporas (Painter 2002, 94; Frey 2003, 97–99; Soysal 1994).

To combine the concepts of political participation and mobilization, the concept of *political engagement* is proposed as it extends the analytical scope of 'political participation' and its general focus on formal processes of participatory politics into the multiple and coinciding spheres of everyday life (e.g. work, family, studies, friends and leisure groups). The expression "political engagement" allows to see forms of political intervention under non-conventional forms of action and organizations. It involves examining the forms, content, and origins of the stakes young actors have and act upon in a given setting (Mahler 2007, 237; Pleyers 2010). Current literature emphasises the need to study young actors' political engagements on several inter-linked levels, but there is little empirical research dealing with a multi-layered approach involving several countries in one project, like SAHWA. Here the

multi-layered approach refers both to survey and qualitative research local national researchers are conducting in different geographical locations, and to several different interlinked themes of the study.

As was jointly formulated during and after the SAHWA project meeting in Rabat in June 2014, the main research questions related to youth engagement are:

> *What are the underlying conditions of youth engagement and mobilization in Arab Mediterranean countries? What are the forms, factors, causes and means of youth participation? Who are the politically active youth and whom do they represent?*

The following framework is something to develop and discuss further with the SAHWA project partners, whether this is a useful collective starting point or not.

The concept of time is relevant even invisible in this framework. It is important to notice that there exist one-time and short-time (e.g. elections, demonstrations or other events limited in time) as well as long-time political engagement (e.g. involvement in social movements, political parties, NGOs etc.). Another interesting theoretical question to address about "political engagement" is what kinds of conflicts it includes: inergenerational, intra-generational, gendered, ethnic, religious? Inside or only between different groups, cultures and social classes?

	Informal Engagement (non-conventional)	**Formal Engagement (conventional)**
Local Engagement (city centres, neighbourhoods)	demonstrations, flash-mobs/performances, networks/movements, reclaiming public space, invisible or quiet activism of everyday-life (see e.g. Bayat 2009)	NGO's, student unions and registered associations
National Engagement (national agoras)	demonstrations, networks/movements	**NGO's, political parties, student unions and religious organisations**
Global/ International Engagement (transnational/global agoras)	global youth cultures/trends, World Social Forum (esp. Tunis 2013 and 2015), Pan-Arab informal social movements/networks, demonstrations	**NGO's, regional, global (e.g. League of Arab States, Euro-Mediterranean Youth Co-operation, international development co-operation concerning youth political participation), religious organisations**

As discussed in the Rabat meeting, in some of the cases it might be difficult and even unnecessary to separate local and national political engagements from each other. By underlining the spatial dimension we wish the study to show how local political engagement might be linked to national, international and even global spheres – and how global phenomena (e.g. social movements) localise themselves in the five research countries. Here the role of web and social media needs to be carefully analysed. For example, in the case of the social movements, the social media sites may provide a crucial sphere for global (and virtual) self-representation, in addition to the local (and much more physical) self-representation.

The data in the SAHWA research project accumulates both from a survey and qualitative fieldwork. The framework presented above gives equal attention to formal (conventional) and informal (non-conventional) political engagement. As a primary hypothesis, it seems that the conventional political engagement will be easier to reach through survey than the unconventional. What is more, the diversity that the qualitative data will provide is at this stage of the project seen as a way to access information especially on the unconventional political engagement.

This said, the framework could be expanded for example with the dimensions of conflict or connection (e.g. are conventional and non-conventional political engagement among the youth connected or conflicting?), or focusing more closely to the skills required to become involved in conventional or non-conventional politics.

In the following part a short description, some examples as well as some of the major research perspectives of each dimension are listed. What should be carefully kept in mind is the fact that many times youth engagement starts on the local level and builds up to national and transnational levels. What is more, one young person can be active in many different ways, and many times activism accumulates. The ones who are in involved in mobilizations and other forms of political participation are active in many different ways on local, national and transnational levels. On the other hand there are young people who step aside from all types of engagements.

This framework is at this point of the project solely used by methodological reasons. In the reality certain points of youth engagement overlap much more. We wish that the framework could be some kind of tool, helping to formulate the research plan and research questions.

Young people have different amount of resources and freedom for their political participation. As Amartya Sen (2001) has argued, different kinds of freedoms are tied together. Young people either possess or lack political freedoms (i.e. opportunities to enter political spheres and/or participate in political dialogues, dissent and critique), economic resources (i.e. in order to engage) and social opportunities (i.e. knowledge of languages, an understanding of political systems and a familiarity with the right people or an active role in the networks or organisations that support their participation). As Beverly Skeggs (2004:17) writes:

> Different bodies carry unequal values depending on their position in space, on their cultural baggage – the capitals they embody. Inscribed bodies literally

> embody entitlements. They move in space "as if they know it", which in the tradition of possessive individualism or in the conversion of propriety into property, they do!

Non-conventional political engagement is rooted in experience, subjectivity and creativity, rather than in the abstract figures and expertise that characterises the conventional political participation (see also Pleyers, 2010: 104). Young actors who are non-conventionally engaged many times create new practices of participation. They might use embodied techniques to provide new perspectives for the discussions, focusing on the practices of here and now. By contrast, youth involved in conventional political engagement many times have technical and abstract knowledge and popular education (see also Pleyers, 2010: 110). These youth analyse policies and current debates in a precise area, construct rational and theoretical alternatives, confront opposing experts and attempt to convince policy makers (ibid.: 118–120).

In addition, Henrik Bang (2009, 131) has argued that the actors of conventional political engagement possess a necessary expertise for exercising influence in elite networks, and many times try to place negotiation and dialogue before antagonism and opposition. In his definition of non-conventional political engagement, he lists actor's most used statements (2009, 132) such as:

- Do it yourself
- Do it where you are
- Do it for fun, but also because it is necessary
- Do it ad hoc or part time
- Do it concretely, instead of ideologically
- Do it self-confidently and show trust in yourself
- Do it with the system, if need be.

One of the questions to be answered in the SAHWA project is whether incoming cohorts introduce new policies, new ways of practising politics, and change their societies, which will depend on whether they have formed themselves into new political generations or factions thereof. This is unlikely to happen if they have never mobilised in opposition to incumbents. Even then, it will be argued, a new generation may not prove radical once in power, and even if it acts radically, this will not necessarily mean implementing the agenda around which the generation mobilised as young challengers.

PART 2. Starting the Kaleidoscope: Inputs from Lebanon and Morocco

For this second part, researchers Elizabeth Saleh and Fadma Ait Mous provided up-to-date literature and study reviews on youth political engagement from Lebanon and Morocco. In addition Kamel Boucherf provided a list of literature from Algeria (see Appendix 1). Before country-specific contributions, few recent studies on the Arab Mediterranean youth political engagement more generally needs to be mentioned. Emma Murphy (2012) has analysed youth political engagement from the perspective of political freedom and closes her article stating:

> Political freedom might over time engender broader social transformation but equally it might allow conflicting visions of national futures to re-surface in dangerous and destabilizing ways.
> Locating Arab youth in this uncertain future requires an inclusive approach, recognizing the shared and traumatizing experiences which are identifiers of, but not limited to, a specific age group whilst also understanding that youth is a dynamic social construction which is subject to powerful global cultural forces and which cannot be adequately summarized in terms of fixed points of entry and exit. Youth define themselves by their interests and aspirations, by a complex overlapping of identities which results in permeable and fluid boundaries. The area of convergence – the objectives which emerge from the generational narrative – can perhaps best be summed up by the iconic slogans of the Arab Spring: *hurriya, karameh, adaaala* (freedom, dignity and justice). (Murphy 2012, 20.)

Jeffrey Haynes (2013) has conducted a study on political activities of selected Islamists in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, and he sees each of these countries notable for recent growth in Islamist political activity in the context of democratization (Tunisia, Egypt) and political liberalization (Morocco). Each country has seen Islamist parties take a significant political role (ibid., 184-185). The purpose of this study is to complement the individual foci on these countries by providing a thematic overview and to locate the activities of Islamist entities in Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco in comparative context (ibid., 170). And he continues:

> To explain the current governments' apparently democratically problematic approaches to governing in both Egypt and Tunisia, it is useful to recall that many among the new power holders were for long periods jailed, forced underground or exiled by ancient regimes. Jail, harassment or exile is not necessarily conducive environments to develop a democratic approach to doing politics. Moreover, Islamists' rise to power was both swift and unexpected, and they were unprepared for the difficulties. (Haynes 2013, 185.)

Reported recently by the EU institute for Security Studies (EU 2015, 9) Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia have introduced parliamentary quotas for women in their national electoral laws, and the number of women actively involved in business and politics is slowly but progressively increasing. The same report raises the question of insecurity is a concern also at the regional level: the implosion of Libya, Iraq and Syria is threatening to drag their

immediate neighbours Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan into their orbit of instability (ibid., 24). And the report (p.42) continues:

> In general, political unrest is still very much present across the region, but it no longer has the same disruptive effects. The regulation of demonstrations in countries such as Egypt and Algeria has not led to a polarisation of the political landscape as was initially feared – in fact, the opposite has taken place. Some shades of political Islam have been more integrated than others: Salafism, initially co-opted by the 2014 regime in Egypt, eventually lost support due to its acquiescence with repression against members of the Muslim Brotherhood; a new party, 'Inclusion' or Idra'esh, appealing to the same voters, emerged fairly quickly. Its leadership seems to have close ties to the still banned Brotherhood, and their programmes resemble each other – but Inclusion seems to be more inclined to compromise on issues such as human rights and gender equality, and has moved in terms of outlook more towards the Tunisian Ennahda. In Algeria, the recent opening of the political space has seen the creation of a small and rather unsuccessful Salafist party.
>
> In general, political Islam has lost the appeal it enjoyed in 2011/2012: reformism is now more fashionable. The generation of 2011, now in their mid-thirties to forties, have evolved into a political party called 'Reform' or Islah. Islah is making increasing inroads in elections in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen and pushing for pragmatic change as exemplified by the Dabdoud Plan. Although pan-Arabism and nationalism are still powerful ideological contenders, reformism is steadily gaining in appeal. However it is challenged by leftist parties emerging from the 2011 revolutionary movements: although not yet regionally organised, these parties have channelled the demands of 2011 into a socialist agenda.
>
> An open political space has contributed to a marketplace of ideas ultimately beneficial for political decision-makers, and political Islam is now only one part of a plural landscape. That being said, democracy has consolidated itself mainly in Tunisia. Three presidential elections after the Arab Spring, it has experienced regime change by the ballot box, the emergence and disappearance of political parties and the establishment of a proper plural system.

Youth in the Arab Mediterranean countries are much more engaged to civil society organisations, social movements and expressing their politics through art much more than are involved in the party politics. Nouri Gana (2012, 26) writes how Arab and Tunisian rap music has emerged as an unlikely democratizing force not only in the field of music and arts in general but also in the public sphere where rappers have adopted an activist agenda and spoken loudly in the name of the poor and underprivileged, conveying their political and socioeconomic malaises to the powers that be. The study focuses on two important songs: Psyco M's "Manipulation" (2010) and El Général's "Rais Lebled" ("Head of State") (2010), and discusses "the crucial role they played in capturing and articulating the mass discontent of Tunisians with Ben Ali's authoritarian regime and, above all, in inspiring the popular uprising that has shaken the country and the entire region since 17 December 2010. To speak about the democratizing force of Tunisian rap music is to underline its largely amateurish nature and its committed political agenda".[2] And Gana continues (2012, 26).

[2] See also http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/2320/rap-rage-revolt, e.g. the translated lyrics of El General's song: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeGlJ7OouR0.

> The same can be said about the venture of Arab rap in its entirety. Arab rap music is not only revitalizing but also resemanticising and enlarging the concept of committed art (al-Fann al-Multazim), which has been exclusively associated in the Arab world with the avant-gardist aesthetic and literary movements of the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time that hip-hop culture and rap music seem to have lost their political edge and become largely mainstream in the United States and Europe, Arab and Tunisian rap is still shot through with insurrection and revolt[3].

Just to mention one interesting source of information, there is an extensive Blog on *Revolutionary Arab Rap*: http://revolutionaryarabraptheindex.blogspot.fi/ (accessed 28.5.2014) by Ulysses (Twitter name). Videos and lyrics (translated also in English) are found from all SAHWA countries: Morocco, Tunis, Egypt, Lebanon and Algeria. There are many articles on Arab Revolutionary Hip Hop in his blog, for example the text *Hip Hop and How Arab Youth Interact With Revolution*.

Lebanon (Elizabeth Saleh)

Youth Political Engagement and Youth Scepticism

Two interrelated themes emerge in the literature on contemporary youth political engagement in Lebanon. The first theme is concerned with the issue that Lebanon stands out in comparison to other countries across MENA because there has been seemingly little unrest since 2011. Yet civil unrest and conflict are important features of Lebanese society. Most notable perhaps is the civil war that lasted for well over fifteen years and came to end during the nineties. Then the Cedar Revolution of 2005 that saw the withdrawal of the Syrian military from Lebanon. In both periods, there is clear evidence to suggest the important role of youth engagement. It is apparent therefore that although Lebanon might not have actively taken part in recent regionals uprisings of 2011, there are many engaged and active citizens. The second theme is thus concerned with the question of conceptualizing the concept of youth political engagement in Lebanon.

Youth political engagement is often problematized in connection with youth oriented projects organized by international bodies, including NGOs and supranational institutes-such as the EU (e.g. Staheli & Nagel, 2013). Youth oriented programmes launched to encourage civic engagement and participant citizenship, are perceived more other than not, as merely importing participatory and democratic values with little understanding of those that exist at a local level (ibid: 15). Indeed, some of these of programmes-and most especially those that come from "Western" organizations-are charged with deploying strategies to depoliticize local forms of activism and engagement.

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[3] See: http://www.policymic.com/articles/1359/middle-east-hip-hop-revolutionizes-while-american-rap-sputters (accessed 20.5.2014)

Yet the Lebanese situation is perhaps somewhat more complex than the picture that emerges out of the arguments that taking reductionist approaches to the West/Rest binary. In the case of accounts documenting the experiences of young people living in post-war Beirut, it is evident that memory is an important issue (e.g. Larkin, 2010). First, young people have to come to terms with personal and familial experiences of war and conflict within the private sphere. Second, there is issue the on-going state policy of "collective amnesia" when it comes to official discourses of remembrance (e.g Khalaf, 2009). Questions that arise, specific to the Lebanese context are thus concerned with examining how-at this interface between building a coherent narrative of the present and coming to terms with the past- are young people are able to aspire for a better future. The Lebanon team have already considered these questions in their ethnographic research entitled "Transitioning Labour Values: A Study of Youth Opportunities in Lebanon". The specific questions can be found in the table below.

Research Questions specific to the Lebanon team:
What are the types of aspirations underpinning young people's hope of the future—are there shared commonalities amongst different youth groups?
What roles do systems of education and work related practices have in reproducing gender inequalities? Or conversely: do gendered hierarchies affect such systems?
How have education institutes and hierarchical labour regimes restricted possible agendas of social cohesion?
How is the Lebanese state perceived by the young people in Lebanon?
How have specific agendas of global and national policies potentially shifted ideas of what constitutes the notion of youth in Lebanon?

While an examination of political engagement in connection with these issues of aspiration and motivation for social change are important avenues of research, identity politics in Lebanon also highlights the significance of youth scepticism. Yet what exactly constitutes as youth scepticism? Some scholars have pointed towards a continual sense of communal mistrust amongst different religious groups-what Yassin refers to as "co-existence without empathy" (Yassin, 2012; Larkin 2010). Indeed, while the forging of these confessional differences might occur at state level through the personal status law, the materialisation of this form of social stratification is often do so through youth social groups, cultural associations and charities (Labaki,1988). However, youth scepticism also potentially surfaces due to a weak state apparatus and the lack of transparent access to state resources. Indeed, researchers have complicated this issue of youth scepticism further by highlighting the importance of facilitating youth engagement in rural areas. Youth orientated programmes must adopt strategies of decentralisation, allowing more access to education, labour markets and political participation. Yet given the state's absence, the question is then: what are the kinds of spaces that allow young people to actively engage?

It is of significance that the emergence of youth organizations such as the (relatively) recently formed youth led NGO called "Nahnoo"[4] who seek to re-engage with public spaces and negate the ever encompassing strategies of privatisation, demonstrates that struggles by

[4] See more information http://nahnoo.org/TopMenu/AboutUs/OverView/OverView.html#toContent

young people of Lebanon can have commonalities with regional and global movements. Interestingly, such types of youth led organizations do not appear to be confessional/religious sectarian driven. Moreover, global (including European) support for the likes of "Nahnoo" only came about following the establishment of this organization by youths. The importance of "grassroots movements" (formal but also informal) in challenging and transforming top-down politics cannot be underestimated. It would appear that "Nahnoo" challenges studies that either overemphasizes the role religious sectarianism has in shaping social relations or stress the essential role of economic prosperity in facilitating social integration (e.g. Yassin, 2012 & Safa, 2006). Indeed, Nahnoo's work suggests the importance of youth agency and their transformative capacities within society.

Finally, a cursory glance over the kinds of activities that might be considered to be "informal engagement" implies that there is stronger participation in central areas. Examples include the flash dance mob in Hamra in April 2014 commemorating the civil war as well as the growing number of graffiti artists[5] across Beirut who are not affiliated to any organizations. Yet there are also formal and more market orientated forms of flash dance and graffiti engagement of which many are mainly concentrated in Beirut. These include the Beirut Duty Free Flash dance mob in the capital's airport. Meanwhile, Ashkemon, a rap, graffiti and clothing company continue to engage political debate through music and art.

Historical Background

Usama Makdsisi's historical study of the rise of religious sectarianism in Lebanon traces the emergence of sectarian politics into the nineteenth century and the modernization process of the region (2000). The implications of his argument have to do with how religious sectarianism has often been the means through which international policy (including European policy) has constantly worked with religious institutes in the region. The European and American Christian missionaries set up during nineteenth century therefore also have an important role in shaping the country's political economy. A rather significant role of these missionaries can be found in the schools and universities they established and of which, many continue to run and educate Lebanese citizens. (E.g. American University of Beirut, Lebanese American University, University of Saint Joseph, Sagesse School and University etc).

Elizabeth Thompson's (2000) work on gendering and colonial citizens during the French mandate rule of Lebanon (incl. Syria) also examines the historical implications of foreign/imperial rule. Thompson's research demonstrates the complexities of the emergence of different "grassroots" political parties/movements at the time. Most notable examples are how some movements, protests etc. were characterised by an entanglement of anticolonial sentiment with feminism, or conversely, anticolonial sentiment with feelings of male disempowerment (an example of this is that colonised emasculated men, where the coloniser might be Ottoman and/or European).

Identity politics and perhaps youth scepticism in Lebanon appears to be entangled with broader shared visions of access not only to political participation but to youth engagement.

[5] See http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Arts-and-Ent/Culture/2014/Aug-18/267466-hip-hop-graffiti-tag-lebanons-woes.ashx#axzz3C40rJhSg

Analytical work on contemporary political engagement and youth engagement is quite sparse. Craig Larkin examines encounters by young people with post-war Beirut (2010). Larkin mostly focuses on the relationship between memory and experience, shedding light upon how young people attempt to (not always successfully) create coherent narratives of their everyday life. Larkin provides a useful approach to exploring youth aspirations (and disappointments) that shape the different types of youth mobility in the country. Indeed, Larkin's analysis contrasts the conclusions of Staeheli and Nagel (2013) in that he demonstrates the at times futile binary of West and East. Yet what exactly constitutes as youth scepticism? Notably, both Yassin and Larkin have pointed towards a continual sense of communal mistrust amongst different religious groups-what Yassin refers to as "co-existence without empathy" (Yassin, 2012; Larkin 2010).

However, the emergence of youth organizations such as the (relatively) recently formed youth led NGO called "Nahnoo"[6] who seek to re-engage with public spaces and negate the ever encompassing strategies of privatisation, demonstrates that struggles by young people of Lebanon can have commonalities with regional and global movements. Interestingly, such types of formal youth led organizations do not appear to be confessional/religious sectarian driven. Moreover, global (including European) support for the likes of "Nahnoo" only came about following the establishment of this organization by youths. The importance of "grassroots movements" (formal but also informal) in challenging and transforming top-down politics cannot be underestimated. It would appear that "Nahnoo" challenges studies that either overemphasizes the role religious sectarianism has in shaping social relations or stress the essential role of economic prosperity in facilitating social integration (e.g. Yassin, 2012 & Safa, 2006). Indeed, Nahnoo's work suggests the importance of youth agency and their transformative capacities within society. In this regard, the way in which Staeheli and Nagel (2013) problematize the strategies of "Western" youth programmes does bear some relevance. Yet the applicability of their observations appear to be only in the sense that failed attempts at democratic change through programmes (from the top) that do not include the types of democratic change that the youth aspire towards, thus resulting in youth scepticism.

A report by Aicha Mouchref of a qualitative study conducted by the Mada Association suggests that important to facilitating youth engagement in rural areas are youth orientated programmes that adopt policies of decentralisation that allow more access to education, labour market and political participation. Simply put, policies of youth engagement and empowerment (and particularly in rural areas) must entail some sort of a de-marginalization process. The study by the Mada Association thus sheds light upon the socio-economic ramifications emerging due to the growing disparities between the rural and urban. In this regard, rather than overemphasizing the West-East binary within formal youth oriented programmes in Lebanon, it appears to be more advantageous to take into account the contrasting conditions that exist in different centres and margins.

The different levels of youth engagement and participation within both formal and informal settings appear to be shaped and affected by these disparities between the centre(s) and margin(s).

[6] See more information http://nahnoo.org/TopMenu/AboutUs/OverView/OverView.html#toContent

Indeed, a cursory glance over the kinds of activities that might be considered to be "informal engagement" implies that there is stronger participation in central areas. Examples include the flash dance mob in Hamra in April 2014 commemorating the civil war as well as the growing number of graffiti artists[7] across Beirut who are not affiliated to any organizations. Yet there are also formal and more market orientated forms of flash dance and graffiti engagement of which many are mainly concentrated in Beirut. These include the Beirut Duty Free Flash dance mob in the capital's airport. Meanwhile, Ashkemon, a rap, graffiti and clothing company continue to engage political debate through music and art.

Morocco (Fadma Ait Mous)

Formal engagements

In Morocco, there are very limited statistics on youth and civil society. In 2009, a national survey on non-profit organizations was conducted by HCP (Haut commissariat au plan, Central planning institution). It aimed to understand the characteristics of these institutions, to evaluate their economic and social contributions and to identify barriers hindering their development. Here are some general findings of this study: The number of organisations actively operating in 2007 was estimated at 44,614. By adding the associations of public utility surveyed exhaustively, we obtain a number of 44,771 associations. The majority of associations in 2007 are youth structures: 8 out of 10 associations were created between 1997 and 2007 and 4 out of 10 since the launch of the National Initiative for Human Development in 2005. The NGO's are present throughout the national territory, with a relative concentration in the regions of Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer and Souss-Massa-Draa (3 groups of 10). Three quarters of these associations have local radiation and focusing on outreach (at the neighborhood level, Douar, urban or rural municipality or group of municipalities).

Regardless of the level of involvement of these associations, their vocation leads them to operate in a variety of intervention areas covering education, social, health, culture, sports, recreation, advocacy, development and housing, etc. The actions of associations are, however, concentrated in the areas of "Development and Housing" (35.2% of associations) and "Culture, sport and leisure '(27.1%).

Despite the political discourse on the importance of the civil society in Morocco, these organizations are faced, in their majority, with multiple constraints to achieving their mission. These constraints are mainly the lack of equipment for operation and access to finance. Indeed, more than 8 out of 10 associations report having inadequate essential equipment. In addition, nearly 8 out of 10 associations report finding it difficult to access funding. The survey concluded also on the problem of the availability of volunteers needed

[7] See http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Arts-and-Ent/Culture/2014/Aug-18/267466-hip-hop-graffiti-tag-lebanons-woes.ashx#axzz3C40rJhSg

for NGO's. More than half of the associations report finding it difficult to mobilize volunteers or to convince those already committed to continue to work within them.

According to EuroMed Jeunesse III, Maroc (2010, p.20[8]): the official number of organizations working in partnership with the State and dedicated to youth is 8441. These include 11 federations; 44 national associations divided into 557 sections; 33 associations with multiple cultural and sports divisions; 217 local sections; 7,500 local associations working primarily with youth at risk and affiliated associations to political parties.

In addition to these organizations officially recognized by the State, there are many small NGOs in civil society. It is difficult to count them, but they do play nonetheless an essential role in terms of the work they do with young people, especially in the social sector. There are three kinds of associations in Morocco today, the first are situated at the national level such as "L'association Chouala"[9] and "l'Association Marocaine pour l'Education et la Jeunesse (AMEJ) working with general public, children, youth and adults. These non-profit organizations operate through a vast network of volunteers trained in-house by these associations themselves.

This network is strongly challenged by the emergence of a second type of NGO's dedicated to development, especially since the terrorist attacks in Casablanca (2003). These new organizations offer highly targeted activities such as the construction of a well in a "Douar" or literacy measures, and young leaders have opportunity to come into contact with international organizations and foundations, allowing them to receive important funds and aid. They are very successful with youth.

The third type of association is composed of small neighbourhood associations that work primarily with youth at risk. They have difficulty recruiting members and youth leaders and therefore feel marginalized.

When looked the official public policies regarding youth, there are 11 federations and youth unions at the national level but there is no national youth council. Moreover, SECJ (State Secretariat for Youth) created INJD (National Institute for Youth and Democracy) in the last three years. It brings together young people elected by their peers for a year. They come from affiliates of political parties and receive training focused on political participation. During their training, the young people also have the opportunity to participate in international conferences.

Youth were very present in the 2011 Moroccan Constitution, which states:

> The Constitution requires public authorities to take all appropriate measures to:
> - expand and generalize the participation of youth in the country's social, economic, cultural and political development;
> - help young people to be part of an active community life, and provide assistance to those with special educational, social or professional needs;

[8] Sylvie FLORIS, Etudes sur les politiques Jeunesse des pays partenaires Méditerranéens, Maroc, Programme EuroMed Jeunesse III, 2010. Url : http://www.euromedyouth.net/IMG/pdf/06-EuroMedJeunesse-Etude_MAROC__FR_090708.pdf

[9] http://www.chouala.org/

- facilitate access for young people to culture, science, technology, the arts, sports and leisure, and foster conditions conducive to the expression of their creativity and innovative skills in all these areas.

Besides, according to the Constitution of 2011, an Advisory Council for Youth and community action (article 170) will be implemented and it would be a consultative body involved in the protection of youth and the promotion of community life. It shall be responsible for studying and keeping up with issues related to these areas, as well as making recommendations on any economic, social or cultural subject bearing direct relevance to youth and community action. It shall also encourage the creative energies of youth and help young people get involved in public life, as responsible citizens.

Youth attitudes vis-à-vis politics

In general, the main conclusion of studies on youth and political universe in Morocco is the disinterest of young people in public institutions and their low political participation in politics. Thus the investigation of HCP (conducted in 2011) shows that only 6% of young people are members of an NGO or association, and 1.3% are affiliated with a political party or trade union.

Adherence to the policy:

	Urbain	Rural	Total
No	71,1	79,1	74,5
Yes	28,9	20,9	25,5

Source : Enquête nationale sur les jeunes 2011, HCP.

Informal engagements

The lack of interest in formal politics does not mean the absence of other forms of engagement among young people. Before the 2011 events, there were many social movements, corporatist movements (protests of unemployed graduates, protests against high cost of living, etc.). In the field of music, youth groups innovative musicians from disadvantaged neighborhoods in large cities created a mix of rap, hip-hop and traditional so-called "rai-hop, metal-Gnawa, or electro-chaâbi" Moroccan music. This contemporary music focused on the search for identity, is now famous beyond the borders of Morocco. In their songs, they express the concerns and needs of urban youth uprooted and often forgotten. Such artistic production had created, at a visual level and at the level of the imaginary, in terms of aesthetics as well as of hermeneutics, a space “of narrative” able to talk about social and political alternatives.

2011: Social Movement and Reform Processes in Morocco

On 20 February 2011, several thousand Moroccan protesters were on the streets of about a hundred towns across the kingdom following a call launched via Facebook in 2010/2011 under the name of “Movement of 20 February”. This movement comprises a motley crowd: young people coming from different political landscapes, mostly independent “cyber militants” and dissenters from historically established political associations or parties

(leftists, Islamists of Justice and Spirituality, etc.). These protesters' demands focused on a constitutional reform, the parliament's dissolution, the government's dismissal, the judiciary's independence, and the separation of powers, or even the transition to a parliamentary monarchy, etc.

After three weeks of protests, the King made a speech on 9 March 2011 announcing his willingness to reform the constitution. His gesture may still not be a response to the M20F protests. The constitutional reform is rather continuing the projects the King has already begun after his accession to the throne, especially when implementing regionalisation processes. The day after his speech, the King appointed a constitutional reform commission (CCRC). This commission's mission was to hear the various players of the Moroccan political and social scene (political parties, trade unions, non-government organisations of the civil society; the M20F had been invited, but refused). On the basis of these auditions and the players' memorandums, the commission elaborated the project of the new constitution. The draft has been submitted to the King who presented it in his speech made on 17 June 2011 for launching the referendum campaign. After a referendum campaign chequered by mobilisations and counter-mobilisations of the protesters in favour of a "yes'' vote and the M20F in favour of a boycott, the project has been widely adopted through the ballot box on 1 July 2011 (98.5 % of "yes" votes).

The third moment of interaction between the social movements and the "top-down reformism" was the election time. In fact, early elections have been held on 25 November 2011. Like in Tunisia, the PJD (Justice and Development Party), a "moderate" Islamist party, won the elections opening up a new political configuration. The exceptionality of these elections, whether real or constructed, caused a real challenge: With the elections taking place after the constitutional reform, the elected representatives formed some kind of a "second constituent assembly". A number of organic laws provided for in the constitution had to be adopted by the new parliament.

The M20F who had called for a boycott of the elections seemed to have run out of steam after the elections. Although they were continuing their protests, they can't manage to develop more politicized demands. Their heterogeneity forced them to adopt a minimalist platform leaving the issue of societal choices to an uncertain future.

Virtual / physical engagements?

Like in other countries, the social networks (Facebook, Twitter) in Morocco have taken on a political dimension by becoming information and mobilization platforms although most commonly used for self-affirmation (or time-consuming chats). In the light of the mystification of the virtual regarding the 2011 events, the virtual emergence of the M20F must be put into a context by relating it to its socio-political background of the 2000s (protests of unemployed graduates, protests against high cost of living, etc.) as well as to the background of cyber activism since 2007, in particular via YouTube. This is not the first time the Internet is actively used: A history of "cyber-activism in Morocco 'to remember: examples of videos on Youtube: The sniper anonymous Targuist in 2007, but also the events Sidi Ifni in 2008 on Youtube and also relayed the events of Tinghir in 2010. We can also mention the MALI (alternate movement of individual liberties) created in 2009 on Facebook

to fight for individual freedoms in Morocco (Note that some members were the first initiators of the group "Movement of 20 February" on the net) (Ksikes 2010).

Despite limited number of Internet users in Morocco, it has played a critical role before and during the protestations in 2011[10]. Young activists connected online through facebook groups and initiated protests. This social networking site has incorporated citizen-to-citizen communication on a different perspectives including diffusion of information as well as stirring up discussion or deliberation, and argumentation among members.

To illustrate how social networks built to mobilize, we can use the metaphor of the "wick", it is decisive at the beginning, but eventually it may become useless (or lose his breath) when the fire took.

The transition from virtual to reality involves changing action repertoires, the register of skills deployed. The 20F youth have formed sections, each with a specific mission: the section of neighbourhoods; section information; preparation section slogans, placards and banners; section responsible for carrying out the first video… etc. But their passage from virtual to physical world was in need of more organization and logistics skills and there were other actors, classics (leftists and especially Islamists of Justice and Spirituality) who took over the initiative since they had better knowledge and control of the street.

[10] In Morocco, they are 7 million registered on Facebook, according to a study by the Dubai School of Government (2012); aged 15-29 (77%); 63% of men; languages: 75% of total prefer to publish in French, against 33% in Arabic and 13% in English.

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