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Book of Abstracts

The 10th Anniversary Conference of the MENASP Network 2023

Crisis and Continuity: Towards Inclusive, Resilient, and
Environmentally Sustainable Social Policies in the
Middle East and North Africa

Co-hosted by IMEA (Mohammad V University) and the University of Bath
11th & 12th July 2023 | Rabat, Morocco and Online

www.menasp.com | imea.um5.ac.ma

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Water And Gender Inequality: Exploring the Impacts of Water Scarcity on Rural Women in Morocco

Abderrahman El Karmaoui (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 5A]

Water scarcity poses a delicate challenge in Morocco, impacting various aspects of the population's livelihoods and well-being. With its arid and semi-arid climate, the country faces significant water stress, further exacerbated by urbanization and climate change. This scarcity of water resources has far-reaching implications, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, with rural women bearing a substantial burden.

This paper examines the gendered dimensions of water scarcity in Morocco through the lens of political ecology, which provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex interactions between social, political, and environmental factors that shape water scarcity and its gendered impacts. Building on the works of prominent authors such as Robbins (2012), Blaikie and Brookfield (2006) and Mahdan (2015), political ecology recognizes that environmental issues are inherently political and socially constructed, emphasizing the influence of power relations, social inequalities, and policy processes on resource access and control.

By adopting a political ecology perspective, this paper aims to understand the impact of water scarcity on rural women in Morocco and explore the implications for building more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies. The paper questions guiding this study are: How does water scarcity impact rural women in Morocco, and what are the implications for building more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies?

To address these research questions, a qualitative methodology is employed. In-depth interviews with rural women in Morocco capture their perspectives and experiences related to water scarcity. Additionally, a comprehensive analysis of relevant public policies assesses the ways in which social policies intersect with access to and control over water resources.

The findings reveal that water scarcity disproportionately affects rural women in Morocco, limiting their educational opportunities, economic participation, and political agency. In addition, the research emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and intersectional approach to address the gendered dimensions of water scarcity. It uncovers the intricate relationships between social policies, political dynamics, social inequalities, and environmental factors, shedding light on the multifaceted challenges faced in water management and access.

The paper argues that addressing the gendered dimensions of water scarcity requires the development of inclusive social policies that promote women's participation in water management and decision-making processes. Additionally, it is crucial to address the underlying power dynamics and social inequalities that perpetuate gender disparities in access to water resources.

Overall, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions about how to build more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable societies in the Middle East and North Africa region, highlighting the importance of considering gender and social policies in discussions of natural resource management and environmental policy.

Keywords: Water scarcity, gendered dimension, political ecology, rural women in Morocco, inclusive societies, sustainable development.

Dynamics Influencing Zee-Generation Entrepreneurial Mindset in UAE

AbdulQuddus Mohammed (Higher Colleges of Technology, United Arab Emirates)

Session 4C

The traditional education system is targeted towards employability, we are taught from school and college systems to finish studies and get the job and the subjects we choose for our studies are set by external agencies matching with the many stakeholder's interests. It is high time that the youth need to be told to get into entrepreneurial activity to think differently, prepared to go out of comfort zone to create own business opportunities and be independent to start their own companies. It can be achieved by having a new course and curriculum on entrepreneurial mindset. Employment environment in UAE is dominated by discussion on public and private sector jobs, entrepreneurship may develop as a "third stream career option available for UAE national youth.

UAE is a young country, moving ahead of times in terms of entrepreneurial education, training and SME development. SMEs are backbone of UAE economy. SMEs sector in UAE represents more than 94 per cent of the total number of companies operating in the country and providing jobs for more than 86 per cent of the private sector's workforce. The aim of this presentation is to provide insights into the factors influencing entrepreneurial mindset of UAE youth in opting entrepreneurship as career option, and ways to improve educational curriculum to develop business leaders in UAE

Design / Methodology and Approach: In this study, the researcher adopted exploratory research to understand the factors influencing entrepreneurial mindset of UAE youth. This research studies the problem empirically by organizing a survey of 120 respondents by using a questionnaire. The data was collected and statistical analysis was conducted to reach findings.

Findings: The result of this empirical study shows that the youth are interested to be entrepreneurs, however they are of the opinion that more education and training on entrepreneurial mindset will shift their perception from traditional jobs to being and entrepreneur. It was also found that the youth would be interested to learn more about entrepreneurial mindset framework that includes entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, growth mindset, creativity and innovation, dare to take risks, financial feasibility, marketing and sales, people management, being courageous, emotional agility and optimism.

Practical implications: Entrepreneurship is a backbone of UAE economy. The results of this study will help the educators and policy makers to develop a new curriculum on entrepreneurial mindset to train youth to take up entrepreneurship as a career option in UAE.

Originality/value: This study is an effort to transform the educational system towards entrepreneurial mindset for the development of entrepreneurs and economy.

Key words: Entrepreneurial Mindset, Entrepreneurship, SME, Entrepreneurial Opportunity Recognition, Creativity and Innovation, Entrepreneurial Mindset Framework, Zee-Generation

Analysis of Morocco's Social Protection System and Its Financial Imperatives

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[Session 1D]

Social protection policies play a critical role in promoting equitable and inclusive societies. In recent years, the Moroccan government has made it official to prioritize its national social protection system through a great reform. A national restructuring of such scale requires careful planning, and substantial budget allocations. One fundamental challenge these programs confront is how to ensure sustainable funding. This research aims to assess the financial impediment to the success of social policies in Morocco, along with the presentation of the potential solutions and opportunities to overcome the financing obstacles.

This study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing a literature review and analysis of the financial environment of Moroccan social protection programs. The literature review involved an extensive search for relevant academic and policy publications on social protection, while the case study analyzed the financing needs that these programs need to address in order to meet United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The financing gaps are calculated based on the International Labour Organization's model (ILO Working paper 14, 2020, p 18-19).

The findings suggest that despite all the efforts, there are still notable gaps in coverage that must be addressed to ensure that all citizens can access the support they need. Effective universal coverage is estimated to cost the country an approximate 26% of its 2020 national GDP, while current expenditure sits around 18% of GDP. To tackle the budget shortfall, policy makers must design sustainable financing strategies that generate sufficient revenue to support their social policy and ensure that funding is distributed equitably across different income groups and throughout the lifecycle.

Social Service Provision in Iraq: Bringing Civil Society Back into the Discussion

Ali Bakir Hamoudi (University College Dublin, Ireland)

[Session 5D]

Setting a framework for social policy analysis in MENA, Jawad (2019) argues for incorporating civil society as a unit of analysis to understand social policy formation in the region more critically. Examining civil society internationally, civil society has two significant functions in social policy development. The first, as Jawad (2019) suggests, is civil society's function in negotiating for and participating in the formulation of social policies. The second is its function in implementing those

policies in what has been termed “mixed economies of welfare” (Johnson, 1999). The state, the market, the family and civil society all have important functions in social welfare provision, and distinctive welfare mixes develop in different countries and regions.

With social service provision in Iraq as its frame of reference, the purpose of this paper is three-fold: Firstly, it furthers Jawad’s (2019) argument by providing further theoretical justification for why civil society is an essential unit in social policy analysis. Secondly, it traces the recent developments of Iraq’s social service provision policies using a mixed economies of welfare framework and considers formal civil society’s increasing importance. Finally, it develops a model to measure how civil society actors act as partners in policy development that promotes solidarity and inclusiveness instead of division and exclusion.

Iraq seems to follow the same general trends Jawad (2014) finds for social protection measures in the region. However, a significant point of departure is in the rationale for implementing these policies. Instead of pursuing economic growth and employment creation promoted by the neoliberal technocratic formulas of international donors, Iraq more noticeably follows Jawad’s second rationale: “political legitimacy and the appeasement of social unrest” (p.27). Arguably, such a rationale offers increased opportunities for civil society actors to reformulate social policies to promote solidarity and inclusiveness. For this reason, forming models which probe civil society actors’ alignment with such goals is paramount.

The Practice of Sustainable Finance in Morocco

Aly Sory Ouere (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 1D]

The Concept of sustainable development has embraced many domains of life worldwide. Morocco is not on the margins of that reality as sustainable development-based attitudes and practices are being conducted by the public authorities as well as the private sector and in various areas such as environmental protection, the business world, social justice, etc.

The financial sector is key to the realization of sustainable development goals in Morocco. Indeed, Moroccan Banks, insurance companies, and the capital and financial markets regulators are implementing sustainable development sound policies and practices, hence the concept of sustainable finance. Sustainable Finance is the process of taking due account of environmental, social, and Governance (ESG) considerations when making investment decisions in the financial sector, leading to increased longer-term investments into sustainable economic activities and projects (European Union).

As evidence, the directive 5/W/2021 of Bank al Maghrib adopted in 2021 recommends that financial institutions integrate climate and environmental risks into the risk management process. In addition, the Circular 03/19 of the Moroccan Agency of Capital Market (MACM) adopted in 2019 imposes annual ESG reporting on listed companies. These measures witness the capital market's and financial regulators' willingness to direct the financial actors toward sustainable finance. Moreover, banks such as BMCI, and Attijariwafa Bank annually publish reports on their activities relating to sustainable finance.

These efforts and initiatives entail us to conduct our research with the following research questions: What the Moroccan financial sector is doing in the achievement of the sustainable development

goals in Morocco? In this presentation, I intend to evaluate the practice of sustainable finance in Morocco through indicators such as the funding of the realization of sustainable development projects, and the Economic, Social, and Governance activities of banks and insurance companies operating in Morocco. Moreover, the research intends to help policymakers in the adoption of sustainable finance-based policies in Morocco. In fine, the presentation will provide data for future researchers interested in the practice of sustainable finance in Morocco.

Key words: Sustainability, Sustainable development, Sustainable Finance

A Framework for Understanding Public Organizations Resilience: A Focus on the Education Sector in Egypt

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[Session 2D]

The organizational resilience of the Public Sector in the MENA region is not thoroughly examined, with the existing evidence focusing primarily on private organizations, (Sawalha, 2015, Duit, 2016). The increase in the pace of disruptive events, whether natural, political, or economic is challenging public organizations, as they might undermine their ability to deliver public services and reverse development progress. Resilient responses during the Corona pandemic opened the door for questioning whether this disruption nurtured positive administrative changes and resilience. And in the case of the MENA region in particular what role did the centralized context of most public organizations play (Bentzen & Torfing, 2022)? Additionally, could the way organizations faced disruption provide sustainable knowledge on how to face disruption in the future? The research on organizational resilience reflects numerous approaches to its conceptualization and operationalization. The objective of this paper is to examine those, and following an extensive literature review, map key arguments and common approaches to analyze the resilience capabilities of public organizations. It concludes by devising a framework specific to the MENA region that incorporates the organizational resilience in the education sector in particular at both central and local levels, and further illustrates how the framework could be operationalized on the ground by examining the education sector in Egypt as a case study.

Participatory Policy Formulation: Case Study the National Strategy of Alternative Care for Children and Young People in Egypt

Amira Hossam Abdel-Aziz (Collective Routes Co., Egypt)

[Session 1C]

The paper focus on the participatory process of developing the national strategy of alternative care of children and young people in Egypt. The strategy used these approaches; systems approach and life cycle approach and used both secondary data that focused on deinstitutionalization in social care and UN guidelines for alternative care among other literature in addition to the primary data which included civil society and governmental officials. The main findings is 1. Civil society and activist were involved in the development process from the beginning, 2- some power dynamics affected the lack

of participation of some key official players, 3- the participation of children and young people wasn't systemized in the development process, 4- the national was able to create sense of direction and alignment among different players. In conclusion, the government of Egypt represented by ministry of social solidarity shall work on including additional players, work on communication strategy internally and externally.

Be an Ambassador for Sustainable Development Initiative and Youth Inclusion in Egypt: An Impact Assessment Study

Amira Hossam Ahmed Ismail (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Egypt)

[Session 3B]

“Be an ambassador for sustainable development goals” initiative is a national Egyptian initiative that listed as one of the best practices for accelerating fulfilling the SDGs from UNDESA. Egypt launched its Sustainable Development Agenda “Egypt Vision 2030” in 2016, and since about 60% of the Egyptian population are youth under 30 of age, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED) decided to launch “Be an Ambassador for Sustainable Development” initiative in October 2020. After three years of the initiative, and graduating 2300 Egyptian youth from 27 governorates, the time has come to launch an impact assessment study for this initiative.

The aim of the impact assessment is not just evaluating the satisfaction degree of the graduates, but also studying the impact of the training on their national societies, professional and educational life, and the most importantly measuring the degree of youth inclusion in designing the environmental policies, and documenting their participation in the international and national conferences and competitions that relates to sustainability and climate change.

The research depends on qualitative method throughout interviewing representing sample, divided into five focus groups from different governorates. Additionally, quantitative method throughout distributing a questioner to all the graduates. Although the outstanding findings and the high achievements that our graduates managed to on the national and international level, we still have a way to modify the initiative, not the curriculum, but to enhance the follow up and incubation systems after the graduation to keep the progress. Finally, this study will guide the decision makers on the youth needs and aspirations for a better inclusion and real empowerment.

Exploring Equitable Approaches to Egypt’s Tamween System: A Scoping Review

Amirah Mobarak (Western University, Canada)

[Session 5C]

Social policies have a significant impact on the economic and social landscape of any country or region. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region experience numerous challenges including high rates of poverty, displacement, and health inequities. Thus, requiring increased recognition, governmental support, and policy reform. Initially introduced in the 1940s and later developed in the 1960s, Egypt’s Tamween system is one of the oldest food subsidy programs globally. Providing subsidized pricing for basic food commodities such as wheat, oil, rice, and sugar to vulnerable and low-income households, the Tamween system offers millions of individuals across the country the opportunity to achieve food security. Current literature is found often discussing the system’s

history, structure, and execution. However, there is limited research available on the factors responsible for ensuring sustainable and equitable access. The aim of this scoping review sought to investigate the existing literature on Egypt's Tamween food subsidy system, while identifying the gaps in knowledge and associated risk factors contributing to equitable, or lack of, program accessibility. Utilizing the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, an initial search was conducted on three databases (Medline, JSTOR, Embase) along with a manual search. The search terms encompassed three central concepts: food insecurity, subsidy, and accessibility. Results revealed limited literature on this study's objective, highlighting the necessity of conducting this review. Few studies addressed the social and cultural contexts and factors impacting ones' experience with the Tamween system. A thematic analysis of the risk factors was conducted and categorized into primary themes related to family, transparency, and sustainability. This review emphasizes the need for further research to comprehensively consider and understand the multifaceted factors that shape the Tamween system in addition to exploring policy solutions and reform to advocate and promote greater accessibility, inclusion, and equity for all Egyptian citizens.

Role of Non-state Actors in Social Protection in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations: A Comparative Case Study

Anisa Haji Mustafa (Marmara University, Turkey)

[Session 5D]

The World Bank estimates that around one billion people live in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS) across the world under extreme socioeconomic and environmental insecurities. Many of countries in FCAS are also in the Arab League, such as Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia.

A considerable body of the literature on FCAS focuses on rapid or short-term shock responsive social protection or study the role of social protection in conflict prevention. However, with the weak state role in these countries, the role of non-state actors becomes crucial to provide social security against socioeconomic risks and challenges. These informal actors have different incentives, modus operandi and (targeted) beneficiaries—from religious institutions utilizing Zakat and charity, to families relying on remittances, in addition to the different levels of contribution from civil society organizations and local private sector.

Therefore, this study attempts to establish a generic comparative framework between Arab countries in FCAS to understand the role of non-state actors in social security provision. The comparison is focused on investigating some attribution; namely, social, demographic, economic and political. As such, this is primarily a sociological study which does not aim at assessing the existing social protection programs in these countries, but rather identify non-state actors and understand their contribution towards alleviating insecurities. Additionally, this study relies on an extensive literature review and publicly available data and statistics.

This study concludes that there are some shared characteristics defining social protection in these Arab FCAS countries, despite the differences in the length, type and origin of conflict as well as institutional differences. Some of these characteristics are due to shared attributions such as socioeconomic conditions, social norms, perception towards state, and the importance of informal actors' role in the daily lives of the population in FCAS. I also argue that understanding the role of informal actors is useful for observing how they are evolving while multilateral organizations assisting in building state capacity in FCAS are engaging these actors.

The final section of this study will specifically overview the case of Somalia, which has been an extreme case of FCAS and failed state. This would allow observing not only the role of non-state actors in sustaining livelihood in conflict, but also how their roles evolved under decades of state failure and collapse.

Keywords: Fragile and conflict-affected situations, non-state actors, social protection, social security, Somalia

The Social Stability Dilemma: The Case of Lebanon to Define What Underlines Social Cohesion

Antea Enna (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

[Session 3A]

Social cohesion is a well-known concept that describes the trust and sense of belonging to a community and people's willingness to participate as active members of society. However, the social cohesion concept is often in specific settings interchanged with the one of social stability, which does not refer to the exact horizontal and vertical social dimensions.

Approaching the Syrian refugee crisis in neighbouring host countries, researchers and practitioners mainly use social cohesion to describe the interactions between refugees and host communities in Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq. However, in Lebanon, the relations are framed under a social stability label.

Academic and grey literature research largely focused on social cohesion, defining this idea and exploring different shades of it, while the concept and definition of social stability remain understudied. This paper aims to contribute to define social stability, arguing that social stability is a prerequisite for social cohesion. In order to explore this complex concept, the study used a qualitative approach employing a case study method, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The country background and history considered, Lebanon constitutes a paradigm and the most opportune field to deeply investigate social stability dynamics. The extensive literature review and Lebanon's profile, combined with the collected data, show that the reasons behind the choice to frame the refugee-host communities' relation under the definition of social stability are coherent. Indeed, Lebanon complex past and the current horizontal and vertical social dimensions demonstrate that social stability is a primary objective to reach the balance and the sense of community at the base of social cohesion.

The Aftermath of the Syrian Crisis: A Glimpse of the Challenging Life of Widowed and Divorced Refugee Women in Jordan

Ayat Nashwan (Yarmouk University, Jordan / University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates) and Lina Alzouabi (Karabuk University, Turkey)

[Session 3A]

This study examines the challenges encountered by Syrian female widows and divorcees. This study addresses the social, cultural, financial, and psychological obstacles these women face in preserving their living arrangements and in parenting as well as the coping mechanisms women adopt to overcome everyday challenges. Researchers used qualitative methodology and interviews to fulfill

the aims. The sample consists of 20 Syrians living in Jordan's Amman, Irbid, and Al Ramtha in specially designed compounds for them (14 widows and 6 divorcees). The study's findings demonstrate that social and cultural norms existing in Jordan and Syria are generally similar, in which women view the males in the family as a source of socioeconomic and emotional stability for them. Widows and divorcees face serious socio-cultural, financial, and psychological challenges in maintaining their living conditions and the integration process as well as performing single parenting. Faith and social connections represent an important part of coping with the situation in the short term, nevertheless, financial and psychological support seems a vital component in the long term. Research on the conditions of widows and divorcees provides evidence to comprehensively approach the issue of "vulnerabilities" in the humanitarian-policy programming targeting refugees. Theoretically, the findings may provide empirical insights for discussions around women's changing identities through displacement, agency, and empowerment in relation to parenting experiences.

Keywords: Syrian women, social, financial, psychological, challenges, coping skills

Political Volatility and The Social Question in Tunisia: Exploring Continuity, Recent Mutations, and How Vulnerabilities Inform Policymaking

Cyrine Ghannouchi (Consultant in Policy Research and Program Development, Tunisia)

[Session 6A]

The Covid-19 outbreak in Tunisia surged on the dawn of the 2019 presidential and legislative elections and amidst a protracted socio-economic crisis calling for an urgent and comprehensive policy response. Soon, it became clear that the pandemic was not seized as an opportunity for reform and its management was rather marked by political rivalries and the continuity of state-led mechanisms of crisis resolution, namely ad hoc measures, the securitization of the issue at stake, the preservation of elites' privileges, and mere cash assistance to vulnerable groups. From March 2020 to July 2021, social mutations have gained pace and intensity, and the political geography of vulnerability showed a significant expansion alongside the observation of emerging vulnerabilities and acute inequalities between and within social strata. In July 2021, the measures taken by President Said, namely the declaration of the state of exception and consequent suspension (then dissolution) of the parliament, were welcomed as a much-needed forward-looking moment of rupture with social, political, and economic deadlock. Two years later, it is rather an unprecedented social divide that marks the country, with an ongoing political project that falls short as per addressing socio-economic urgencies.

The speaking note builds on the findings of a research project hosted by the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (a Tunisian NGO) addressing the state's social policy and forms of vulnerabilities and economic resistance during the pandemic. It poses questions on how social mutations affect, and are affected by, the political in the case of Tunisia, and how they inform policymaking more broadly. The note focuses on two field studies conducted under the said project, respectively exploring 1-the socio-political dynamics of informal labor through a case study in urban Tunis (street vendors of rue d'Espagne) and the resurgence of the tribe as a state surrogate, 2-invisible vulnerabilities per milieu (maritime / fishermen, urban / plastic collectors, rural / rosemary pickers, etc.) and the shrinking frontiers of safety nets due to rising conflicts over resources in the absence of a comprehensive social policy that falls short in tackling territorial and environmental dimensions of vulnerability. The note puts the findings of these two studies in dialogue and applies a social contract lens to discuss them from a state-societies standpoint. The note hence falls under

diverse themes of the conference, mainly political will, institutionalization, and meaning and design. It argues that there is an urgent need to shift social policy design from the aid (or burden alleviation) rationale to a justice-based approach by acknowledging “intimate social contracts” and organic modes of communitarian organization while equally working on curbing customs that allow the reproduction and perpetuation of inequalities at the local level within, and between, these communities.

Curbing Overconsumption as the Key to Overcome Water Crisis: A Study of the United Arab Emirates

Deepika Matange (Jawaharlal Nehru University, India)

[Session 2C]

Background: Desalination technologies have transformed seawater into an inexhaustible source of potable and fresh water for states where conventional resources are under stress. The United Arab Emirates, with no permanent river and scant precipitation, is a state with one of the world's highest per capita water consumption rates. Groundwater is its only major conventional source. However, it is almost exclusively allocated to irrigating farms and maintaining forests in the desert environment, leaving domestic freshwater supply entirely dependent on non-conventional options, primarily desalination. The rapid depletion and increasing brackishness of groundwater have made desalination an absolute necessity. The Emirates is the second largest producer of desalinated water, with seventy desalination plants dotting its coastline, producing over 1,400 million gallons a day to satiate the increasing demand. However, these plants, while energy-intensive, also contaminate their very source by releasing toxic brine sludge into the seawater. And calls into question the long-term viability of desalination.

The Sustainable Development Goals 2015 (SDGs) were launched as a set of 17 interlinked goals that recognised the society, economy, and environment as three fundamental pillars of human development. UAE's dependence on desalination has directly linked ocean health (Goal 14) to clean water supply (Goal 6). The pattern of overconsumption in an affluent society like the UAE's has exacerbated the issue and pitched socioeconomic and environmental objectives against each other.

Conceptual Framework: While Sustainable Development Goals are considered interdependent, their progress is expressed through independent indicators. The paper adopts the nexus approach to sustainable development to help unveil the synergies and trade-offs among the SDG targets that affect the progress or failure in achieving a particular goal.

Objective: With a focus on desalination, the paper investigates the interplay and trade-offs between Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 14 (Life Below Water) in the UAE.

Research Methodology: The study depends on the qualitative analysis of government policies, legislations and data and is guided by secondary sources like journal articles, books and newspapers.

Findings and conclusion: The paper concludes that while states with limited water resources may look for ways to diversify their sources, the impending water crisis can be circumvented only by curbing excessive consumption patterns.

Basic Income for Development and Peacebuilding: A Proposal

Diana Bashur (University of Vienna, Austria / Basic Income Earth Network)

[Session 4B]

This paper seeks to assess in what ways Basic Income (BI) can be a valuable social policy tool for development and peacebuilding in MENA countries. In reviewing the field's track record in helping countries achieve lasting peace, the paper highlights peacebuilding's challenges, where BI lends itself as a promising alternative. The reviewed evidence of BI pilots held in India and Namibia shows positive effects on key development indicators of nutrition, education, health, welfare, resilience and social cohesion. While these transformative effects are crucial for post-conflict recovery, BI is still to be considered as a peacebuilding instrument. After assessing the risks of implementing a BI in war-affected countries, the paper proposes to carefully test BI's mechanism in such settings. If its transformative effects are validated, BI could be an innovative instrument for future development and peacebuilding interventions.

Beyond a post-conflict reconstruction phase, a BI can be institutionalized and adopted as a national social policy, paving the way for a renewed social contract. Specifically, BI's universal approach aims to instil, through a social policy, a sense of equality among individuals. Considered as a right, a BI distributed to the entire population by national governments can thus encourage an inclusive national identity and prepare the ground for social justice.

The paper adopts a theoretical approach for its proposition. It reviews the domestic drivers of conflict as well as peacebuilding's challenges and juxtaposes these with the rich evidence from BI pilots showing positive effects commensurate with peacebuilding's goals. This synthesis points to a research gap where BI has not been tested as a peacebuilding instrument.

An earlier version of this paper will be published in the forthcoming Palgrave International Handbook of Basic Income. This paper presents new research elements, namely specificities of and key advantages to MENA countries where a BI could be tested.

Employing the Panel Quantile Regression to Examine the Social Factors and the Climate Change Role in the Economic Growth Promotion: The MENA Region Case

Essadik Emna (University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia) and Hammadi Slihi (University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia)

[Session 3C]

The economic growth of a country is considered as a complex system. Given that it depends on many factors. In this study we investigate the impact of the selected sustainable development goals on the economic growth in a sample of MENA countries. We try to assess the relationship between the economic growth, the human capital, the global gender gap index and the CO₂ emission by considering the heterogeneity problem for countries and applying the quantile regression at different percentile values on panel data observed from 2006 to 2019 in 10 MENA. Regarding the base model we are inspired from Harman Singh.P.H et al, (2022) and Damrah.S et al, (2002) studies. We also focus on the role of education, health, environment and the gender equity in the economic growth promotion. As results, we will have estimates of the various impacts for the richest and poorest countries.

In fact, the model consists on regression of the GDP growth rate on the explicative variables, which are: the Education Composite Index (ECI), the Global Gender Gap index, the Carbon dioxide emissions as a percentage of GDP and the Universal health coverage index.

Firstly, we'll calculate the composite indicator according to other components: the School enrollment primary (% gross), the School enrollment secondary (% gross), the School enrollment tertiary (% gross), which are observed for both sexes. The method applied is the standardization (Terzi.C ; Essadik.E 2022).

Secondly, we will compute the descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix. Finally, we estimate the model. We proceed as follows: an estimation to the overall model then we divide the variables distribution into quartiles: Lower, middle and higher quartiles and we estimate them separate. Thus through this technic we analyze the whole conditional growth distribution by simultaneously accounting for the factors social and the climate change. Since, through this study we can give for policy makers some economic policy suggestions that enable them to improve the economic growth country through the selected SDG and by focusing on the different wealth quartiles.

Key Words: Economic growth, Health, Gender Inequality, Climate Change, Education, PQR, MENA .

From Tangential Livelihood Programming to Integrated Social Protection: Conceiving of a Long-term Approach to Youth Economic and Social Policy in Iraq

Farah Al Shami (Arab Reform Initiative, Lebanon)

[Session 3B]

This paper provides a critical analysis of the approach to livelihood policies and programming for youth in Iraq in the aftermath of the 2014 conflict with ISIS, which has been followed by international NGOs and intergovernmental organizations, often in collaboration with the Iraqi State. This approach is characterized by labor market activation programs that promote work precarity and social assistance programs that obstruct social security, which cannot be established through transient poverty alleviation interventions. These interventions include cash for work programs, MSME support, including support for the gig economy, microcredit programs, cash transfers, food assistance, and in-kind donations, among others.

Such programs are tangential, are designed to enable survival, and are leaving many behind. They are generally designed with a goodwill and with the intention to follow a comprehensive configuration that makes them respond to the youth's needs identified in several forms of assessment, including ones that are conflict-sensitive. However, they are not actually responding to Iraqi youth's expectations and aspirations, and are not eventually meeting their intended purpose of ensuring the sustainable and universal economic inclusion of Iraqi youth that is needed for both their prosperity and that of the economy at large.

Their tangentiality stems from the fact that they are reactive, small-scale, transient, short-sighted, inadequate, and not integrated enough, as they are neither State-led nor curated within the framework of an effective development paradigm which has a clear and central vision. They suffer, instead, from flaws in their targeting methods, delivery mechanisms, and instruments, in addition to having to adjust their standard operating procedures to satisfy the vested interests of the government and de-facto forces.

Iraq needs a national macroeconomic structural plan for reform and stabilization, which is built around the principles of economic viability and inclusiveness. It also needs a State-led universal social protection system, which is well integrated, effective, and sustainable. This system can provide the social security guarantees that complement equitable social and economic policies in order to achieve systemic social justice. Such a welfare model can, in turn, be complemented by poverty alleviation, social assistance, and labor market activation programs in times of crisis and emergency like the 2014 conflict with ISIS.

However, for these programs to fulfill their complementary role efficiently, they need to improve their targeting methodologies, their operational and delivery mechanisms, the quality and quantity of their aid/services, and the scope and continuity of their interventions, etc. They also need to turn the imposition of coordinating with the State into an opportunity to enforce a set of conditionality that can facilitate the sound implementation of their activities, such as asking the government to establish a unified national social registry, and imposing transparency and accountability mechanisms.

The paper illustrates the politico-economic challenges impeding the envisioned path forward, and proposes alternatives to overcome these protracted challenges. Knowing that overcoming issues of weak public institutions, bad governance, and poor rule of law requires a long time to become feasible, development actors should begin to think of ways to “bridge the gap between policy and politics.” To do so, they should carry on their interventions, when necessary, where necessary, all while rethinking the types, structures and quality of their aid instruments.

Public Crisis Communication Tested by the COVID 19 Pandemic: Case of the Moroccan Department of National Education

Fatima Ouahmi (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 6D]

The "COVID 19" pandemic was not only a health crisis but also an economic, social and educational crisis. This unprecedented crisis has, in fact, tested all education systems, particularly in terms of their ability to implement efficient and effective educational continuity plans. Moreover, the management of this crisis, like any other crisis, is not only about the deployment of the educational continuity plan and the management of the different risks that arise from it, but it is also about the crisis communication to be put in place to face the possible consequences of such a situation on the image of any organization. It is in this context that our communication is included.

Indeed, the main objective of our investigation is to analyze the response strategies adopted by the Department of National Education of Morocco (DNE) during this pandemic in particular to communicate around the pedagogical continuity plan implemented during the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. In this sense, our main research question is the following: what response strategies were used by the Department of National Education to communicate about the pedagogical continuity plan implemented and facing the crisis?

Our research methodology is based on a case study, the case of the education system in Morocco, using the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) created by Timothy Coombs.

We conducted a documentary analysis of a corpus of official press releases and press statements made in order to identify the response strategies adopted in the face of the COVID 19 crisis.

Our research covered the period from March 2020 to September 2021 and also examined the characteristics of this crisis, the timeframe for communication and the "spokesperson(s)" designated during this crisis.

The results showed that the Ministry used three response strategies among the four strategies provided by the Coombs model, namely: diminish, rebuild and bolstering. Indeed, in the face of a health crisis like "COVID-19" that affected almost all countries, it would be unthinkable to adopt "Denial" strategy.

This investigation has allowed us to note that these strategies were effective at certain times of the crisis but insufficient at other times. This was further accentuated by the unprecedented and unpredictable nature of this crisis as well as by the growing power of social media.

The Discourse of Water Scarcity: Case Study of the Occupied West Bank

Feras Qawasmeh (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar), Laurent A. Lambert and José Antônio Puppim de Oliveira

[Session 2C]

This paper investigates the construction of the discourse of water scarcity for Palestinians in the West Bank. It identifies the actors constructing the discourse and the elements comprising the discourse. Previous works have either been focusing on specific aspects of the water scarcity such as the political one, or mostly depended on quantitative data. However, this study is important because it analyses all actors and constituent elements, relying on in-depth discursive analysis of data collected from interviewing 14 officials, while supported by some quantitative facts. The study finds that there is a single dominant discourse of water scarcity, which is composed of three narratives: the control of Israeli occupation on the land, water mismanagement and the lack of financial support. The control of Israeli occupation narrative is constructed to factors external to the Palestinian Authority. For example, the Israeli control over 85% of the water resources, limiting the water extracted by Palestinians, rejecting Palestinian proposals to transmit water and building wastewater treatment projects, and increasing the lost water. The water mismanagement narrative is constructed to emphasize the inefficient management of Palestinian Authority to the water service which results in water scarcity. Mainly represented in the lack of technical experts and regulative policies, which eventually lead to unequal provision of water. The lack of financial support narrative is constructed to reflect the impact of the unsustainable funds by foreign donors such as keeping the outdated water networks and infrastructure and decrease economic efficiency in the water sector. To conclude, the water scarcity caused by the three narratives constantly impacts the social policies in the West Bank which noticed in the low level of wellbeing, and the ad-hoc environment.

"My Right to Work": The Road towards Disability Inclusive Employment Policies in Crisis Contexts

Grace Khawam (American University of Beirut, Lebanon / Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom)

[Session 2A]

Context of study: Seventeen years after the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the impact of social policies on increasing employment rates for people with intellectual disabilities remains limited. Possible reasons include lack of political reinforcement and loopholes in legislature content or interpretation. There is also insufficient evidence on how inclusive policies can be shaped in unstable and crises-loaded settings, where rights are not state-protected. This is the context of Lebanon, where more than 90% of people with intellectual disability remain unemployed, and the UNCRPD remained, until recently, non-ratified.

Conceptual and theoretical framework: Using the case of Lebanon, I explore the social policy arena around disability rights and employment and investigate how the right to employment for people with intellectual disabilities can be advanced in crisis-loaded disabling contexts. The study draws on critical disability theory, which acknowledges disability as the result of the interaction of personal impairments with disabling and ableist environments. It adopts a human rights approach, by positing employment as a right and a means to inclusive community participation.

Data sources and methodology: Interviews with disability rights activists, self-advocates, and non-profit organizations, were carried out based on activist ethnography. The study also included a comprehensive review of academic and policy literature on employment, labor, and disability rights in Lebanon.

Findings: Lebanon adopted Law 220 on the rights of persons with disabilities in the year 2000. Although it includes anti-discriminatory employment legislation, its enforcement remains lacking. It adopts an outdated medical model of disability with an ambiguous definition of intellectual disability and uses a charity discourse not recognizing the contribution of individuals in the economic development of society. The disability rights movement has adopted a dual approach to advancing rights of people with disability, which includes either bargaining with the state or bypassing it through alternative community-based models.

Conclusions: By describing an innovative model for the inclusive employment of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, I illustrate how community-based models may inform policy development through an incremental bottoms-up approach. Implications on social policy development and reform in alignment with the newly ratified UNCRPD are discussed.

Investigating the Role of Higher Education on CO2 Emission Reduction: Evidence from the Moroccan Economy

Hajar Mazouz (Eastern Mediterranean University) and Sami Fethi (Eastern Mediterranean University)

[Session 4D]

This study empirically investigates the role of higher education, economic growth, renewable energy consumption, and tourism on the reduction of CO₂ emissions in an augmented version of the Environmental Kuznets Curve hypothesis. The ADF, PP, KPSS, and ZA unit root tests are conducted. For a long-run relationship, the ARDL, the Johansen and Juselius (JJ) cointegration tests, DOLS, FMOLS, as well as CCR tests are employed. Additionally, Granger causality (GC) tests are used to estimate the directions of the relationships between the variables whereas the impulse response functions and variance decompositions are utilized to uncover the effects of shocks to the system over the period 1995-2019 for the Moroccan economy. The empirical results reveal that higher education and tourism have a positive impact on carbon emissions in the long term, whereas economic growth, the square of economic growth, and renewable energy consumption show no

statistically significant effects on carbon emissions over the long term. The study underlines the need for policymakers to prioritize the development of sustainable and resilient policies to address the challenges of climate change, including investments in renewable energy and sustainable tourism. Policymakers should also consider higher education's role in shaping climate change's impact.

Keywords: Environmental degradation, Higher education, Modified EKC model, Cointegrating regression, ARDL, Morocco

Governance and Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence from the MENA Region

Hamza El Baraka (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco) and Abdelali Fadlallah (National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, Morocco)

[Session 2B]

The current economic crisis has affected all aspects of life, leading to political instability, personal financial problems and a growing number of business failures. While these are serious problems, simply developing a government policy that injects money into an economy is not an appropriate means of achieving economic recovery and long-term economic development, unless it is combined with an effective and efficient system of governance.

This paper examines whether there is a relationship between governance and growth in the MENA context. Through this study, we plan to shed light on the relationship between governance and economic growth by using a scientific approach to analyze the impact of governance indicators on gross domestic product per capita, we will take advantage of this problem to set up an econometric analysis of this relationship using the generalized method of moments (GMM). We used panel data for the period 2002 to 2019 to investigate the impact of governance and other determinants of economic growth on economic growth in 17 MENA countries.

Our dependent variable (GDP per capita) is the gross domestic product divided by the mid-year population. GDP is the sum of the gross value added of all resident producers in an economy, plus taxes on products and minus subsidies not included in the value of products.

The explanatory variables Aggregate governance indicators incorporate the views of many citizens, businesses, and experts. They are based on hundreds of variables obtained from over 30 data sources (WB). The WB captures six dimensions of governance.

These six dimensions are categorized into three characteristics of governance: the political aspect which is measured by the indicators "Voice and Accountability" and "Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism", the economic aspect which is assessed based on the indicators "Government Efficiency" and "Regulatory Quality", and the institutional aspect which is estimated by the indicators "Rule of Law" and "Control of Corruption".

The results reveal the complexity of these relationships, with certain variables showing significance in specific groups. The analysis focuses on five governance indicators: Voice and Accountability (VA), Political Stability and Absence of Violence (SP), Government Effectiveness (GE), Regulatory Quality (QR), Corruption Control (CC), and Rule of Law (LR). The findings indicate an inconsistent correlation between VA and economic growth, with a slight increase in growth associated with a decrease in VA. SP and GE demonstrate significant positive correlations with economic growth, while QR exhibits a

negative correlation. CC is found to have a significant negative impact on economic growth. Additionally, LR shows a significant negative correlation and highlights the coexistence of moderate rule of law and high corruption levels in some cases. These results emphasize the intricate nature of governance indicators and their influence on economic growth in the MENA region, underscoring the importance of tailored policy interventions for sustainable development.

Alternative Child Care Governance: The Kafala Family-Based Care Arrangement in Egypt

Heba El Azzazy (Save the Children International, Egypt)

[Session 1C]

Over the past decade, Egypt has witnessed several changes in relation to its alternative care system for orphans and children without parental care. Starting 2014, the Egypt government along with Civil Society actors started to adopt the UN General Assembly guidelines on Alternative Care; which call on States to take solid actions to develop their respective deinstitutionalization strategy that aims towards the progressive elimination of institutional cares and prompting family-based care approaches for children deprived of parental care.

Generally, there is very limited academic research published on the alternative care system in Egypt; henceforth, the overall aim of this study is to explain how the existing cooperation and coordination mechanisms established between the government and civil society actors have contributed in positively re-shaping the kafala system in Egypt; which could be considered as a promising child rights' governance framework that could shape future public sector reform for children in Egypt. The study also aims to capture alternative families' experience throughout their kafala journey as end users.

The main research question this paper attempts to explore is to what extent the case of the alternative care reform in Egypt while focusing precisely on kafala could be considered as a successful framework of child rights' governance; which could inform future public sector reforms for children in Egypt?

To fulfill the objective of this study, a qualitative research methodology was adopted to collect in-depth information on the governance framework of the kafala reform system based on the different participant's experiences and level of involvement. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 key informants from governmental actors, child protection practitioners and founders of community initiatives/organizations to share their experience and involvement in the kafala reform process in Egypt. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 11 alternative families to gain insights on their experience and capture their views on the legislative and procedure changes as end users.

Although, more time and comprehensive child governance analysis framework are needed to fully assess the efficiency of the kafala system reform under study, the findings indicate that the on-going coordination and collaboration mechanisms established between the government and civil society actors are contributing to a great extent in strengthening the alternative child care governance framework in general and the kafala system in particular. Despite the positive indicators mentioned above, it is essential to acknowledge that it is still necessary to continue in developing the system as per the feedback shared by alternative families based on their actual experience with the system.

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Sub-Saharan Migrant Students in Moroccan Public Schools

Hicham Chentoufi (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 4C]

Given their interconnection with the historical, social, cultural, economic and, most importantly political spheres, migration and education are among the most debatable issues. Migration studies in the global north established a set of trends and patterns related to immigrants' education in western societies, but this topic is still understudied in the global south, including in Morocco where public schools host a considerable number of Sub-Saharan immigrant students. The present study purports to explore four Sub-Saharan students' lived experiences in Moroccan public schools, their navigation of the school setting and the effect of the multidimensional environment. The research answers three questions, namely (i) How do Sub-Saharan students (person) navigate and experience the Moroccan public school (ii) What personal attributes do the researched students possess? and (iii) To what extent do the environment four levels, namely the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, and macro system, curb or encourage them to interact with their environment and maintain social relations? Through the adoption the qualitative approach and the theory of social ecology of human development as a theoretical framework, the data analysed herein was collected via one-to-one interviews of four sub-Saharan immigrant students. The results indicate that this minority students have academic and non-academic needs that are not fully satisfied, though they exhibit a high level of self-awareness. The wide array of structures, both proximal and distal, that are operative and their effect on the developing students of migratory backgrounds were also found to be another major challenge. Further, the major finding reveals that the interaction between two conflicting microsystems, the school and the family, along with macrolevel structures like culture and belief systems are neither for the benefit of the host country, nor are they advantageous to these coming-of-age students. The latter's personal attributes were proved to be generative in that they help them overcome some challenges at school and beyond. Yet, the presence of cultural and religious minority students in Moroccan public schools is a growing phenomenon that still needs a lot of planning and intervention.

Development and Validation of the Moroccan Dialect Version of the Primary Care Assessment Tool (PCAT)

Hicham El Mouaddib (Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco), Majda Sebbani (Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco / Mohammed VI University Hospital, Morocco), Adil Mansouri (Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco / Mohammed VI University Hospital, Morocco), Latifa Adarmouch (Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco / Mohammed VI University Hospital, Morocco) and Mohamed Amine (Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco / Mohammed VI University Hospital, Morocco)

[Session 4A]

Background: Morocco lacks validated tools to assess the performance of primary care (PC) from patients' perspective. On the one hand, this study aims to adapt the Moroccan Arabic dialect of the Primary Care Assessment Tool-Adult Edition (PCAT-AE). On the other hand, to assess its reliability and validity in the assessment of essential domains of PC from the perspective of adult patients in Morocco.

Methods: A committee of experts carried out the cross-cultural adaptation of the PCAT-AE. The adapted questionnaire was subject to forward and backward translation and a pilot study.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed to assess the internal consistency, reliability, and construct validity of items and scales. Finally, descriptive statistics were performed on the final factor structure.

Results: From the responses of the participants (n=60), a 43-items Moroccan Arabic dialect of the PCAT-AE (Ma PCAT-AE) was constructed, comprising six multi-item scales, representing the four main dimensions of PC (first contact, continuity, comprehensiveness and coordination) and four derived dimensions (Cultural competence, Communication, Advice, and Community orientation). All six scales showed good internal consistency, item-total correlations, and construct validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranged from 0.78 to 0.90.

Conclusion: Comprehensive metric analyzes supported the reliability and validity of Ma PCAT-AE in assessing core PC domains from the patients' experience. This tool could be used in the future for research on PC in Morocco.

Voluntary Organization Membership Effect on Life Satisfaction in Contemporary MENA Countries

Hilal Ceylan (Marmara University, Turkey) and Mehmet Fatih Aysan (Marmara University, Turkey)

[Session 3D]

Welfare is an old concept that humans have been trying to reach throughout history. First and foremost, the family was the primary source of welfare. However, its role has changed with the inclusion of the state and market. Asping-Andersen (1990) explains the welfare state regime as a mix of state, family, and market which are seen as the main suppliers of welfare against social risks. In addition to these three pillars of the welfare regime, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) contribute to welfare distribution by collaborating with the other three pillars to provide services, raise awareness and improve people's well-being in the welfare diamond model.

In this study, the life satisfaction of individuals will be searched since in a welfare society people are expected to be more satisfied with their lives. The impact of NGOs membership will be analyzed to see the contribution to life satisfaction. The underlying hypothesis is that involving voluntary organization increases life satisfaction. Therefore, being involved in voluntary organizations' effects on the life satisfaction of individuals at cross-national level will be investigated. Tunisia, Türkiye, and Egypt will be looked. Data is taken from the last wave of the World Value Survey (2017-2022) which started in 1981 and conducted in every five years. It measures topics about cultural values, beliefs, lifestyles, socio-demographic characteristics, attitudes towards institutions, justice, and migration. Logistic regression model will be used to investigate to what extent membership to voluntary organizations and other control variables explain life satisfaction.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, NGOs membership, welfare regime

Representations and Perspectives of Gender Equality in EFL Learning Among Moroccan Educators and Students

Hmad Benaissa (Ibn Tofail University, Morocco)

[Session 5A]

Education has an impact on constructing gender, power relations, and cultural identities. Textbooks can promote gender disparities or encourage equality and equity. Educators and learners redefine gender roles through various perspectives that consider the educational discourse as a potential mode of resistance and identity forming. The educational materials used, by the instructors and learners can impact gender identification in classrooms.

Education could be a generator that reproduces gender inequalities or creates new realities that provide women with more opportunities for access and success in the public sphere. The theoretical background of the study confirms that educational institutions are included in the apparatus that shapes human lifestyles; education can produce or reproduce social principles and norms. It proves that learning English as a foreign language could shape students' thoughts about gender equality and socio-cultural beliefs. It shows that social education constructs teachers' and students' meanings and values that resist or perpetuate patriarchal ideas.

This study adopts the mixed approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods besides content analysis. Gate Way to English 2 is chosen non-randomly as a representative of the textbooks that are used in teaching English as a foreign language and designed for second-year Moroccan baccalaureate learners. 70 EFL female students from high school in Daraa-Tafilalet regional Academy were involved in answering the questionnaires associated with gender representations in textbooks and students' perspectives towards gender and 30 males. At the same time, 20 girls accepted to make interviews. 30 female EFL teachers participated in this study and 25 male teachers were involved.

Content analysis and the findings show that gender roles are represented negatively in Gate Way to English 2. 75.58 % of teachers assume that there is a misrepresentation of women and men in the evaluated textbook; whereas 32.72 % of learners think that women and men are equally represented in Gate Way to English 2. Teachers transmit ideas that they already have about social division to their students in association with their beliefs about the content of the textbook. They supported changing stereotypes, 72.20 % suggested the introduction of more powerful models, and 62% confirm that there is a need to change textbooks.

Key Words: Gender Representations, Equality, Education, EFL Textbooks, Students, Teachers

Ageing in the Arab Gulf States as a Temporary Migrant

Idil Akinci (University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom)

[Session 3A]

In spite of the strict migration regimes that prevent permanent settlement and naturalisation, migrants have, for decades, made the Arab Gulf States their unofficial home, something that has led to the existence of subsequent generations of non-citizens who are born there. However, reaching the age of 65 marks retirement for migrants, who can no longer receive work visas.

Prolonging residency is possible, yet without social security and pensions, maintaining a decent life requires significant financial investment and reliance on family and social networks. Based on interviews with the adult children of first-generation migrants in Dubai from the 'Global South', this paper provides insights into a number of strategies their parents develop in order to navigate restrictive immigration regimes upon retirement in Dubai. Most migrants prefer to stay put in Dubai upon retirement, where their children continue to live. Drawing on 'immobility' debates, this paper

argues that immobility is an active – and relatively privileged – response to restrictive immigration policies in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that enforce mobility upon retirement. Whilst a preference for ‘ageing in the UAE’ is often costly and precarious, older migrants’ social and emotional attachments often outweigh economic reasons to leave, as this paper shows.

Family and School as a Breeding Environment of (Violent) Extremism among Young Moroccans

Issam El Birch (Ibn Tofail University, Morocco)

[Session 3B]

Most counter-terrorism policies around the world address the issues of religious extremism and terrorism from a security perspective. Despite its effectiveness to curb instant threats as planned and conducted by terrorist individuals or groups, dominant security approaches tend to impede multi-dimensional treatments of the root causes of religious extremism and terrorism. Here comes the importance of approaching the extremism-terrorism duality as a ‘process’ accounting for why and how youths religiously radicalise. In this respect, Morocco is not an exception: while the Moroccan intelligence-based efforts to combat local and global terrorist networks is remarkably successful, academic investigations of terrorism as a human/social behaviour are scarce and not as comprehensive as to cover all the push and pull factor of holy violence. This paper purports to examine how the extremist/terrorist idea is socially and religiously shaped among young Moroccans. To this aim, a questionnaire was administered to 400 respondents aged 18-22, each 200 from a different social environment, measuring the role of the family and school in rendering youths vulnerable to be drawn by extremist narratives often conducive to (violent) extremism. The findings demonstrate that family and school handle children in ways that make of them desirable profiles for prospect recruits of terrorist groups.

Keywords: Youths, Radicalisation, Family, School, Process.

Développement financier, corruption et inégalité de genre au Maroc

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[Session 4A]

Les inégalités de genre est l’un des problèmes majeurs qui entravent le développement humain et socioéconomique dans le monde. Ce sujet est devenu une préoccupation fondamentale des gouvernements et des décideurs politiques. D’ailleurs, de nombreuses études ont mis en exergue le rôle de la participation des femmes à la population active dans la croissance économique et la réduction de la pauvreté (Dormekpor, 2015 ; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2019).

A cet égard, nous allons traiter dans cette étude l’impact du développement financier et le contrôle de la corruption sur les inégalités de genre. Ainsi, notre problématique s’articule dans quelle mesure le développement financier et le contrôle de la corruption affectent les inégalités de genre? Dans cette étude, afin d’étudier la relation entre notre variable d’intérêt « inégalités de genre » et les variables explicatives « développement financier » et « contrôle de corruption » nous allons

procéder aux tests de cointégration de Johansen et aux tests de causalité de Granger dans le cadre d'un modèle vectoriel à correction d'erreurs.

Pour mener notre étude, nous allons exploiter les données secondaires fournies par la banque mondiale, FMI et les données publiées par PNUD sur les inégalités de genre.

Les inégalités de genre seront mesurées par l'indice composite GII créé par les Nations unies, qui utilise trois dimensions : la santé reproductive, l'autonomisation et le marché du travail.

Le développement financier : cette variable sera mesurée par un indice créé par le FMI qui fait référence aux classements des pays en fonction de la profondeur, de l'accès et de l'efficacité de leurs institutions financières et de leurs marchés financiers.

Contrôle de corruption : Pour mesurer le contrôle de la corruption, nous allons utiliser l'indice de contrôle de la corruption varie de 0 à 1, les valeurs élevées dénotant une économie transparente tandis que les valeurs faibles dénotent une économie corrompue.

Nous avons ajouté d'autres variables de contrôle à savoir : le PIB par habitant comme proxy de la croissance économique, ratio de pauvreté sera mesuré par le pourcentage de la population vivant avec moins de 1,90 dollar par jour aux prix internationaux de 2011.

Hypothèses :

- Le développement financier pourrait réduire les inégalités de genre.
- Une augmentation de la corruption pourrait augmenter les inégalités de genre.

Au regards de ce travail, plusieurs politiques et stratégies seront proposées dans ce contexte afin d'assurer l'égalité entre les sexes et de renforcer l'autonomisation des femmes et de réduire l'exclusion sociale

COVID-19 Social Policy Responses in East Asia

Julia Shu-Huah Wang (National Taiwan University, Taiwan), Chenhong Peng (The University of Hong Kong), Irene Y.H. Ng (National University of Singapore, Singapore), Ji Young Kang (Chungnam National University, South Korea), Aya Abe (Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan), Xi Zhao (Renmin University of China), Inhoe Ku (Seoul National University, South Korea) and Olivia Cheung (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)

[Session 2D]

COVID-19 is the largest crisis since World War II that necessitated social policy interventions to ameliorate its health and economic consequences. Yet, many countries implemented their policy responses with little certainty. This study scrutinizes COVID-19 social policy responses targeting low-income families in East Asian societies, including mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. We investigate East Asian societies' welfare policy design to tackle COVID-19 as well as evaluate their generosity, coverage, and poverty alleviation effects using a model family approach. We contrasted both performances during COVID-19 and changes before and during COVID-19. The model family approach entails collecting income-packaging data for hypothetical income levels and family types, and income packages include information on labor income, welfare benefits, tax and social security contributions, and the costs. We collect model family data before and during COVID-19 (2019, 2020, and 2021) and analyze these primary data (n=2,094) through descriptive statistics and regression analyses. We found that three societies instituted the most

changes in welfare measures during COVID-19: Hong Kong adopted multidimensional responses, Taiwan adopted generous responses, and Singapore adopted coverage responses. The other three societies adopted fewer changes with varying performance: Japan exhibited an inactive response with high generosity, Korea had an inactive response with low generosity, and China displayed an inactive response with low coverage. Theoretically, our discussions on variations behind responses suggested that interactions of a myriad of factors, such as fiscal capacity, welfare institutions, welfare ideologies, and challenges faced by the society and political regimes, jointly explained why similar societies adopted divergent responses. Findings from this study also enrich the ongoing debates on features of East Asian welfare models by empirically characterizing welfare approaches to tackle external shocks. Practically, the cross-national social policy comparisons can provide empirical evidence for governments to improve their shock-responsive social protection systems.

Economic Hardships, Social Protection and Quality of Life during the COVID-19 Crisis in MENA Region: Fuzzy Sets-based Causal Relationships

Khaled Nasri (The University of Tunis El Manar and ERF, Tunisia) and Besma Belhadj (The University of Tunis El Manar, Tunisia / The LAREQUAD, FSEGT, Tunisia)

[Session 6D]

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy, leading to increased unemployment, reduced income, and poverty. As a result, many individuals and families have experienced economic hardships, which have negatively affected their quality of life. Social protection measures, such as unemployment benefits, cash transfers, and food assistance, have been implemented by governments to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations. Gentilini et al.(2020c) highlighted that over the world, around 195 countries implemented various social protection measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of March 31 (2021), 20 countries in the MENA region have implemented a total of 158 social protection responses to covid-19 (Bilo, Dytz and Sato, 2022; Jawad, 2022; ESCWA, 2022; Krafft, Assaad and Marouani, 2021). These measures supposed to help reduce economic hardships. In turn, this will normally have a positive impact on the quality of life of individuals and families who have benefited from social protection measures. However, the effectiveness of social protection measures in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on economic hardships and quality of life has varied across countries and populations.

In this research, we try to understand how well the social protection responses are mitigating the impact of the pandemic and economic hardship on the quality of life in MENA countries? To this end, we intend to investigate the causal relationships between economic hardship, social protection, and quality of life during the COVID-19 crisis in four MENA countries, using a Fuzzy Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) and data from the ERF COVID-19 MENA Monitor Household Survey (OAMDI, 2021).

Although several articles in the literature have investigated how job loss during the COVID-19 crisis affected depression or anxiety (see Mojtahedi et al., 2020; Rajkumar, 2020; Ikeda et al.,2022; Al Dhaheri et al.,2021 and Shek, Leung and Tan 2023), to our knowledge, few studies have addressed the association links between social protection responses; economic hardships and the quality of life of individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the MENA region. Thus, this paper contains research to fill this gap. The main contribution of our research is to address all the possible combinations between social protection and economic hardships allowing to explain the quality of life of individuals (contrary to what has been done in previous studies, where the association

between COVID-19 and/or social protection and quality of life has been studied on the basis of traditional methods of quantitative analysis). In regression analysis, the goal is to discover the effect a variable has on some outcome. However, in fsQCA, the focus is on what conditions lead to a given outcome.

The preliminary results of this research show the association between job loss during the COVID-19 pandemic and health-related quality of life in some individuals included in our sample and that the financial support received during the COVID-19 era has a protective influence on the quality of life related to mental health of the same category. However, the quality of life of certain individuals is degraded despite they did not experience economic hardships during the Covid-19 crisis and they have social security coverage. There is clear evidence that governments and policy makers have taken policies that focus primarily on physical well-being with a relatively weaker emphasis on psychological well-being. Also, social responses have mainly aimed at stabilizing public “financial capital”, human capital (especially personal resilience) and social capital (especially family resilience) are relatively neglected.

The Role of Transnational Communities in Conflict Prevention: The Case of Arab Australian Communities

Khalid Al Bostanji (Australian National University, Australia)

[Session 3A]

Citizens and residents of MENA were most affected by the political crises of 2019 that included mass demonstrations across Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran, as citizens revolted against their governments over corruption and stagnant economies, amongst other issues. They have also been facing environmental, social, and economic crises to which civil society groups have responded with relatively limited means. Policy actors have attempted to mobilise political support and resources from foreign governments. Support has also been mobilised from international actors, amongst the most important of which have been migrant communities. But academics and policymakers alike remain sceptical of the role these communities can play in responding to local crises. This paper addresses the role of migrant communities when MENA societies experience crises, ultimately finding that this role is a complex and significant part of conflict prevention in the region.

This pilot study focuses on the case of the largest Arab communities in Australia, which are mostly Levantine with origins in countries like Lebanon or Palestine. Ultimately, the paper aims to show that Arab migrant communities in Australia played an important role in cushioning the impact of 2019 crises in Lebanon and Palestine. Not only are Lebanese and Palestinian migrants amongst the biggest migrant communities globally, but they also form part of a wider diaspora whose migrations can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century. However, the case of Arab communities in Australia and their role in conflict prevention in their countries of origin is underexplored compared to that of Arab communities in the Americas, for example. The study addresses this gap using the concept of transnational communities as a framework to ask the question of what role migrants play when MENA societies face crises. This concept differs from that of diaspora, but there are also some overlaps between the two, especially in the age of globalisation that facilitates transnational exchanges. Utilising an interpretative approach, data analysed in the study come from two qualitative sources: (1) information from citizen groups, press and other forms of Arabic-language media in Australia, and (2) interviews with informants including community organisations, leaders, and spokespeople. I conclude that transnational communities can be part of preventing conflict in the MENA region.

Solar for Whom? Beyond Neoliberal Extractivist Logics and Towards Decentralized Potentials of Solar Energy

Khaoula Bengezi (York University, Canada)

[Session 3C]

In the years following the grandiose announcement and subsequent media-frenzied construction of the Noor Ouarzazate Solar Power Plant, arguably the largest solar power plant in the world, Morocco's solar energy light has dimmed. While the technological shortcomings have been repeatedly and openly recognized, the social cost of the power plant have been minimized at best. Environmental scholars and activists have noted how the construction of the power plant has led to further water scarcity in an already drought-prone area of Southern Morocco and has provided little prospects for local communities in terms of employment, access to cheaper electricity and opportunities (Belghazi & Sammouni 2020; Rignall 2014; Ryser 2019).

This paper relies on semi-structured interviews conducted with both local communities surrounding the Noor Ouarzazate power plant as well as Moroccan technical experts in renewable energy technologies to highlight the ways in which a decentralized approach to solar energy is more pressing and effective in providing Moroccans, particularly marginal desert communities with access to cheap and stable electricity. This, I argue, is in contrary to the imaginaries presented by international public and private actors and national spokespersons who have and continue to push for large scale solar development projects that have yet to produce communal or national benefits. Rather, such visions are fuelled by Western imaginaries of extraction and exportation of the sun and other renewable energy sources from North Africa to Europe.

As such, this paper presents an alternative social imaginary wherein subsidized and decentralized solar potentials can allow for agricultural economic growth, national employment opportunities and more equitable access to electricity and water across Morocco and particularly to vulnerable people and regions.

E-danger: The Detrimental Effects of the Toxic Passivity in Qatar

Laura Sani (Ayaan Institute, United Kingdom)

[Session 4D]

Nearly 54 million Mt of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) was generated globally in 2019. Although the e-waste engendered by Qatar is relatively low in comparison to other regional players, such as Saudi Arabia, the amount of available EEE per inhabitant was the highest in the MENA region – 24.9 kg. Nevertheless, the urgent need for an authoritative legal text on the correct disposal of the EEE does not correspond to the swiftness with which legislative action is undertaken in the Gulf state. Another obstacle to the realization of better collection and recycling regulation is the lack of consumer awareness. A good number of scholars have established a strong relationship between the lack of awareness about e-waste and its collection, correct disposal, and subsequent recycling. However, few of those who included such a hypothesis managed to test empirically the level of awareness of the whole society or a specific segment of it. The current research fills this gap by taking the students in Education City as a case study. More than one hundred students completed an online form that contains multiple-choice questions alongside open-ended questions. The results suggest that the reasons behind the low level of awareness range from prioritizing personal issues to

mirroring the insufficient dedication of the responsible institutions to resolve the problem. The paper concludes with recommendations on how to accelerate the pace with which education on e-waste progresses and how to mobilize local and international students in Qatar to demand WEEE-related legislation.

Promoting (Which) Emirati Women's Employment

Lauren Clingan (Princeton University, United States)

[Session 1A]

Since soon after its founding in 1971, the United Arab Emirates has engaged in a form of state feminism, promoting women's education, employment, and political representation. A key component of UAE state feminism is women's formal labor force participation, which rose, between 1975 and 2018, from 2.2 to 36.5 percent, with 4 in 5 Emirati women employed in the public sector. The UAE state celebrates Emirati women's increased employment as a symbol of their empowerment.

Historians, political scientists, and sociologists studying state feminism have long called for work that empirically examines the intersectional consequences of pro-women policies. Focusing on the UAE case—where vast inequalities exist among women residents along lines of citizenship and class, but little is known about family, class, region, and other inequalities among Emirati women—I respond to this call by asking how and which Emirati women benefit from “employment as empowerment.” This study aims to produce insights that can support effective, inclusive gender policies in the UAE, relevant for understanding the intersectional consequences of similar pro-women policies across the Arab Gulf, for example, in Saudi Arabia.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with 64 Emirati women and men conducted between 2016 and 2019, my qualitative analysis finds that Emirati women benefit from the state's promotion of “employment as empowerment,” albeit unevenly. Young, affluent Emirati women report being most advantaged. They attribute professional opportunities to ruler support and experience employment as empowering. Employment facilitates these women's economic independence, allowing them to delay or exit marriage, and gives them a sense of personal growth and purpose. By contrast, older, poorer Emirati women from the rural northern emirates, who hold less well-paid administrative and teaching positions, report feeling less of a sense of empowerment; these women, who work to support their families financially, describe struggling to balance work and family—especially those who migrate between emirates for work and cannot rely on older generations of women for childcare.

I conclude that despite successfully increasing Emirati women's labour force participation, the UAE can take additional steps to improve work experiences for women citizens, beginning with implementing financially and geographically accessible work-family policy supports.

Why Women Vote: Wasta and Political Participation under Authoritarianism

Lindsay J. Benstead (Portland State University, United States)

[Session 5A]

Why, after decades of universal suffrage in most Arab countries, are women less politically engaged and empowered than men? Importantly, why does the gender gap in voting all but disappear or

reverse in some conservative states such as Jordan and Morocco? This book leverages the concept of linking capital within an authoritarian, clientelist context to explain why personal connections drive political participation among women—as well as among men. Drawing on extensive field research and original survey data, I argue and empirically show that women who enjoy connections with candidates (that is, linking capital), are more likely to vote. Yet women are more able to access this linking capital through the private sphere—namely through tribes and civil society organizations, rather than more male dominated domains in the public sphere including politics, business, and the paid labour force. Women in the MENA region find unique pathways to empowerment, often in the private sphere where linking social capital overlaps with bonding capital (e.g., through kinship groups), while being stymied by labour force participation, which does not lead to higher rates of voting in this region, contrary to conventional wisdom. Thus, in monarchies, which tend to have more politically salient tribes than republics, women are more likely to acquire linking capital and thus vote in parliamentary elections. Electing women—especially through quotas—also improves women's engagement by reshaping networks and creating new sources of linking capital for female citizens. In addition to providing a vivid picture of the pathways through which women exercise political agency in the MENA region, this book has important insights for the study of electoral politics in authoritarian regimes and policy efforts to empower women in clientelist contexts.

Advocating for Family-Friendly Policies: First-time Fathers' and Mothers' Recommendations for Parental Leave and Husbands' Prenatal Appointment and Birth Attendance in Qatar

Mahasin F. Saleh (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar) and Jozina (Yoke) van der Meulen-Rabaia (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar)

[Session 1A]

Background: Theory about fathers' involvement and coping during the period of pregnancy and childbirth is underdeveloped, and few studies have been undertaken in the Arab world. This presentation will concentrate on a subsection of findings from a qualitative exploratory and descriptive study about first-time fathers' involvement in pregnancy and childbirth in Qatar. The research questions included: What are participants' views about and recommendations for maternity and paternity leave in Qatar? What are the participants' views about the father's role and attendance at prenatal appointments and birth?

Methods: Purposive and snowball sampling were employed, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 Qatari and 13 non-Qatari Arab fathers and 12 Qatari and 13 non-Qatari Arab mothers, and 9 Maternal Health Professionals (n=49).

Key Findings: Qatari and non-Qatari Arab husbands' roles and potential ways of supporting their wives during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum are changing towards more involvement in areas such as emotional/psychological, health, household, and social support. For couples who wanted to experience medical checkups and delivery together, the public maternal health services' prohibition of husbands attending medical checkups and at the delivery of the baby was a serious restriction. In some cases, families were forced to seek expensive private services where husbands were encouraged to participate. Due to the financial constraints of other families, some could not transfer to private services, and thus the father was not allowed to attend prenatal appointments and the birth. Almost all of the interviewees considered the approximately 2-month maternity leave granted to women insufficient, and most suggested that there should be an option for men to take

paternity leave. Furthermore, the majority of participants recommended that fathers should have the option to attend medical appointments and the birth if they choose.

Conclusion: Social policy recommendations for paternity and maternity leave and family-friendly maternal child health services will be addressed. Furthermore, the recommendations will incorporate the conference theme and focus on how social policies can be more inclusive of citizens and residents in a Muslim country where family is considered the foundation of society.

Sustainability and Social Policy in MENA: Towards a New Social Contract in the MENA

Mahmood Messkoub (Erasmus University of Rotterdam, Netherlands)

[Session 6B]

Social welfare and social policies are based on social contracts between citizens and social groups as well as between citizens and the state. The scope of a social contract would depend on socio-economic formation (including, inter alia, resource base of a country, especially in MENA) and balance of power among social groups and different classes. Social contracts do change overtime in line with changes in the balance of political power and social and economic needs of different groups and social classes. Environmental challenges should also be included in the dynamics of changes that re-shape social contracts.

The political/political-economy ecology literature links theories of social welfare and welfare state to environmental issues like resource use through the relationship between economic growth and sustainability. Orthodox mainstream neo-classical and Keynesian economics rely on economic growth in order to raise living standards but using different channels and mechanisms. It is this reliance on economic growth and its depletive effect on environmental resources that has lied at the heart of the critiques of growth oriented liberal/neo-liberal or Keynesian economic policies, and for that matter, economic policies of centralised economies of socialist countries.

Economic growth for its generation of resources has provided the foundation upon which states have been able to deliver on their side of the bargain vis-à-vis the citizens and meet their obligations under any implicit or explicit social contract; and legitimise their rule. Meeting the environmental challenge has introduced new potential constraints on achieving a target rate of growth. In the context of a sustainable social policy we should ask how to meet the increasing health, education and other social needs whilst minimising the depletion of natural resources. This paper argues that the answer to the question of a sustainable social policy in part lies in an economic model, a la Kalecki and others, that can manage/negotiate the composition of output whilst investing in resources to reduce depletion of natural resources and greenhouse emissions. This is a growth strategy based on 'the human theory of needs' that meets the needs of current generation and provides some measure of inter-generational justice.

This debate in the MENA region would have to take note of differing resource-base of countries. States in countries rich in hydrocarbon and mineral resources have relative autonomy to decide on their growth objectives and meet their social obligations. States with low or no hydrocarbon and mineral resources have to rely on tax and foreign aid. Both groups of countries need to engage in a social dialogue to determine the growth path that would deliver on their obligations. In either of these cases a social contract has to be formulated that puts the emphasis, at a minimum, on the public and collective provisioning of socially necessary services of health and education. This

is based on the argument that collective provisioning will reduce per capita cost through economies of scale and scope whilst providing an equitable access to these services – universal provision and access and not targeting is at the heart of this approach.

Cash Transfers, Household Food Insecurity and the Subjective Wellbeing of Youth in Jordan

Maia Sieverding (American University of Beirut, Lebanon) and Zeina Jamaluddine (LSHTM, United Kingdom)

[Session 1B]

Cash transfers are an increasingly common feature of social protection systems in MENA, including in humanitarian settings. There is strong evidence that cash transfers are effective in improving basic needs outcomes but less evidence on more distal effects such as psychosocial wellbeing. Youth in Jordan, as elsewhere in MENA, face numerous health and socioeconomic challenges during the transition to adulthood. The potential of cash transfers to improve psychosocial wellbeing during this period of life could therefore have long-term positive consequences. This paper addresses the conference theme of how social policy contributes to social welfare by analysing the degree to which the relationship between cash transfers and subjective wellbeing is mediated by food insecurity among Jordanian and Syrian refugee youth in Jordan.

Using the nationally representative Survey of Young People in Jordan 2020-21, we build ordinary least squares regression models using a stepwise approach. Twenty percent of Jordanian-headed and 90% of Syrian-headed households with youth received at least one cash transfer. Nevertheless, food insecurity was high, at 45% of Jordanian and 74% of Syrian households. Thirty-nine percent of Jordanian and 52% of Syrian youth experienced poor wellbeing. Receipt of social assistance was not predictive of wellbeing among Jordanians. Only receipt of all three major United Nations cash transfer programs for refugees was a significant predictor of better wellbeing among Syrians. While household food insecurity was a significant predictor of worse wellbeing for both nationalities, we do not find strong support for the hypothesis that food security is a mediator of the association between cash transfers and wellbeing for this population. A draft of the paper was published as an Economic Research Forum Working Paper. The revised version for presentation adds an analysis of how cash transfer amounts may change the identified relationships between receipt of transfers, food insecurity and subjective wellbeing.

Public Sentiments about Subsidy Reform in Iran: An Analysis of Public Discourse on Instagram 2016-2022

Markus Loewe (German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Germany) and Somayeh Mirashe (German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS), Germany / Allameh Tabataba'i University in Teheran, Iran)

[Session 1B]

Social contract theory says that governments deliver at least some protection (against internal and external threats) or provision (of economic and social services) or political participation or even all of the three to citizens and that these give back by accepting or at least tolerating the government, by paying taxes and by contributing to other public goods. From public spending data and governance indicators, we can draw how much government gives to society in different countries. However, for

most countries, we do not have enough information to tell how content citizens are with the deliverables of government. Opinion polls like the World Value Surveys and the Arab Barometer give insight into the overall satisfaction of citizens with the government and but they say nothing about how individual policies affect the acceptance of the government by the people.

With our research, we aim to fill this gap with respect to subsidy reforms in Iran. We have analysed the complete discourse of Iranians on Instagram between February 2016 and August 2022. 45% of Iranians have an Instagram account. We identified 10 sets of terms expressing positive sentiments and 12 sets for negative sentiments and counted how often these terms have been used in every month in relation with the subsidy reform policies of the government in any public post on Instagram or in randomly selected 5% of all comments on these posts. So-called 'organised content products' (posts of policy makers and their fan clubs and interest groups) have been systematically excluded.

We find that the number of negative comments exceeds the number of positive comments during the entire period but public policy debates are almost always dominated by critical statements. However, the ratio between negative and absolute comments dropped significantly in 2021 and particularly after president Raisi was elected president and again after he announced a new direct social transfer scheme to compensate citizens for the next reduction in energy and food subsidies.

Intentionally, the timeframe of our analysis ends in August 2022 before the mass protests started in Iran. We expect that all public debates in Iran are too much governed by issues such as political participation or women' rights thereby making comparisons over time before and after the beginning of the protests worthless. This means, however, also that our research reflects only people's immediate reactions to the most recent reforms.

Egypt Pension Reform: Implications for Poverty and Social Justice

Marwa Mohamed Galal Abdelwanis (University of Southampton, United Kingdom)

[Session 1C]

Introduction: A new social contract has been created between the government and citizens in Egypt, following the revolution of 25th January 2011. During the revolution, Egyptians in the streets asked for "bread, freedom and social justice" (Loewe and Jawad, 2018). These demands have led to a modification of the political and social policy objectives, and, to achieve them, the government has implemented different procedures. One such is a consolidated social insurance pension law no. 148 (Barsoum and Selwaness, 2022), introduced in 2019, which aims to extend coverage, improve long-term living standards, and achieve equity for all Egyptians. This reform's significance stems from social pensions' role in strengthening social cohesion and achieving peace and stability.

Research aim: This research aims to assess the effectiveness of the recent reform of the social pension system in Egypt from the perspective of its impact on poverty and social justice to answer the following questions: Will it alleviate poverty? Does it indeed secure a better quality of life for all Egyptians? Until now, there are no studies that empirically assess how effective is the 2019 reform.

Method: The research compares the old and the reformed system in respect of social sustainability indicators: equity, and adequacy (OECD, 2019); it follows interdisciplinary work by employing actuarial modelling (Queisser and Whitehouse, 2006) and hypothetical biographies (Meyer and Bridgen, 2013, 2022) that represent different system members for a social policy analysis.

Outcomes: the study reveals that the new law leads to significant changes to the pension system in Egypt, it provides more incentives for the informal economy to be enrolled within the system and it achieves more equity between members of the system (public, private, and casual workers).

Keywords: social pension reform; adequacy; equity; social justice; social cohesion; actuarial modelling; Egypt

Non-standard Employment in the Health Sector: Precarious for Women?

Maye Ehab (Institute of Employment Research (IAB), Germany) and Fatma Mossad (Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo (AUC), Egypt)

[Session 5B]

Like women in health sector in many countries, Egyptian women represent a vulnerable group with high working poverty. Despite the high share of informal employment worldwide, the literature mainly focuses on the primary labour market segmentation differentiating between permanent and temporary employment (de Cuyper & de Witte, 2007). Informal employment is predominantly neglected in the global North literature with some exceptions (Karabchuk and Soboleva, 2020; Pirani, 2017). In this paper, we investigate nonstandard employment as an extra layer of segmentation including informal employment. This paper answers two main research questions: (1) How precarious are non-standard jobs compared to standard jobs for women in the health sector with respect to working poverty? (2) Are there differences between single, married women and mothers? In our pursuit, we use the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS) dataset for the years 2012 and 2018. Our main contribution to the literature focuses on looking beyond the usual segmentation of the labour market differentiating between permanent and temporary employment by including a third dimension which is informality when considering the health sector. This allows for digging deeper into the precariousness of these non-standard jobs to investigate their level of precarity and highlight whether non-standard jobs are precarious per se or not.

Agency, Solidarity and Social Policies for Migrant Care Workers in Lebanon

Michael Drinkwater (Independent consultant)

[Session 6C]

Lebanon's economy has deteriorated sharply in recent years, initially through a political crisis and aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic. This crisis has huge implications for the care economy. The impoverishment of especially the non-US\$ earning middle class has meant that demand for full time live in migrant workers has plummeted, whilst that for part-time workers has grown. For women migrant workers this part time work allows them more control of their time and who they work for, which they are denied as a live in worker. But whilst this freedom is valued, it runs against current migrant labour laws and regulations.

There are multiple actors involved. In addition to the employers and women migrant workers themselves, there is the Ministry of Labour, General Security (who deal with immigration), recruiting agencies, and civil society organisations representing migrant workers. A decade long ILO project, Work in Freedom has engaged with all these actors. In this presentation, reference will be made to a human security framework as modified by the 2022 HDRO Special Report on New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene. These modifications add the concepts of solidarity and agency to the

original protection and empowerment dimensions. These are concepts Work in Freedom has sought to operationalise, by working with women's organisations that represent and build the capacity of women migrant workers, and by seeking to change labour policies in ways that will benefit domestic and international migrant workers. This contested terrain will be explored to show how women migrant domestic workers have developed both agency and solidarity.

Welfare Retrenchment Under Authoritarianism

Molly Hickey (Harvard University, United States)

[Session 1B]

Whether due to budgetary constraints or demands made by international financial institutions, middle income governments in the Arab world are finding it increasingly difficult to fund the welfare goods that have stabilized their rule. Historically, programs such as public sector employment and subsidies on basic commodities have served as tools of clientelism. Over the past few decades, these public goods have become incredibly burdensome on state budgets. Governments have responded by shifting their economies to a more neoliberal model. However, this shift has been carried out to varying degrees of completion, in no small part due to the dissatisfaction that such reforms generate amongst citizens, which tends to take the form of destabilizing protests. This problem is especially salient in authoritarian regimes, where public spending can bolster governments in the absence of electoral legitimacy. I ask: what explains the sectoral variation in welfare retrenchment in authoritarian contexts? Under what conditions do these regimes rescind the very welfare spending that stabilizes their rule? My project examines these dynamics by focusing on authoritarian regimes in Jordan and Morocco.

I will pursue a multi-method approach, combining quantitative budget data with interviews, historical narratives, and primary source documents to build a picture of the tradeoffs that each government is making between different constituencies when determining their reform strategies. In doing so, I interact directly with the conference theme, interrogating how governments adjust their social policies to respond to economic shocks. Moreover, this study is motivated by a desire to understand how social policy can be reformed in an inclusive and sustainable manner. Finally, my work is in dialogue with the key question of political will, understanding that any policy solution is inherently constrained by political considerations.

Patterns of Subsidy Reforms and Civil Unrest in the MENA Region

Moritz Schmoll (Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Morocco), Amir Abdul Reda (University Mohammed VI Polytechnic) and Thomas Richter (German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) in Hamburg, Germany)

[Session 5C]

Does subsidy reform trigger civil unrest in the Middle East and North Africa? To test the longstanding expectation that the reform of subsidy systems – which are part and parcel of social contracts in the region – results in social protests and political instability, our project aims to compile the first region-wide dataset on episodes of food and energy subsidy reform since 1975, drawing on a wide range of sources (e.g. IMF documents, government reports, scholarly publications, etc.). On the way to a more comprehensive answer to the question about if and how subsidy reforms trigger unrest, we use our new dataset to present preliminary descriptive evidence on the historical patterns of subsidy reforms in the MENA region. We match our results with existing protest event data on social unrest

to identify trends across time and countries. Ultimately, we hope our project will help scholars, experts, and practitioners better understand the social and political consequences of subsidy reform across the MENA.

Settlement of Nomadic Societies in National States: Reality, Policy and Continuity

Muhammad Suwaed (Western Galilee College, Acre)

[Session 6A]

The process of settling nomadic societies in the Middle East and North Africa began in the late 19th century and strengthened during the 20th century for the following reasons: strong central governments, technological development, and development of transportation that caused significant change in the traditional nomads' sources of livelihood.

Settling of nomadic societies occurred in two forms: a. spontaneous settlement initiated by the nomadic group/community, b. enforced settlement initiated by the government.

This process has always raised conflicts between the two parties, due to the gap in the parties' perception of land usage: grazing pastures versus uses that could benefit the entire society.

The gap in perceptions and needs can be summed up as follows: 1) The nomadic dispersion over large territories, preventing their usage for the economic needs of the entire country. 2) The refusal of the nomadic population to give up lands they used to wander through or to compromise. In the past, when the central government was weak, the nomads could realize their "rights" over vast territories. Once the state is strong, the nomads cannot resist it and they become dependent on its good will.

In recent decades the nomadic population in the Middle East and North Africa undergoes a far reaching change from nomadic way of life into settled society, and instead of tribal society with its own unique culture it is exposed to the culture of the host state, alongside foreign culture mediated by the modern media.

This lecture will discuss the transition from nomadic life to living in permanent settlements, the social, cultural political and economic impact of the transition with reference to the government policy towards the issue. The Bedouin in Israel will be a case study for discussion of these issues.

The presentation in the conference combines a field study performed by the author and an academic study based on analysis of relevant academic literature, published in recent years, and diverse archive materials including official publications of the relevant governments.

Research method: Cross-referencing information from relevant academic research sources, extensive fieldwork carried out by the author and data and official publications of governments and the UN.

The contribution of this article is that its conclusions can point out possible solutions to states in which the problem of nomadic population, is yet to be solved.

Mobilising Political Will for Social Protection and Conflict Prevention in Iraq Through a Youth Lens

Mustafa Al-Soufi (The London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom)

[Session 3B]

Effective implementation of social protection policies that can prevent conflicts in societies of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) requires political will. However, mobilising political support and resources for social protection is a complex endeavour that requires the participation of various policy actors, including governments, international actors, and civil society organisations. This paper aims to answer the question of how can policy actors in Iraq mobilise political support and resources for social protection to engage in timely and effective conflict prevention?

Sub-questions: How can government in Iraq prioritise social protection policies and allocate adequate resources for their effective implementation?; What institutional frameworks can be established by governments to ensure the successful implementation of social protection policies?; What role can international actors play in providing technical and financial support for social protection programmes in Iraq?; How can civil society organisations advocate for social protection policies and hold policy actors accountable in the context of conflict prevention?; What are the specific ways in which young people can participate in policymaking processes and contribute to the mobilisation of political support and resources for social protection?; What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that policy actors are responsive to the needs and preferences articulated by young people?

These sub-questions will help explore different dimensions of mobilising political support and resources for social protection and conflict prevention in Iraq, with a particular focus on the involvement of policy actors and the engagement of young people.

This paper will investigate the role of various policy actors in mobilising political support and resources for social security. It will investigate how governments can prioritise social protection policies, allocate adequate resources, and establish institutional frameworks for their effective implementation. In addition, the role of international actors in providing technical and financial support for social protection programmes and the significance of civil society groups in advocating for social protection policies and holding policy actors accountable will be examined.

In addition, the paper will emphasise the significance of involving young people in the process of garnering political support and resources for social protection. It will investigate how young people can participate in policymaking processes, articulate their needs and preferences, and hold policy actors accountable for their actions.

This paper will employ a qualitative research approach to investigate the role of policy actors in mobilising political support and resources for social protection and conflict prevention in Iraq. The study will rely on existing literature and empirical evidence from case studies of Iraq's social protection policies. Additionally, virtual interviews will be conducted with a diverse range of participants, including five Iraqi youth, representatives from three international and national organizations, two senior government officials, three international actors from the FCDO and NATO, as well as two academic experts on social protection policies. These interviews will provide valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of policy actors involved in social protection policymaking and implementation. The use of qualitative research methods and diverse participant selection will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder political will for social protection policies and conflict prevention in Iraq.

This paper seeks to contribute to the literature on conflict prevention by emphasising the significance of political will for social protection policies and providing insights into how policy actors can mobilise political support and resources for conflict prevention in MENA societies.

The Classification of Social Assistance Programs in Bahrain, Morocco and Qatar

Nergis Dama (Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, Turkey)

[Session 5C]

The typology of social assistance programs differs according to the welfare regime adopted by the countries. The indicators to be the targeting groups, duration of implementation, criteria, purpose and coverage are used in the classification of social assistance. While this type of classification is made for European countries with economic and political stability, there is no classification for the social assistance programs implemented by MENA countries. In this study, social assistance programs in Bahrain, Morocco and Qatar, which are MENA countries, have been examined. The question of the research is “what are the social assistance programs implemented in Bahrain, Morocco and Qatar?” Accordingly, the social assistance programs implemented in these countries in the last 20 years have been analyzed in terms of the headings of targeting groups, duration, criteria and purpose. The research has been created according to the situation analysis pattern, one of the qualitative research designs. The countries of Bahrain, Morocco and Qatar are chosen as the sample because these countries are located at the intersection of Eastern and Western life among the MENA countries. Using the 2000-2023 time limit, social assistance programs in these countries for a quarter of a century have been analyzed. Data are public documents, policy notes and reports on social benefits of the countries of Bahrain, Morocco and Qatar. With the descriptive analysis method, social assistance programs are examined in terms of headings that are targeting groups, duration of implementation, criteria, purpose and inclusiveness. Afterwards, the similarities and differences are determined by making a comparative analysis between the countries. Finally, a set of words describing the social assistance system of each country are scrutinized with the Maxqda program.

Key words: MENA countries, social assistance system, typology of social assistance, targeting groups

Social Protection, Protracted Displacement and Crisis: Lessons from a Cash Plus Transfer Programme in Jordan in Promoting Social Inclusion and Sustainable Peace

Nicola Jones (ODI, United Kingdom) and Bassam Abu Hamad (School of Public Health Al-Quds University, Jerusalem)

[Session 1C]

Background: There is a growing interest to generate evidence around the contributions of social protection programs to fostering social cohesion, social inclusion and community development. However, evidence on how adequate and responsive such programs are in promoting adolescents’ connectedness and resilience in contexts of forced displacement remains very limited. This article aims to address this evidence lacuna, focusing on exploring the extent to which social protection programs are effective in promoting social connectedness and social cohesion among adolescents in

refugee and host communities in Jordan and Gaza during the Covid-19 pandemic. The article will also explore whether there are differences based on age, gender and disability.

Methods: This article addresses this evidence lacuna by drawing on mixed-methods data collected through phone-based surveys with 2717 refugee and Jordanian adolescents and 500 Gazans adolescents (refugees and non-refugees). The quantitative surveys are complemented by in-depth interviews with 68 adolescents and 20 key informant experts from the social sector in Jordan, and 77 adolescents in Gaza, and 9 key informants.

Main findings: Our findings based on adolescents' responses suggest that in Gaza social protection programs contribute little to promoting social cohesiveness as the responses of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of these programs did not differ in terms of statistical significance. In the case of volunteerism, there was a small difference in favour of program beneficiaries. Similarly, adolescents benefiting from social assistance programs elicited only slightly higher scores in resilient coping than non-beneficiaries and had only marginally lower perceptions of police violence during lockdowns. Possibly due to significant differences in the design and the monetary value of social protection programs in Jordan, there were marked differences between beneficiary and non-beneficiary perceptions in terms of the help provided to adolescents to cope with the pandemic by adults outside of the family. In the same vein, beneficiary adolescents benefiting from social assistance programs had significantly higher scores indicative of resilient coping, and much lower perceptions that aggression between people in community has increased.

Conclusions: Our study underscores that existing social protection programs in the two settings are helpful in preventing poor households from descending into further destitution. By helping poor households meet their basic expenditures. However, the contrasting findings regarding social inclusion and social cohesion in the Gaza and Jordanian contexts underscore that the design and value of social assistance programs play a major role in shaping the extent to which social protection can help promote social justice and contribute to sustainable and peaceful development for young people. We conclude that designing multimodal, age-and-gender tailored cash plus transfers, complemented with empowerment programming that target refugees and host communities, are essential if the promise of social protection to tackle both economic and social vulnerabilities in contexts of forced displacement is to be effectively realized.

The Politics of Accountability on Social Policy and Social Protection in the Levant

Nicola Jones (ODI, United Kingdom), Sally Youssef (GAGE MENA, Lebanon), Pilar Domingo* (ODI, United Kingdom) and Bassam Abu Hamad (School of Public Health Al-Quds University, Jerusalem)

[Session 5D]

Sustainable Development Goal 1.3 calls for the implementation of national social protection systems and substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable, however there has been limited attention to questions of accountability. The paper will explore the politics and modes of accountability regarding social policy and social protection in the Levant. Reviewing the current scholarship on accountability and narratives of the social contract, rights and other modes of conceptualisation of social policy provision, the paper will explore current trends in the Levant from the perspective of three questions: First, what are the politics of entitlement, and the political, social and economic factors that sustain prevailing narratives of social policy and social provision trends in social policy in the region?; What mechanisms and processes of accountability exist regarding access to and the

provision of social policy/social protection in the region? This involves also considering the modes of voice, agency and mobilisation strategies to either advance or contest prevailing views and policies of social justice; How are these institutional modes of policy choice around the institutional design of social provision both shaped by, and in turn reproduce, prevailing patterns of intersecting inequalities in the region, and associated narratives of citizenship?

The interlinkages across these questions help to explain patterns of inequality, exclusion and marginalisation. The paper will draw on empirical case studies from Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine with a specific focus on marginalised groups including refugees, persons with disabilities and the Dom (a socially excluded ethnic minority community) undertaken as part of the GAGE longitudinal study in order to contextualise the analysis.

Reflecting on both political trends in the region on social policy, and evolving capabilities for voice, agency and related modes of mobilisation and collective action, the paper will connect up these three questions to consider implications for both state and non-state stakeholders, as well as for international investment efforts in supporting social policy reform and social protection measures in line with the commitments in the Sustainable Development Agenda.

On Both Sides of the Separation Barrier – A Mixed Methods Study on Individual Climate Change Adaptations among Palestinians and Israelis

Noam Suissa (Center for Philanthropy Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland)

[Session 3C]

The research aims to contribute to the knowledge on individual climate change adaptation in Israel-Palestine. Herewith, it compares the individual adaptation towards climate change between Palestinians and Israelis by exploring following three research questions: First, do climate change risk perceptions differ between both population groups? Second, what factors, if any, predict climate change risk perception among both population groups? Third, what facilitating and constraining factors do both population groups perceive to matter for climate change adaptation? By answering these questions, this research provides a novel contribution to the literature by employing a mixed-method approach using semi-structured interviews (N=16) and an online survey (N=327) to analyze individual climate adaptation. Results indicate a drastic adaptation divide to climate change between Israelis and Palestinians, and possible explanations are provided. The hierarchical multiple regression analysis used in this study explains 55 percent of the variance in climate change risk perception. It indicates that belief and interest in climate change are the main positive predictors for climate change risk perception in the region. The perceived importance of religion, age, and contextual satisfaction are the main negative predictors for climate change risk perception in the region. The demographic characteristic of being Palestinian or Israeli does not explain the difference in climate change risk perception. Qualitative results elaborate on constraining and facilitating structures for individual adaptation to climate change by examining perceived barriers to adaptation.

Transforming or Undermining the Struggle? Civil Society, Conflict, and Service Provision in the MENA Region

Oliver Walton (University of Bath, United Kingdom) and Wali Aslam (University of Bath, United Kingdom)

[Session 6A]

How and why do civil society organisations operating in conflict-affected and authoritarian settings engage with service delivery activities and with what consequences for peace and conflict? Does civil society's role in the MENA region differ from other world regions and how does the nature and significance of this service delivery work vary across contexts in the MENA region? Most existing literature on the link between service delivery and conflict or peace is focused on the role of the state and relatively few studies have examined the role of civil society and social movements in mediating these connections. We seek to address this gap by examining three country case studies from the MENA region – Lebanon, Iraq and Tunisia - to develop an understanding of the complex and diverse roles that civil society actors play in mediating the relationship between service delivery and broader dynamics concerning peace and conflict. Our paper will draw on a review of academic literature and key informant interviews. By comparing CSOs engagement in service delivery across three conflict-affected MENA countries, our analysis shows that their involvement in this area is heavily shaped by the varied histories and characteristics of civil society which in turn are often profoundly shaped by conflict (e.g. CSOs divided along ethnic or sectarian lines) and also by the wider characteristics of the political settlement and the political system.

Concurrence informelle et accès au financement : comment atténuer les effets négatifs sur les entreprises formelles ?

Omar Ayouni (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco) and Lahboub Zouiri (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 4A]

L'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser l'impact de la concurrence informelle sur les entreprises formelles et d'examiner comment l'accès au financement peut atténuer cet effet dans la région MENA. Cette recherche s'inscrit dans le cadre du congrès et aborde un sujet crucial lié au marché du travail, à savoir la relation entre l'accès au financement et l'économie informelle/formelle. La littérature présente des perspectives divergentes sur l'impact de la concurrence informelle sur les entreprises formelles et le rôle du financement dans cette relation. L'accès au financement est un facteur important de la performance des entreprises, mais les PME sont souvent confrontées à des obstacles pour y accéder. La littérature empirique suggère qu'il existe un lien positif entre l'accès au financement et la productivité des entreprises ainsi que leur capacité à investir dans l'innovation. En ce qui concerne l'effet de la concurrence informelle, certains soutiennent qu'elle peut améliorer les capacités d'innovation et de production des entreprises formelles, tandis que d'autres soulignent qu'elle affecte négativement leur fonctionnement. En utilisant les données de l'Enterprise Survey de la Banque mondiale et un modèle logit ordonné, nous avons constaté que les entreprises confrontées à des contraintes financières signalent des niveaux plus élevés de concurrence informelle, ce qui suggère que le financement est nécessaire pour sortir des marchés où la concurrence informelle est traditionnellement féroce. Par conséquent, il est crucial de favoriser le développement financier et de réformer l'environnement des affaires pour réduire les contraintes financières et favoriser la croissance des entreprises formelles. Les conclusions de cette étude ont des implications importantes pour la formulation des politiques publiques visant à promouvoir

l'entrepreneuriat et l'innovation dans les économies en développement, en particulier en ce qui concerne la lutte contre la concurrence informelle et l'amélioration de la productivité des entreprises formelles.

Disability in the MENA Region: Supporting the Supporters

Rachel Forrester-Jones (Western University, Canada) and Rana Jawad (University of Bath, United Kingdom)

[Session 2A]

Introduction: A range of international declarations and treaties exist that are relevant to the care and support of people with disabilities in MENA, starting in 1948 with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966, the United Nations Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and more recently, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that promise to 'leave no one behind. Despite MENA countries signing up to and ratifying these declarations, treaties and covenants, people with disabilities continue to experience huge challenges in relation to their social and economic, cultural and political rights.

Method: In this paper, we report on the findings of qualitative interviews and focus groups with a number of civil society disability groups, NGOs, and carers of people with disabilities across the MENA region.

Results: Amongst other findings, we highlight the significance of charities, advocacy and self-advocacy groups for supporting people with disabilities and their families in the face of bureaucratic and fractured formal social protection. We also discuss how despite their pivotal role in providing care and support, disabled people's organizations are weakened by chaotic structural, economic and political situations. Furthermore, we describe some of the problems that international donors present to local organisations, leading to inconsistent and diminishing funding for current operations and restricted future grant opportunities. **Conclusion:** We end by presenting some examples of good practice, lessons learnt, and recommendations for the future.

Policy Labs as a Vehicle for Social Policy Change

Rachel Forrester-Jones (Western University, Canada), Rana Jawad (University of Bath, United Kingdom) and Chahir Zaki (Cairo University, Egypt)

[Session 6B]

Context: Individuals, communities and societies across the MENA region are calling for policy change especially within the area of social protection. Yet current interventions demonstrate nascent progress. In this paper we suggest that a significant factor impacting the slow development of social protection systems is how social protection is defined and understood by different social actors. We explore how different actors, including policy makers, civil society actors, service providers and self-advocates, appear to perceive social protection, and the types of social protection interventions they think will be the most helpful, in different ways. In particular, we discuss who ultimately has the most power in terms of moving the social protection agenda forward. We then introduce a policy lab approach aimed at influencing policy making that is more inclusive of stakeholders' views, opinions and understandings of social protection. We posit that such an approach also has the potential to encourage conflict prevention.

Framework: Following a review of extant literature on policy labs, we examine findings from a series of interrelated policy labs on social assistance reform carried out in Egypt (2016-2018) that involved various social actors to explore whether, as a design process, it might offer an alternative influencing shared power model to help impact conflict which is more collaborative and less competitive. Using these findings, we compare and contrast the policy lab experience in Egypt with that of another country (UK) in order to explore the transferability of the policy lab innovation including its methodology across countries with and without conflict.

Conclusion: We consider the extent to which new approaches to policymaking in contexts of conflict can support more sustainable and peace-promoting social protection interventions. We end the paper by providing recommendations in terms of research, policy and practice particularly in terms of the future possibilities for consultative design theory.

COVID-19: Accelerator of Poverty Processes in Morocco

Rachid El Bazzim (Ibn Zohr university, Morocco)

[Session 6D]

The COVID can infect all individuals and does not discriminate between social categories; however, ample reason exists to believe that some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people are not only more likely to be infected by the virus but also to suffer economically. The pandemic has primarily affected the most marginalized populations and reinforced existing socioeconomic inequalities. Here again, the health crisis in Morocco has a multiplier effect on poverty and inequality.

A study published on April 28, 2021 by the High Commission for Planning (HCP), a national statistical institution, indicated that the incidence of poverty increased almost sevenfold nationally, from 1.7% before the crisis to 11.7% during containment; fivefold in rural areas, from 3.9% to 19.8%; and 14-fold in urban areas, from 0.5% to 7.1%. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that the economic consequences of the pandemic are unevenly distributed, mainly due to the disproportionate impacts on the poorest segments of the population. Beyond the urgent issue of health, the virus and the resulting economic shocks had an impact on unemployment. Other areas where the covid-19 has manifested on the poor are in the following areas such as health inequalities and unemployment.

The context of the crisis remained the master of public policy outcomes related to the social issue in Morocco, which were increasingly embodied in the Corona crisis in 2020, as its sudden appearance led to the disruption of the system of ordinary solutions to public problems. Consequently, the Corona crisis provided an opportunity to re-discuss the need to reform the health infrastructure in Morocco and to strengthen mechanisms for social integration of the marginalised, as it exacerbated the deepening of poverty.

In order to address the economic and social impacts of the Corona crisis, a special fund was created in March 2020, with ten billion dirhams allocated to this fund, mainly to sponsor expenses related to the rehabilitation of health facilities and means, whether to provide adequate infrastructure or urgently needed equipment. It will also help to support the national economy.

The Social Protection of Gig Workers in Egypt: Rideshare Application Case Study

Radwa Abo Shady (The American University in Cairo, Egypt), Nermen Abdelmoula (The American University in Cairo, Egypt) and Esraa Mostafa (The American University in Cairo, Egypt)

[Session 5B]

Despite the significance of Gig work in Egypt, its workers are not given access to social protection that should support them in times of illness, work injury, and unemployment. The new labor law no 149 for the year 2019 attempted to extend insurance to certain segments of those workers, yet they were not included.

This paper focuses primarily on the extension of social protection to gig workers in general and rideshare workers in particular, who may be considered informal workers. The transportation sector in Egypt is generally an informal sector, and the Egyptian market was pioneering in the rideshare market since it represents almost two-thirds of the gig economy in Egypt (CIPPEC, 2018). Swvl and Uber bus started in Egypt; after the expansion or during the financial threat, they laid off their captains (drivers).

The theory "Sen empowerment" theory to eradicate the pressure on workers who are still under the poverty line since their payment does not have a minimum wage, so the research question is how to provide social protection for rideshare workers in Egypt? especially during the crisis they become under more pressure and less vulnerability to losing their job or risk to leave it. This is also through considering the Egyptian increasing burden of the tough economic situation, economic reform programs, and the repetitive increase in fuel prices.

The paper methodology depends primarily on the desk review of academic papers, official reports, and NGO reports such as ILO. In addition, we examine the basic requirements for social insurance programs that extend coverage to informal workers based on international literature and successful case studies from developing countries. This paper aims to bridge the gap in the current literature on social protection for rideshare workers in Egypt.

Moroccan Educational Policies and the New Development Model: What Strategies for an Emerging Morocco?

Ramdane Khalid (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 4C]

Morocco aspires to become an emerging country. Higher education is claimed to be the main driver for emergence. The long-term vision of His Majesty the king has also set a short and mid-term vision by crafting a New Development Model (NDM) for Morocco, which makes of higher education a priority. Despite the efforts made, Moroccan higher education is still facing serious challenges because the Moroccan government seems to lack a clear vision that would help achieve the goals. The strategies the government has been adopting in all the reforms of higher education seem to be strongly influenced by the neo-colonialist system, which has proved to be totally inefficient for Morocco; The new strategy does not adhere to the recommendations of the NMD. The aim of this study is to analyze the Moroccan government higher education action plan, if any, and the strategies used. These are mainly based on the Higher Education Council Report (Vision 2015-2035), and the Bologna Treaty and its corollary French LMD system, which have both shown their limits. The study

addresses two research questions: (i) What immobilizes the Moroccan higher education, in general, and engineering education in particular? (ii) How can Moroccan Higher Education boost Morocco to become an emerging country? The study focuses on the training of engineers as they are the key actors for any country to emerge. The study will show that engineering education in Morocco is still strongly influenced by the obsolete neo-colonialist system. It will also argue that the current government's strategy will not help improve Moroccan higher education as it is in contradiction with his Majesty's vision for Morocco.

Efficiency in Jordan Municipalities under the Influences of the Covid-19 Crisis: An Application

Rami Naser Mansour Al Tobaishat (Eastern Mediterranean University) and Sami Fethi (Eastern Mediterranean University)

[Session 2D]

Objectives and Significance of the Research: The main aim of this study empirically investigates the technical efficiency, productivity, and the determinants of the efficiency of the 20 municipalities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by employing 5-stages DEA throughout the period from 2011 to 2021 along with the influences of the global pandemic COVID-19.

Introduction: Service organizations encounter many challenges and issues that require evaluating their performance and measuring their efficiency and productivity to determine how they achieve their goals and meet residents' desires and needs (Habib & Shahwan 2020). In fact, with the scarcity of government resources, and the growth of the population, the increased demand for essential government services made countries more concerned the improving the public sector effectiveness and the efficiency of managerial as well as operational activities. The goal is to obtain more and better public services with the limitations of Government budget deficit and indebtedness.

Research Question: Main question is to find out how the outputs can be optimized using existing inputs to compare the efficiency values of the 20 municipalities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan considering the impacts of the global pandemic COVID-19.

Data and Methodology: The variables (inputs and outputs) in addition to data were collected from the Ministry of local administration, and annual fiscal records of the municipalities in Jordan between the years 2011 and 2021. These data are shown as numeral, financial, and weighing values. We employed four inputs which are wages and salaries (wse), operating expenditure (oe), current and capital transfers (cct), and capital expenditure (ce). on the other hand, output variables are population served (pop), number of lighting points (nolig), number of wastes collected (nowas), and homes with clean water (clw) were used. It is important to mention that A pulse dummy variable (i.e., Dcov19) is also used to seize the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic for all parametric models used in this study.

Within this researcher paper, we employed Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), Malmquist index (MI), Tobit Regression and Stochastic Frontier Analysis (SFA) and Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) approach for investigating the efficiency and productivity of Jordanian municipalities.

Results and Findings: Given the importance of Jordanian municipalities in providing necessary and basic services to citizens, this study came to measure the efficiency and productivity of municipalities in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as it is considered the first study that uses the

Data Envelopment Analysis, Malmquist Index, Tobit Regression, SFA analysis, and GMM approach. In fact, Tobit, SFA, and GMM models were employed to confirm the efficiency scores obtained from DEA and Malmquist index.

Based on the results estimated, most municipalities in Jordan are displayed active efficiency, and the efficiency of twenty municipalities was variable over the years. Only, Al- Shoala , Al- Taiba and New Berma municipalities, were able to achieve efficiently utilize inputs and maximize outputs.

Conclusion and Implications: This section enables us to identify weaknesses and defects in the management of the municipal services sector in Jordan, and thus work to develop clear administrative policies for the activity of the municipal services sector aimed at developing municipalities in a comprehensive manner in accordance with the scientific, administrative, and financial foundations. Additionally, this research will stimulate general managers to seek continuous measures that increase efficiency in resource allocation and control to reduce the waste of public resources and improve the quality of life and well-being of society as a whole.

Keywords: Jordanian Municipalities, Five–Stages DEA Analysis, Efficiency, and Productivity.

Understandings of Female Household Headship and Access to Social Assistance in Egypt

Rasha Hassan (Cairo University, Egypt) and Maia Sieverding (American University of Beirut, Lebanon)

[Session 5C]

Female household headship is considered in the targeting of many social assistance programs. Yet female-headed households (FHH) have many forms, which can influence how benefits are used and their effects on women. How FHH are defined by social assistance programs may also not correspond with women’s lived realities of household dynamics. This paper focuses on FHH in Egypt, which has shifted its social assistance model towards cash transfer programs over the past decade. The study aims to answer the questions: (1) What are the most common structures and sociodemographic characteristics of FHH?; (2) How does receipt of social assistance among FHH compare to women in male-headed households (MHH)?; (3) What challenges do FHH face in accessing social assistance?; and (4) How can approaches to defining FHH make social assistance programs more inclusive?

Building on a global typology of FHH (Saad et al. 2021), we identify the most common forms of FHH using the nationally representative 2018 Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey. We examine the characteristics of FHH as compared to women in MHH and the role of household headship and other characteristics in predicting receipt of social assistance. We also conducted eight focus group discussions in Cairo and Gharbeyya with FHH of different household structures. Results show that receipt of social assistance was more prevalent among FHH than MHH, but FHH were less likely to receive Takaful or Karama cash transfers. The relationship between female headship and receipt of social assistance was explained almost entirely by marital status. Qualitative data revealed that most FHH experienced limited financial support from their families and did not receive any social assistance. Participants had varying experiences applying for and receiving cash transfers. In conclusion, the diversity of female-headed households is an important aspect to consider in the design and implementation of social assistance programs.

Key topics: social assistance; gender; social exclusion

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Decision Making at Jordanian Telecommunication Companies

Refat Alfaouri (Yarmouk University, Jordan) and Areen Hussein Hindawi (Yarmouk University, Jordan)

[Session 3D]

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, managing emotions, empathy, social skills, and motivation) on decision making. The research population comprises of telecommunication companies, and the unit of analysis was telecommunication companies' managers in the middle and low levels (Umniah and Orange). The study tool used to collect the data in this research was a questionnaire. Only 159 of the electronic and hard copies of questionnaires were collected from the research population. The data is statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), with descriptive statistics being utilized.

According to the findings, there is a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and decision-making from the perspective of managers in telecommunication companies.

The Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities in Morocco: The Gap between Policy and Practice

Said Ouboumerrad (Al Akhawayne University, Morocco)

[Session 2A]

Access to education is a fundamental human right. However, persons with disabilities in Morocco may still face significant barriers when it comes to realizing this right (see Bounahai, 2014; Idrissi, Engel, and Benabderrazik, 2019). Despite having policies in place to ensure equal access to education for all, the implementation of these policies often falls short in practice. The study at hand addresses disability as an aspect of diversity in its relation to education. It also brings into light the questions of political will and effectiveness in an attempt to establish the ground for a more inclusive approach to policymaking which could improve educational practice. Many educational institutions lack the necessary resources and accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities, and there is a lack of trained professionals to provide specialized support (Evans et.al, 2017; Graham et.al, 2020). This creates a significant gap between policy and practice, leaving many persons with disabilities in Morocco without access to quality education. Addressing this gap will require a concerted effort to prioritize the education and inclusion of persons with disabilities and ensure that policies are effectively implemented at all levels of the education system. As such, the study at hand highlights the existing gaps between policy and practice and examines the efficiency of the current government efforts to ensure access to education for persons with disabilities in Morocco. In this regard, the study adopts a qualitative approach to explore the views of 21 participants. To this end, semi-structured interviews have been conducted to collect data from the concerned parties, including stakeholders in the areas of public policy and education. The results revealed that several discrepancies in policies, as well as their implementation, stand between persons with disabilities and their right to inclusion in educational institutions.

Keywords: Access to education, disability, political will, effectiveness, inclusion

Social Protection and Food Security during Crises: Perspectives from the MENA Region

Samar Abdelmageed (Ain Shams University, Egypt)

[Session 2C]

The recent regional and global crises witnessed by the MENA region have uncovered significant shortcomings in its social protection schemes and put further pressures on the region's food security systems, which face serious challenges amplified by these crises. Social protection policies can be employed to address the risks of food security in MENA and mitigate the negative impacts of crises on vulnerable groups. Therefore, this paper aims to study the role of social protection in food security within the MENA region and the impact of crises in this regard. The study evaluates the period during 2000 to 2021 for MENA countries with available data to answer the following research questions: Does public social spending affect food security in MENA? What is the role of crises in this relationship, if exists? And, how did the different social protection and safety net measures used during the Pandemic impact aggregate and individual food security in MENA? To answer its questions, first, the paper builds a series of cross-sectional and panel models using data on food security indicators released by FAO on four main dimensions: availability, access, utilization, and stability, in addition to the independent variables on social protection published by the World Bank, ILO and IFPRI. The paper also analyzes the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) issued by the Economist from 2012 to 2022. Moreover, vulnerability of countries in the MENA region to the on-going Russia-Ukraine war is discussed by analyzing trade data available until 2022 in the UN-Comtrade database. Second, the research assesses the impact of social protection and safety nets on individuals' food security using data of the COVID-19 MENA Monitor Household Survey by the Economic Research Forum (ERF), which collected data about the impact of the Pandemic on several social and economic aspects of people's lives in different MENA countries.

Practitioners Notes for Shock-responsive and Inclusive Social Protection

Samman J. Thapa (UNICEF MENA) and Maya Hammad (UNICEF Jordan)

[Session 2D]

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have been facing, and will continue to face, the impacts of multiple crises such as conflict, natural disasters and severe economic shocks. The global COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this situation and added to the negative socio-economic conditions in the region. Already vulnerable groups such as children, women, persons with disabilities, informal workers, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and irregular migrants are being disproportionately affected.

The strength of social protection systems in MENA and their ability to respond to shocks vary tremendously from one country to the next, with some countries suffering from limited financing, inadequate coverage and a lack of coordination and digitised infrastructure. However, key challenges of low coverage and inclusiveness cut across most countries in the region.

Given the urgency of these issues and the momentum for social protection reform in the region, UNICEF MENARO in partnership with IPC-IG recently launched a series of four Practitioners Notes providing MENA governments and practitioners in the field of social protection with guidelines on designing and delivering social protection in a more inclusive manner, drawing on lessons from COVID-19 responses. The notes cover the following topics: (i) targeting, identification and registration mechanisms; (ii) transfer values and payment modalities; and (iii) communication, case management and grievance redress mechanisms, (iv) inclusion of migrants.

The presentation will give an overview of the key issues to consider to strengthen inclusive social protection, especially when preparing and responding to shocks.

Islamic Feminisms: Particularities, Limitations, and Contributions

Serra Kocak (Binghamton University, United States)

[Session 1A]

Muslim societies, like the rest of the world, suffer from deep patriarchal problems. However, it is not easy to generalize Muslim women's condition in these politically, socially, and culturally diverse contexts. Due to the dynamic, complex, and varying circumstances, Muslim women represent a controversial topic for feminists in the West. Some feminists emphasize the importance of cultural particularisms, while others follow a top-down agenda, defending women's rights all around the world. For some, as Gayatri Spivak argues, Western feminism appears to be a white men's movement, protecting brown women from brown men.¹ In this regard, Islamic feminisms in various political and cultural contexts are crucial to understand both the local configurations and the non-Western interpretations of feminisms.

This paper presents a theoretical synthesis of the particularities and the limitations of Islamic feminist movements and ideologies. Through a critical literature review of the key scholars of Islamic feminisms — Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Fatima Mernissi, Leila Ahmed, and Saba Mahmood—this paper analyzes the main themes of Islamic feminists, their methods, and how political and cultural context inform their struggles.

Using content analysis, the paper consists of six main sections. The first section summarizes the varied cultural and political contexts in which Islamic feminist literature is produced. The second section outlines the methods through which Islamic feminists justify their arguments, namely, reinterpretations of the Islamic sources (the Qur'an, and Hadith, Prophet Muhammad's words), historical contextualization of Qur'anic verses, and adaptation to contemporary societal practices. The following section explains Islamic feminist arguments, focusing on the works of critical Islamic feminist scholars mentioned above. The fourth section discusses secular feminists in Muslim societies and their critique of emergent Islamic feminisms. The next section, following feminist scholars of the Middle East, situates Islamic feminisms within an anti-colonial framework.

Finally, the paper offers a theoretical intervention, reframing the role of Islamic feminist movements in global feminism. Although Islamic feminisms reveal particularities in global feminist experiences, their religious-ethical framework limits creating globally inclusive discourse, such as transgender, queer, and same-sex marriages. Nevertheless, if one accepts the plurality of feminist struggles, global feminisms cannot be established without including local particularities, including the voices of Islamic feminists. Consequently, Islamic feminisms are essential to the rise of gender consciousness among Muslim women and crucial for the future of global feminisms.

Universal Health Coverage in Egypt for Achieving Public Satisfaction

Shaimaa Sabbah (Institute of Global Health and Human Ecology, The American University in Cairo, Egypt) Radwa Aboshady, Mariam Waleed and Nourhan El Manzalawy

[Session 3D]

The Egyptian government has worked on different projects and strategies for achieving public satisfaction. The most important one is the Egypt Vision 2030 strategy, issued by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. One of the leading causes of developing this strategy is to meet the Egyptians' needs to improve the efficiency of essential services and finally achieve public satisfaction. This strategy depends on three main dimensions: The Social Dimension, The Economic Dimension, and The Environmental Dimension. Each dimension targets different pillars for achieving Egyptians' dreams for a better quality of life. The Social Dimension's second pillar is Health to provide an accessibly, high quality, universal healthcare system. One of the leading health programs to be adopted until 2030, according to Egypt's Vision 2030, is universal health coverage for all Egyptians. In 2018, the Egyptian Government issued the Universal Health Insurance Law (Law no. 2/2018). This law defines the management of the universal health coverage in Egypt by assigning different roles and responsibilities among three central authorities one for funding the system, another for providing the service, and finally the third for regulating and accrediting the service.

Providing high-quality healthcare for Egyptians under the umbrella of universal health coverage is essential for achieving human development for Egyptians; moreover, decreasing out-of-pocket expenditures. The Egyptian government worked on developing a customer satisfaction system to regulate the healthcare service provided under the umbrella of the universal health insurance system; moreover, to continuously improve the service. Universal Health Coverage is currently one of the main national projects run under the auspice of President Abdel Fattah El Sisi. This paper aims to work on desk research for the services provided under the umbrella of universal health coverage; besides, checking how these services affected the quality of life for Egyptians and do these services fulfill and stick to the Egypt vision 2030. In addition, interviewing different service providers and customers for evaluating this pillar of Egypt Vision 2030 for achieving a better quality of life for all Egyptians. The paper will provide an evaluation of this system to meet its goals to end with comprehensive recommendations for stakeholders on improving the coming phases of this system.

Keywords: Egypt Vision 2030, Universal Health Coverage, High-quality healthcare service, Quality of Life.

Convergence: Stability and Security of the Persian Gulf

Sharareh Abdolhoseinzadeh (Scientific Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center, Iran)

[Session 4B]

The strategic region of the Persian Gulf has always been one of the most important regions in the world since the distant past, but in this region, it has been seen a mixture of convergences in foreign policy, contraction in domestic policies, definition of national security based on realistic concepts and views, divergence in economic and social policies. and regional affairs and trying to connect with a trans-regional force. The existence of three prominent factors, namely common religion, common geopolitics and energy resources, which provide suitable platforms for convergence and cooperation

between coastal states, unfortunately under the influence of secondary factors such as border and territorial disputes, the power of world powers in security measures and military and control relations of a system Security is based on cooperation, and the tension between them has been a great witness for more than four decades.

Based on this article, it seeks to answer what are the security ways of the Persian Gulf. To answer this question, we used Karl Deutsch's convergence theory. Carl Deutsch's theory of regional convergence, which observes consensus, cooperation and solidarity in the Persian Gulf region in political, social and economic decisions, can be considered as the reason for this convergence including religion, common geopolitics and common energy related issues. It is one of the regional disputes and the security of the Persian Gulf. The governments of the Persian Gulf can show a role by designing a model of regional convergence and on the cultural, economic and political characteristics of economic degrees to the equations of this region and international positions in it but paying attention to these three propositions that determine identity and survival is related to it, contexts. Good to achieve convergence.

Using Carl Deutsch's theory of convergence, including religious commonalities, common geopolitics, the sense of neighborliness and belonging to the Persian Gulf, dependence on the Strait of Hormuz to overcome regional differences and regional security.

Keywords: Persian Gulf; Security, Geopolitics; Carl Deutsch; Convergence.

Social Media Activism and the September 2022 Iranian Uprising

Shirin Saeidi (University of Arkansas, United States)

[Session 4B]

In September 2022, the Islamic Republic faced the most serious threat to its rule since its establishment in 1979. Protests broke out across the country due to the death-in-custody of Mahsa Jina Amini who was arrested by the morality police. This paper will rely on a close reading of social media posts and published statements in Iran and abroad to understand what, if any, relation exists between Iranians in the diaspora and protestors based in the country. My goal is to analyze the relevance of state boundaries and citizenship during crises that challenge the sovereignty of states in the MENA.

GVCs and Environmental Sustainability in MENA: Do Digitalization and Institutions Make a difference?

Suzanna El Massah (Zayed University, United Arab Emirates / Cairo University, Egypt) and Eslam A. Hassanein (Beni Suef University, Egypt)

[Session 6B]

Currently, the advent of digitalization has profoundly altered the structure of Global Value Chains (GVCs), with implications for environmental sustainability. Notwithstanding its importance, the dynamics of participation in GVCs, environmental sustainability, and digitalization have not been thoroughly investigated in empirical literature. As part of the ongoing debate over GVCs environmental ramifications, this study aims to propose a novel perspective on reconciling GVCs

participation growth goal with emissions reduction goal through embracing two major policy variables as potentially modulatory variables on the GVCs and environmental sustainability nexus. Precisely, this investigation aims to discern whether participating in GVCs is environmentally friendly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, followed by an examination of the moderating impacts of two relevant policy variables: digitalization (DIGI) and institutional quality (IQ) on the GVCs and environmental sustainability linkage. We employ the system GMM on GVCs database from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD-EORA MRIO) for 15 MENA countries from 1996 to 2018. We also consider the environmental consequences of both the backward and forward value chains.

Empirical findings indicate that GVC participation improves MENA's environment quality. Participation in GVCs, however, has divergent polluting impacts based on backward or forward integration. Forward linkages have favourable environmental impacts, while backward linkages degrade environmental sustainability. Similarly, GVC participation has different environmental impacts in oil-importing and oil-exporting countries, with participation in value chains enhancing oil-importing countries' environmental quality while having an insignificant impact on oil-exporting countries' ENS. Evidently, the findings demonstrate that GVCs environmental impact is modulated through IQ and DIGI. In one sense, IQ and GVCs are particularly complementary in promoting environmental quality in MENA and across both oil importing and exporting groups. GVCs and DIGI, on the other hand, are substitutes for improving MENA's environmental quality, with their interaction generating a negative net effect. Fortunately, above a threshold of 10.23%, this negative effect reverses. Consequently, supplementary policies regarding GVC participation and environmental sustainability below this threshold are essential, in tandem with policies to improve digitalization, in order to reap the environmental advantages associated with higher participation in GVCs. Generally, findings indicate that FDI can mitigate CO₂ emissions significantly, while natural resource rents increase them, supporting the resource curse hypothesis for MENA.

Our results suggest that, to achieve a "win-win" situation of higher GVCs participation and environment sustainability, MENA economies have to consider digitalization and IQ levels when formulating export policies and strategies. On the one hand, low digitalization levels in the region, according to the model results, hinder the favourable environmental impact induced by higher GVCs values. Thus policies aimed at accelerating digitalization are of the utmost importance; including robust and supportive policies, as well as facilitating digitization adoption, among many others. On the other hand, a well-structured institutional system is also essential to emphasize the environmental benefits associated with higher GVCs participation in the MENA region. The study findings as well propose insightful conclusions into achieving improved GVCs integration while maintaining a sustainable environment.

Women and Environmental Leadership: The Elected Councils In Jordan Case Study

Tala Khrais (Country Director, MENA Women's Leadership Program, Forum of Federations)

[Session 4D]

A pilot project was conducted by the Project "empowering women for leadership roles implanted by the international organization forum of federations and funding Global affairs Canada in collaboration with a women-led local NGOs in the rural Jerash government of Jordan. The project focused on women's empowerment in climate change adaptation and mitigation, including capacity building for female municipal and local council members. The project included specialist training

sessions on environmental laws, regulations, challenges, data collection, environmental impact assessment, community participation, and sustainable development. The project also held town hall meetings to pass on knowledge to interested women activists, women-led organizations, young women university students, and university employees. A research study was conducted to revile the negative community perspectives and expectations regarding women's roles in leadership. The She for Environment Media campaign was launched, involving e-volunteers to connect women, leadership, and the environment in the published message content. The campaign's objectives were created using the SMART model, which aimed to change stereotypes and demonstrate women's capabilities in leadership positions. The campaign was one of the first attempts to implement the concept of e-volunteering in Jordan, and the team created a booklet containing an introduction to the campaign, supportive partners, and the mechanism of work. The volunteers were asked to raise awareness of their surroundings by providing video content or publications on empowering women to hold positions of environmental decision-making. The campaign received a high rate of reach, with 16,400 views. On International Women's Day, a seminar was held under the title "women and the environment we want for Jordan," with women leaders in environmental or development decision-making positions from various governmental and non-governmental organizations attending.

Fighting against Violent Extremism in Iraq: A More Inclusive Democratic Approach

Talip Alkhayer (Syrian Center for Policy Research, Lebanon)

[Session 6A]

This research explores the relationship between exclusionary politics and the rise of violent extremism in Iraq, using the case study of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's statements between the 2003 invasion and his death in 2006. The study draws on Social Identity Theory and the Integrated Threat Theory as conceptual frameworks and employs a coding process to analyze Zarqawi's statements for the development of out-groups and threats. The findings show that Zarqawi emphasized the threat to Sunni Arabs from both the Allies and the Shia-dominated government, specifically referencing the Badr Brigade and the Mahdi Army. The research highlights the significance of an inclusive and transparent democratic process in countering violent extremism and suggests that the disfranchisement of the Arab Sunni community provided an opening for Zarqawi's exclusionary rhetoric. The adoption of a new electoral system in the 2021 elections represents a positive step towards establishing a stable country governed by the rule of law, but the sectarian nature of the party system leaves the door open for future conflict. The research argues that addressing grievances and fragmentations through equitable public policies should be a priority for anti-radicalization and counter violent-extremism efforts. The study concludes that a strong state that minimizes sectarian influence over the political process is crucial for preventing the next wave of extremism from taking advantage and hindering efforts for social and political reforms.

Forced Displacement and Women's Economic Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of Women's Economic Citizenship among Syrian Refugee Women in Jordan

Tamara A. Kool (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, Netherlands), Alissar Al-Hassan and Estefania Solano de la Sala Maldonado

[Session 5B]

Currently Jordan is host to the second highest number of Syrian refugees in the region. Within the discourse on self-reliance of refugees, it should be recognised that impact of displacement and the subsequent coping strategies are gendered in nature. Hence, the question on whether women could achieve self-reliance or if this is just a myth arises. A careful examination is required on how Syrian refugee women can be included within the Jordan labour market through the lens of women's economic citizenship. Thereby, acknowledging that refugee women face a dual marginalisation, namely both due to their status as women and as refugees.

This study seeks to contribute to this debate by answering the research question: Despite the dual marginalization of refugee women, to what extent can displacement also be a catalyst for economic empowerment of Syrian refugee women? To critically examine the gendered lived experiences, this study comprises a qualitative analysis, building on semi-structured interviews with refugees conducted in 2017/2018 and subsequent key informant interviews conducted in 2021, as well as an analysis of livelihood programmes, to derive at a holistic perspective. This provides an insight into what extent programmatic responses are reflective of the gendered lived experiences of individuals, and how they can foster or women's economic empowerment.

In Jordan, the constraints of women's empowerment remains rooted in its customary norms, values, and beliefs based on dominant models of masculinity and patriarchy. While strides have been taken and changes in mindset appear, the findings showcases that gaps remain. Despite organisations introducing gender-transformative programming, there is still a lot to be done in terms of addressing the oppressing structures from the current construct of economic citizenship that continue to affect women's capabilities, such as the restrictive sectorial availability, the lack of adequate public transportation, or recognising the importance of childcare.

Keywords: gender, inclusion, refugees, labour market and formal/informal workers

Bangladeshi Migrant Women Employed as Caretakers: Cases from Lebanon, Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia

Thérèse Blanchet (Drishti Research Centre, Bangladesh)

[Session 6C]

Out of the three source countries included in ILO's Work in Freedom project (Bangladesh, India and Nepal), Bangladesh had the most open policy towards women's labour migration. From 2015 onward, Saudi Arabia has been the main destination followed by Jordan, Oman, and Lebanon (until the economic crash in 2019-2020).

Aware of a growing demand for caretakers in rich countries with aging populations, the Bangladesh government hoped to tap a promising job market. But women with a good level of education show little interest for caretaker jobs. A few women migrate as professionals, but most migrate in low

skills jobs as domestic workers. Women are mostly absent from intermediary levels. Medical care in Bangladesh is characterized by more doctors than nurses. Purdah, the separation of the sexes and bodily substances deemed polluting mark the provision of care at home and in hospitals. Should potential recipient countries not share such features, tapping the promising market for caretakers abroad could be complicated.

In documenting the case histories of 211 migrant women for the WIF project, 30 were found whose main job was to care for an elderly woman or a disabled child or adult daughter. The caretaker women generally had a low level of schooling and some had none. Considered irreplaceable by the employers' family, they often stayed several years forsaking home leave. None of them had regular days off and working days often extended into the night. Women engaged in caretaking were generally better paid than domestic workers and they often develop strong and lasting ties with the employer's family.

This paper explores some of the testimonies of migrant women who describe the situation they experienced in their employer's home. In this way, migrant women offer a small glimpse of social policies in the above-mentioned countries. Considering their point of view is unusual but useful and necessary nonetheless as they constitute an important population for their number and for the role they play socially and economically. They are an integral part of these societies.

Positive Peace in the Middle East and North Africa. What would it mean?

Timo Kivimäki (University of Bath, United Kingdom) and Talip Alkhayer (University of Bath, United Kingdom)

[Session 4B]

Organised violence in the MENA region is often framed as a partisan security issue. Yet, security of one actor sometimes constitutes a source of insecurity to other actors. Clearly, if one considers the effect of security framing in the MENA, it is easy to see how individual partisan security of each actor fails to build regional security. Rather, security framing logically leads to collective insecurity.

This article reintroduces an alternative framing for the study of peace and conflict and considers how such a framing, if adopted, could change the social reality of the region. The article will return to the basic concepts of peace research. It will substitute the security focus by focusing on peace and the concept of positive peace as a positive relationship that reduces structural violence and the risk of organised violence. The focus in such a perspective is also on how social protection could reduce structural violence – the unavoidable deprivation of years of life that occur due to uneven distribution of basic necessities.

While this will be done by considering how violence could be reframed in the MENA region as a more relational, less power-centric concept it will also empirically test whether a more peace-based framing could produce societies with less violence. This will be done, on the one hand by investigating the effect of interventions of two actors, the US and the UN, in the MENA region. On the other hand, the level of peace- and security framing varies over time and between operations/countries both in the US and the UN interventions. This variation can be used to see if more peace-oriented framing of politics in the MENA region results in better conflict prevention, and reduction of violence. To measure the level of peace-framing and security-framing, we will use authoritative texts (UNSC resolutions and presidential papers) as evidence of framing. We measure these levels by measuring word frequencies of such words that are crucial for the security- and

peace framed discourse. After quantifying the level of security and peace framing in time and space, we then compare this variation with the variation in fatalities of organised violence. This way we can then conclude if peace framing in the behaviour of each of the global actors in the MENA region, is associated with lowered levels of organised violence.

Policy Reform Failure and the Endless Crisis of Education in Morocco: A Problem of Design, Implementation and Governance, or a Lack Political Will?

Wiame Idrissi Alami (PACTE, Université de Grenoble Alpes, France)

[Session 6B]

The Moroccan education system has been facing a structural and multi-dimensional crisis despite the several reforms aimed at improving access to education and its quality in the last two decades (Charte Nationale de l'Éducation de 2000, Programme d'Urgence 2009-2012, Vision Stratégique 2015-2030). Indeed, education reforms mostly failed to achieve their intended objectives, as revealed by empirical evidence from several evaluations (high dropout rates, low achievement, lowest scores in international evaluations and rankings, etc). And although the generalization of access to education was partially met, the quality of education kept deteriorating through the reforms (Rapport analytique de la mise en œuvre de la réforme 2000-2013, CSEFRS-INE 2014).

During my investigation into education reforms, a significant question that emerged was the role of political will. Through interviews with experts, politicians, and union activists, I explored the causal factors behind the failure of education policies. Despite the implementation of various reforms and the allocation of substantial financial resources, some stakeholders consistently highlighted the lack of political will as a crucial explanatory factor for the education crisis. Research questions: Why do education agents perceive a lack of political will despite the important efforts aiming to reform the Moroccan education system? What other factors can explain education reforms failure? The aim of this study is to determine the key factors behind education policy failure and crisis. To do so, I examine the recent debate surrounding the reform and the education framework law that has been a subject of controversy. Employing a cognitive approach to policy analysis, I identify and analyse competing narratives regarding causality. To answer the research questions, a qualitative study was carried through semi-structured interviews to gather perceptions from policymakers, public agents, union activists, deputies and experts.

Health Policies, Decentralization and Localization of SDGs: Any Connection?

Yasmine Badr (Ministry of Local Development in Decentralization Project, Egypt) and Khaled Abdelhalim (Ministry of Local Development in Decentralization Project, Egypt)

[Session 3D]

Health policies, being no exception to other social policies in Egypt, are often defined centrally and implemented through a deconcentrated public administration system composed of directorates that are technically affiliated to, directed and financed by the Ministry of Health. Accordingly, the role of local administration in planning, implementing, and monitoring service delivery within the framework of health policies and other social policies is controversial; little control, yet, accountable for performance and development indicators of the sector at service delivery level. The progress Egypt made on policy implementation with regards to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, including health-related indicators, is on aggregate level of voluntary national reporting.

Through conducting in-depth interviews with senior officials at the Ministry of Health, health directorates and local administration leadership at selected governorates (2-4); this work examines existing and expected roles of local administration in healthcare policy implementation and service delivery within centralized, decentralized and/or deconcentrated systems. The question this research attempts to answer is whether there is potential for local institutions to play a key role in improving health sector's performance, while connecting it to the localization of SDGs.

The initial results demonstrate that local administration can play an effective role in facilitating healthcare service delivery once given control over related budgets and decision-making. Institutional reforms and local capacity development focused on innovative private sector engagement modalities and more accountable healthcare facility governance are identified as being crucial conditional factors for any mode of decentralization to succeed.

The paper recommends encouraging the Egyptian government to apply the national decentralization strategy within the health sector. It is advisable to (a) adopt a balanced, mixed approach between decentralization and de-concentration, (b) hence enable local administration to steer healthcare directorates, direct service delivery planning according to local priorities and the localization of relevant SDGs. These recommendations can be relevant to other MENA countries, not only for healthcare policies and public administration but also to other social development sectors.

Amazigh Language Teaching in Morocco: A Language Policy Failure in the Making

Yassine Boussagui (Ibn Zohr University, Morocco) and Yamina El Kirat El Allame (Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco)

[Session 4C]

Amazigh, the indigenous language of North Africa in general and Morocco in particular has for long been marginalized and excluded from all the formal domains and the school context in particular. During the last two decades, however Amazigh has been recognized as a national language in 2001, and efforts have been made to promote its teaching and use. The Moroccan government officially made it a compulsory subject in primary schools beginning of 2003. Though Amazigh has been officially recognized as the second official language in 2011, language policies, such as the Amazigh language-in-education, are complex and challenging to implement effectively. The aim of this paper is to examine the Amazigh language policy in Morocco. Its main objective is to evaluate the teaching of Amazigh and the measures undertaken for its implementation. The study addresses three main research questions, namely (i) In what context was Amazigh introduced at school and what were the objectives set for its teaching? (ii) Where and how was the teaching of Amazigh implemented? (iii) How does IRCAM evaluate the experience and to what extent has it achieved its goals? The study reveals that success requires careful consideration of the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders, as well as a commitment to providing the resources and support necessary for implementation. The failure, therefore, of a language policy to concretise the outcomes that governments and policy agencies desire, is often attributed to poor implementation of the policy. This paper examines the many reasons why language policies may fail and explore the extent to which they apply to the Amazigh language-in-education policy in Morocco.

Keywords: Amazigh, language policy, Amazigh language-in-education policy, language policy failure.

Participatory Interfaith Dialogue: The Keys to Addressing People's Needs in Morocco

Yossef Ben-Meir (High Atlas Foundation, Morocco)

[Session 5D]

Introduction: [Morocco's policies](#) encourage intercultural dialogue and communication for human development. The Moroccan government embraces multiculturalism as an important aspect of development, including the support of interfaith dialogue. Tree nurseries are valuable for Moroccan farming communities because 70 percent of [agricultural land](#) in the country generates only 10-15 percent of agricultural revenue. Fruit tree cultivation allows farmers to transition from less lucrative barley and corn and [generate higher income](#). Empty land around Jewish burials grounds in Morocco is being utilized for community tree nurseries.

Research Objectives and Questions: Small-land holders often cannot designate the necessary nursery plot over the two years required for fruit tree seeds to mature. Thus, the question that remains prevalent for rural communities is where do we acquire the land for nurseries to maximize our planting yields? [Community nurseries](#) jumpstart a new development path toward sustainability. Research Methodology: Through the [USAID Dakira](#) (or "Memory" in English) program, civil society organizations and public administrations seek to redress the lack of such participatory community dialogues in which people discuss the past and the future together and create a shared vision forward.

Results and Findings: While multicultural memory and consciousness in the country create opportunities, combining these factors has yet to reach the level of self-reliant development and a [circular economy](#) that the people need. The most significant challenge for participatory planning is the need for more training on community dialogue facilitation to empower all voices and express all priorities.

Conclusion: Interfaith dialogue - the opportunity to voice our histories - can deepen understanding and provide reconciliation between historically antagonistic groups if sought. When this process is maintained and integrated with supporting projects, defined and managed by the people, it can become a basis for achieving sustainable and prosperous societies.

Theoretical Implications of Social Inclusion Programmes under Authoritarian Rule: Analysing Social Investment in Contemporary Egypt

Yusuke Kawamura (Kobe University, Japan)

[Session 1A]

Egypt currently requires social inclusion of the youth and women through social policy. Women and the youth often fail to get decent works or, at the least, are forced to work under informal, vulnerable working conditions (without written employment contracts and social insurance coverage). There is a considerable gap between working skills and knowledge that schools offer.

Consequently, this results in unemployment and underemployment, which makes it difficult for people to support themselves. To address this issue, the Sisi regime has taken various measures for social inclusion, such as direct cash transfer (Karama wa Takaful). However, social inclusion measures would ultimately result in political empowerment; although, Egypt can currently be

characterised by political exclusion. The Egyptian authoritarian regime suppresses opposition parties and other groups in the civil society and controls civil activities. Moreover, it does not desire political empowerment through social inclusion programmes.

This study aims to reveal the theoretical dilemma of social inclusion programmes under authoritarian rule, focusing on social investment in contemporary Egypt. The Egyptian authoritarian regime has recently implemented social investment programmes, including active labour market programmes, and the World Bank and donor countries have supported them. However, their positive effects do not necessarily reach their beneficiaries (i.e., the youth and women). They cannot fully participate in the labour market and have been socially and political deprived, which often becomes an 'engine' for political uprisings. Thus, this study paper analyses the structural constraints of social investment under authoritarian rule and attempts to understand what restrictions social inclusion programmes have under the authoritarian rule. To answer this question, this study analyses Egypt's social investment programme by using a qualitative research method (case study method) and analysing documents and data published by the Government of Egypt and international organisations (e.g., the World Bank and the ILO).

Through this analysis, it will be able to contribute to theoretical development in welfare state studies because current research works on social investment mainly focus on democratic countries, especially European countries. They tend to presuppose democratic mechanisms and institutions. In contrast, parliamentary elections under authoritarian rule do not necessarily function to reflect citizens' opinion to parliament. Political movements by youth and workers, who are the main beneficiaries of the social investment strategy, are often suppressed by authoritarian governments. Consequently, it is expected that dynamics of the social investment under authoritarian rule (top-down policy changes), which would differ from that in democratic countries (bottom-up policy changes), will be revealed.

Changing the Narrative: New Interventions in Care in Lebanon

Zeina Mezher (International Labour Organisation, Lebanon)

[Session 6C]

The informal nature of service provision of home-based care means that workers are not fully covered by labour and social protection legislations, both in law and practice. It also means that workers do not always have the competencies required, and recipients of certain types of care, namely the elderly and children, suffer from the lack of skills and from a lack of oversight and accountability in the sector. This has led to a vicious circle of a care economy that operates outside of the regulation or protection of the state.

The WE CARE intervention aims at structuring a response to care work needs in Lebanon and pave the way to professionalize the sector through greater formalization and regulation of care services, in line with decent work principles, and by exploring cooperatives and small enterprises as entry points with linkages to a digital job matching platform. It is a pilot that adopts a context-specific approach to engage beneficiaries to impact the political, legislative, social, and economic contexts.

Establishing National Financial Funds for Social Protection in the MENA Region

Zina Nimeh (United Nations University-MERIT, Netherlands / Maastricht University, Netherlands)

[Session 1D]

There is global consensus that governments should ensure that people have access to at least a floor of social protection. Many governments however often fall short due to weak administrative systems and inadequate financial resources. An answer to this conundrum is a dedicated financing facility, in the form of a global solidarity fund, that enables the global community to systematically and sustainably support national efforts in poorer countries to reduce poverty and inequality through social protection. This paper argues that such a fund would eventually steer beneficiary countries to progressively increase their own funding by identifying new sources of national revenue and ensuring sustained levels of support for countries committed to these programmes. The funding would be time-defined and eventually tapers off, raising the issue of how, and over what duration, can resources be mobilized at the national level. While global contributions are critical in the start-up period, national ownership of the process and improvement of government financing capacities are key for the long-term sustainability of the established social protection system. Examining existing evidence on the viability of a solidarity fund in the context of the MENA region. The paper argues that a fund is possible at a relatively low cost and is paramount to supporting the achievement of social protection targets, and that taking the universal road to social protection ensures a social justice outcome of reduced poverty and inequality.

Volatility Spillovers between Conventional and Renewable Energy, and Stock Market in Morocco

Zineb Chakib (Eastern Mediterranean University)

[Session 2B]

This study is motivated by Morocco's fast expansion of renewable energy investments, and mainly to investigate the linkage to the stock market and energy industry of both conventional and renewable. For this research the causality effect is examined between crude oil price fluctuations and the renewable energy price movements and the Moroccan stock market returns, considering also volatility spillovers. The data frame is from 2017 to 2022 and the methods used are time-varying causality-in-mean and causality-in-variance tests based on the concept of causality-in-variance proposed by (Cheung and Ng, 1996), Hong (2001), and Hafner and Herwartz (2006) methods. The variables are presented as follows: Common stocks are represented by the Casablanca stock market index, the conventional energy sector is represented by the crude oil index, and the renewable energy sector is demonstrated by the clean energy index. The findings of the research illustrate a bidirectional connection between the Moroccan stock market and conventional energies, between the Moroccan stock market and renewable energies, and between conventional and renewable energies.