

Monitoring human development: enlarging people's choices to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living

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Abstract:

Human development is the process of enlarging people's opportunities to live a healthy and happy life and takes into account the level of the actually achieved well-being. The Human Development Index reflects socio-economic aspects that are left out in other indexes such as the Gross National Product. It serves to monitor progress and to make comparisons between different countries. Through disaggregation, the Human Development Index allows to study inequalities between the values that led to the Human Development Index and highlights for example disparities between regions within a country.

Over the past generation, the Arab world experienced rapid progress in human development outcomes, including declining child mortality, extended schooling and increasing stature of women. These development gains penetrated most Arab states and subpopulations.

This essay traces the impact of human development on the economical and socio-economical change, focusing on the events of the Arab Spring and the political change in the Arab countries.

Keys Words: Human development , Human Development Index (HDI), Gross National Product , Arab Spring, political change

ملخص:

هي عملية توسيع نطاق فرص لعيش حياة سعيدة و صحية كما يراعي مستوى تحقق ذلك ويعكس مؤشر التنمية البشرية و الاجتماعية و الاقتصادية في مؤشرات أخرى مثل الناتج القومي الإجمالي كما يساعد على رصد التقدم المحرز و إجراء مقارنات بين الدول المختلفة من خلال التقسيم و التفصيل في مؤشر التنمية البشرية الذي يتيح دراسة التباين بين القيم التي أدت إلى مؤشر التنمية البشرية و يسلط الضوء على سبيل المثال: التفاوت بين المناطق داخل البلد الواحد.

على مدى الجيل الماضي شهد العالم العربي تقدما سريعا في نتائج التنمية البشرية. بما في ذلك انخفاض في معدل وفيات الأطفال و التعليم و زيادة مكانة المرأة. هذه المكاسب الإنمائية تغلغت في معظم الدول و القطاعات العربية.

هذا المقال يتتبع اثر التنمية البشرية على التغيرات الاقتصادية و الاجتماعية مع التركيز على إحداث الربيع العربي و التغيرات السياسية في البلدان العربية

الكلمات المفتاحية

التنمية البشرية، ومؤشر التنمية البشرية (HDI) الناتج القومي الإجمالي، الربيع العربي، التغيير السياسي

Introduction :

Over the last decades, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been the least growing region, with the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa, when compared with other regions in the world (Bhattacharya and Wolde 2012).

Moreover, the MENA region is found to display higher volatility in its performance, mainly due to the majority of its member countries' dependence on oil and the relative weakness of its governance quality compared with other regions of the world . However, most of the studies for the MENA region have considered per capita income levels and growth only, yet it has been suggested that GDP per capita alone is not a satisfactory indicator for measuring social welfare in a country or region (see, e.g., Becker et al. 2005).

Over time composite indices and multivariate welfare analysis have become more popular. The most popular of the multivariate development indices is the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index (HDI) which measure the achievements in three classical dimension welfare , health , education and standard of living . therefore in order to complement the previous studies which have mainly concentrated on income per capita levels ,until recently ,HDI has been calculated as a country's average achievements in three aspects of human development longevity , knowledge and decent standars of living using fixed equal weights .(Thanasis,2013)

Middle East and North African countries (MENA) have achieved much to be proud of in human development. Falling child mortality and fertility have transformed family structures in most MENA countries. Despite important advances in health, education, and income, there are certain aspects human development in which MENA countries have not progressed as far. In this paper we review the record of human development in the MENA region to highlight areas in which the region has been more successful, as well those

in which human development has lagged in absolute terms or relative to economic growth. we draw attention to certain important characteristics of the region that distinguish it from other developing regions, in particular the presence of oil income and delayed demographic transition.

The plan of this paper is as follows. The next section will review the special characteristics of human development in the MENA region. Section 2 discusses the record of human development in the region according to HDI and GDP per capita. Section 3 views human development issues from the perspective of the region's youth; section 4 discusses the impact of human development on the economical and socio-economical change, focusing on the events of the Arab Spring and the political change in the Arab countries.

- **The story of development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA):**

While Middle East and Northern African (MENA) countries differ in terms of resource endowments and economic evolution, they share common history and cultural heritage. The MENA region has managed to maintain a unique geopolitical significance throughout its history. Situated at the junction point of three continents, the region was a thriving centre of trade. Control over main commercial networks helped to establish MENA as the world's leading economic power from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries. Compared to the rest of the world, including Europe, the region was very prosperous: according to Table 1, GDP per capita in the MENA region in the 10th century was the highest of the five country groups.

Table 1: GDP per capita from the first to the nineteenth century (1990 International Geary-Khamis dollars)

Year	1	1000	1500	1600	1820
Latin American	400	400	416	438	636
Asia	433	447	554	557	604
Africa	472	425	414	422	420
Western Europe	576	427	772	889	1,202
MENA	517	527	485	453	532

Source: Maddison (2003).

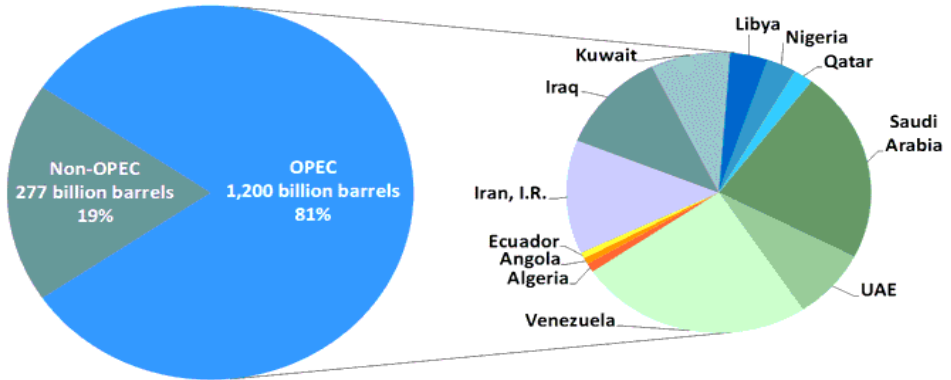
Although the MENA region no longer has a leadership role, it still maintains a unique position. Because of its central location between Europe, Africa, and Asia and the fact that the locality has the largest heritage relationship of all global regions, with more than one billion people, implies that MENA is still the focus of attention.

Its high profile may also be explained by the key role the region plays in the global economy. Indeed, two additional key factors have become apparent during the modern period, which have ensured the region's position as the premier geopolitical flashpoint of the globe: the world's major oil reserves are located here, and its financial resources are considerable according to Table 2.

Moreover, many experts have recently stated that the MENA region during the next decades will be among the vital areas where renewable energy, including solar energy, will be exploited (Müller-Steinhagen and Trieb 2007).

Table 2: OPEC Share of World Crude Oil Reserves 2012

OPEC Share of World Crude Oil Reserves 2012



OPEC proven crude oil reserves, end 2012
(billion barrels, OPEC Share)

Venezuela	297.7	24.8%	Iraq	140.3	11.7%	Libya	48.5	4.0%	Algeria	12.2	1.0%
Saudi Arabia	265.9	22.1%	Kuwait	101.5	8.5%	Nigeria	37.1	3.1%	Angola	9.1	0.8%
Iran, I.R.	157.3	13.1%	United Arab Emirates	97.8	8.1%	Qatar	25.2	2.1%	Ecuador	8.2	0.7%

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2013

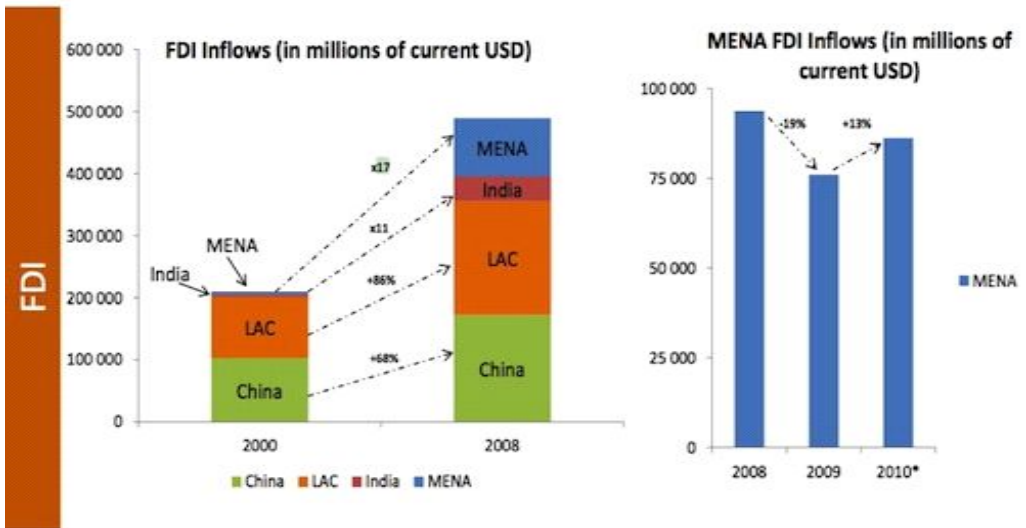
NB : According to current estimates, more than 81% of the world's proven oil reserves are located in OPEC Member Countries, with the bulk of OPEC oil reserves in the Middle East, amounting to 66% of the OPEC total. OPEC Member Countries have made significant additions to their oil reserves in recent years, for example, by adopting best practices in the industry, realizing intensive explorations and enhancing recoveries. As a result, OPEC's proven oil reserves currently stand at 1,200.83 billion barrels.

By the mid-twentieth century, the independent countries formed the region's new architecture and a new era began. After independence, the MENA states had serious concerns for a national industry that would be geared more to their own specific interests as well as to the development of the education and health systems. Financed through natural resources during the 1970s, post-colonial development programmes were implemented to improve the quality of life for the citizenry. Most MENA countries invested in major infrastructure projects, education, and public health. With the end of the oil boom in the 1970s, however, economic performance gradually declined.

Since the late 1980s, many MENA countries have launched important economic reforms in line with programmes prescribed by such international institutions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These reforms essentially were concerned with privatization and trade liberalization, considered to be the tool to improve trading capacities and to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI). In many countries of the region, development programmes implemented in the late 1980s, have succeeded partially to improve economic growth and to adapt the economies

of the region to the international environment. The current MENA region encompasses 22 independent countries: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Egypt, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, (UAE) and Yemen.

Tables 3 : The inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI)



The total surface area is 14.8 million km², making it 44 % larger than China, or 3.8 times the size of the European Union. The MENA countries cover 9 % of the world’s total surface area and hold 61 % of the world’s known oil reserves and 21 % of its natural gas. Eight out of the ten oil-exporting OPEC countries are located in the MENA region (Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates), and in 2004 accounted for 42 % of total oil exports in the world.

The population of the MENA region was 340 million in 2012 (World Bank 2012), indicating that the region is relatively scarcely populated, with a mere 38 inhabitants per km². The most important reason for the low population density is the scarcity of water resources. The region covers a diverse group of countries, including some very rich and some very poor. It can be divided into three main country-groups, with different economic structures.

First are the oil-producing countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Libya, and Algeria) where oil contributes 36 % of total value added, 82 % of the export revenues and 71 % of government fiscal

receipts, highlighting that these economies are still overwhelmingly dependent on petroleum.

While the value added of the petroleum industry represents 36 % of the region's aggregate GDP, its contribution to employment, including all petroleum-related activities, is less than 5%. These countries lack a domestic market to meet their needs in terms of consumer and non-consumer goods and have a paucity of financial and capital markets to absorb domestic savings.

Table 4 : Energy Resources in the MENA countries (UNDP Report)

HDI Rank	Total primary energy supply (Mt of oil equivalent)		Shares of TPES											
			Fossil fuels						Renewable energy				Other	
			Coal (%)		Oil (%)		Natural Gas (%)		Hydro, solar, wind and geothermal (%)		Biomass and waste (%)		Nuclear (%)	
1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	
HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT														
33	Kuwait	8.5	28.1	0.0	0.0	40.1	66.5	59.8	33.5	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
35	Qatar	6.3	15.8	0.0	0.0	12.1	15.7	87.8	84.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	()	0.0
39	United Arab Emirates	22.5	46.9	0.0	0.0	39.9	27.9	60.1	72.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	()	0.0
41	Bahrain	4.8	8.1	0.0	0.0	26.5	23.2	73.5	76.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
56	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	11.5	19.0	0.0	0.0	63.8	72.2	35.1	27.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.8	0.0
58	Oman	4.6	14.0	0.0	0.0	46.6	33.3	53.4	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
61	Saudi Arabia	61.3	140.3	0.0	0.0	64.7	63.6	35.3	36.4	0.0	0.0	()	()	0.0
MEDIUM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT														
86	Jordan	3.5	7.1	0.0	0.0	95.3	78.5	2.9	19.5	1.7	1.0	0.1	()	0.0
88	Lebanon	2.3	5.6	0.0	2.4	93.7	92.9	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.8	4.4	2.3	0.0
91	Tunisia	5.5	8.5	1.4	0.0	57.5	50.0	22.3	36.6	0.1	0.2	18.7	13.3	0.0
104	Algeria	23.9	34.8	2.6	2.0	40.6	31.7	56.7	66.0	()	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0
106	Occupied Palestinian Territories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
108	Syrian Arab Republic	11.7	17.9	0.0	()	86.3	65.3	11.7	33.0	2.0	1.7	()	()	0.0
112	Egypt	31.9	61.3	2.4	1.5	70.5	49.2	21.1	45.3	2.7	1.9	3.3	2.3	0.0
126	Morocco	6.7	13.8	16.8	32.3	76.1	60.2	0.6	2.8	1.6	1.0	4.7	3.3	0.0
134	Comoros	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
137	Mauritania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
147	Sudan	10.6	18.4	0.0	0.0	17.5	19.9	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.6	81.7	79.5	0.0
149	Djibouti	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
153	Yemen	2.6	6.7	0.0	0.0	97.0	98.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	1.2	0.0
WITHOUT HDI RANK														
	Iraq	19.1	30.8	0.0	0.0	90.2	92.3	8.5	7.0	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
	Somalia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	All developing countries	- T	- T	30.3	32.5	30.5	31.0	9.4	14.1	2.7	2.9	26.3	18.0	0.8
	Least developed countries	- T	- T	-	-	-	17.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Arab States	237.4 T	477.1 T	1.1	1.3	59.5	54.2	33.9	40.2	0.7	0.4	4.8	3.8	0.0
	East Asia and the Pacific	- T	- T	-	-	-	25.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Latin America and the Caribbean	- T	- T	4.5	4.8	51.9	48.7	16.8	21.7	7.9	9.0	17.7	14.3	0.7
	South Asia	456.2 T	818.9 T	23.9	26.1	27.7	28.3	9.0	17.9	1.9	1.7	37.1	25.3	0.4
	Sub-Saharan Africa	- T	- T	-	-	-	13.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS	1,751.5 T	1,266.3 T	27.6	22.6	29.8	20.5	36.1	46.0	1.4	2.2	1.2	2.1	4.0
	OECD	4,525.5 T	5,547.6 T	23.5	20.4	42.0	40.5	18.6	21.8	2.9	2.7	3.1	3.5	9.9
	High-income OECD	4,149.4 T	5,101.1 T	22.2	19.9	42.3	40.6	19.0	21.7	2.9	2.6	3.0	3.4	10.6
	High human development	5,950.8 T	6,981.2 T	21.7	18.3	40.9	39.3	22.8	26.0	2.8	2.9	3.4	3.9	8.3
	Medium human development	- T	3,816.7 T	36.8	40.7	24.7	25.1	12.9	13.8	2.0	2.5	22.7	16.8	1.0
	Low human development	- T	- T	-	-	-	13.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	High income	4,300.4 T	5,423.2 T	21.7	19.0	42.9	41.5	19.5	22.7	2.8	2.5	2.9	3.2	10.2
	Middle income	3,556.4 T	4,594.4 T	31.6	34.3	31.0	28.3	21.7	21.7	2.3	3.1	11.4	10.1	2.1
	Low income	- T	- T	-	23.4	-	20.6	-	11.6	-	2.3	-	41.6	-
	World	8,757.7 T	11,433.9 T	25.3	25.3	36.8	35.0	19.1	20.7	2.5	2.6	10.3	10.0	6.0

Source: UNDP, HDR 2007/2008, Table 23: 306-309.

Data for Iraq and Somalia are from the HDRO online database at [http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/data].

The second group is represented by the states that have more diversified (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia). Indeed, these countries are deeply integrated into the global economy. Furthermore, exportation, FDI, remittances, and tourism play a key role in the economic growth and job creation of these countries.

The third group includes the poor countries (Sudan, Darfur, Yemen, Mauritania, Djibouti, Somalia, and Comoros). This group is affected by serious economic and social problems as a result of inadequate economic and social structures.

Despite the low performance of the region as a whole, few countries succeeded to find appropriate strategies to adapt to the constantly changing international environment.

Among those countries, Bahrain, Oman, Tunisia, and the UAE do offer some useful insights. Bahrain, Oman and the UAE are resource-rich countries in the Gulf and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Tunisia, however, is located in north Africa, and has highly educated and abundant labour. In terms of population the four countries are relatively small, about 6 % of the total population of MENA, yet they contribute about 25 % of the total GDP of the region.

- **The record of human development in the region according to HDI and GDP per capita**

“Human development cannot be built on exploitation of some groups by others or on greater access to resources and power by some groups. Inequitable development is not human development. Equity and the HDI are systematically related: countries that do well on the HDI tend to be more equitable. This result is consistent with research that shows how reducing inequality – both in the population as a whole and across gender and other groups – can improve overall outcomes in health and education, as well as economic growth”.

- **Characteristics of Human Development in the MENA Countries**
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Although MENA countries are fairly homogenous in terms of religion, language and culture, they differ widely in per capita income. Since income an important component of HDI, for the purpose of this review I divide MENA countries into three income groups. The rich countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, or the GCC (Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia), along with Libya enjoy high levels of per capita income because of rents from the export of hydrocarbons .

This group accounts for only 9 percent of the region's 740 million population. A second group, with 78% of MENA population, consists of middle-income countries including oil exporters Iran and Iraq. The third group, accounting for the remaining 13 percent of the population, consists of the three lowest income countries of the region* Djibouti, Sudan, and Yemen*.

This group, with a (population weighted) average per capita GDP of only \$2,150 in 2005 Purchasing Power Parity, is poorer than the average Sub-Saharan African country (Table 5). The middle-income group enjoys an average per capita GDP that is almost four times as high (\$7,624) and is slightly below Latin America and the Caribbean. Average income in the richest group (\$25,097) is 3.5 times higher than the middle group and in the range for advanced countries. With such vast differences in income, discussing human development for MENA countries as a whole can be misleading.

Table 5 : Per capita GDP in MENA region, 1990-2010

Region	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
MENA-low	1,011	1,119	1,334	1,831	2,150
MENA-mid	5,244	5,562	6,226	6,974	7,264
MENA-high	20,474	21,765	22,300	26,982	25,097
Africa	1,688	1,553	1,589	1,994	2,286
Asia	2,649	3,211	3,684	4,544	5,965
LAC	7,102	7,679	8,268	8,739	9,998
Oceania	18,126	19,109	21,656	24,303	25,326
Europe	16,429	15,680	17,908	24,753	25,627
N. America	31,454	33,249	38,472	41,825	41,594

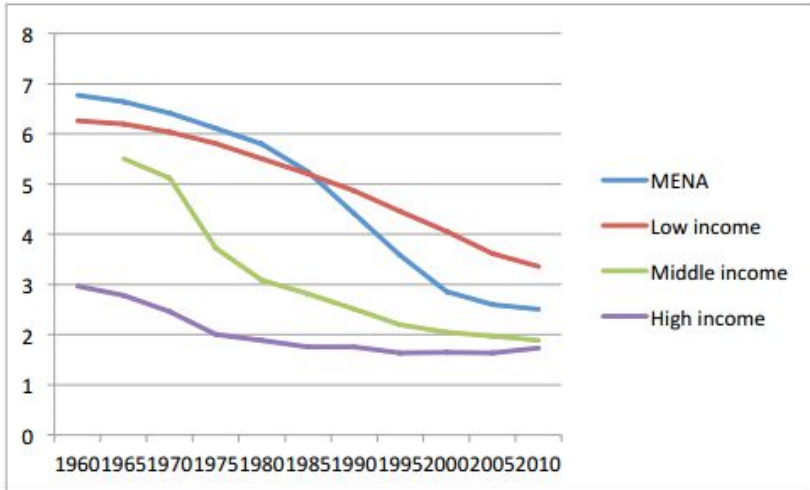
Note: Population weighted averages, in 2005 PPP USD.

Source: World Bank WDI 2012.

MENA countries are more homogenous in terms of demography. Although fertility transition is under way throughout the region, and in some (notably Iran, Lebanon, Tunisia, and the UAE) fertility is at or below replacement level, it started later than middle-income developing countries (Figure 2). Transition to lower fertility is the most empirically consistent correlate of economic development. Recent economic development theory considers the change in the function of the family from producer of children to producer of human capital critical for transition to sustained economic growth (Becker 1992, Luca 2002). Fertility decline also directly affects other aspects of human development, such as child health and education and women's

empowerment. It allows greater participation of women in economic and civic life, increasing their power inside the family and improving the allocation of family resources in the direction of health and education and in favor of girls, all of which promote economic development (Thomas and Strauss 1995, World Bank 2007).

Figure2. Total fertility rates have declined later in MENA than in Middle income countries



Source: World Bank, WDI 2012

The global relationship between average country income and fertility seems weaker in MENA, due to the region’s oil wealth and its resilient gender social norms (Salehi-Isfahani 2007). Large inflows of oil money imply that average incomes rise above productivity, which measures the opportunity cost of time, and like all unearned incomes can increase fertility.

High MENA fertility relative to GDP per capita, which has puzzled some demographers, can thus be explained by rent income from oil. As in the rest of the world, an important reason for the decline in fertility has been improved health and education, especially of women and children. In this regard, delayed fertility decline in some of the oil-rich countries, despite their achievements in health and education, shows why income per person is a less adequate indicator of human development in the MENA region than elsewhere. In Iraq, Libya, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, fertility remained unusually high till late in the 1990s. Income growth in Oman and Saudi Arabia is yet to transform women’s status from the traditional role of others and wives to that of full citizens. This incongruity between high income and

gender equity, which is sometimes blamed on Islam, is more likely caused by the high share of oil income in the GDP (Ross 2008, 2012).

While fertility decline requires deep social transformation and is therefore less easily affected by inflow of oil money, health outcomes respond to income regardless of its source, productivity or oil rent. MENA oil-rich countries have child mortality rates (CMR) at levels close to those in developed countries, 11 per thousand or below in 2005, except for Saudi Arabia. Low CMR in Oman and Saudi Arabia, relative to fertility, highlights the anomaly of human development in oil-rich countries. CMR has declined across the board in MENA countries falling below the average in Asia (54) in 2005. Even in Yemen, with a CMR of 71 per thousand in 2005, child health appears better than in Sub-Saharan Africa (125).

Another distinguishing feature of MENA demography is the unusually large size of the cohorts of young people that have been entering the labor and marriage markets in recent years. Except for the three poorest countries, MENA societies have generally provided their youth with schools and the incentives to enroll. As a result, education has expanded faster in MENA than in most other regions (see Table 6). It is generally considered good for growth, but because of high rates of unemployment among the region's youth and low productivity of their education, the region may fail to take advantage of its demographic window of opportunity (Dhillon and Yousef 2009).

Table 6: HDI index and its components

	HDI					GDP pc Index				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2011	1990	1995	2000	2005	2011
MENA-low	0.30	0.32	0.36	0.40	0.43	0.32	0.36	0.38	0.40	0.43
MENA-mid	0.52	0.56	0.61	0.64	0.66	0.55	0.56	0.58	0.59	0.61
MENA-high	0.70	0.72	0.73	0.75	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.80
Africa	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.40	0.43	0.34	0.32	0.33	0.34	0.37
Asia	0.47	0.52	0.55	0.59	0.63	0.39	0.43	0.46	0.50	0.56
LAC	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.70	0.73	0.60	0.61	0.62	0.63	0.65
Oceania	0.78	0.79	0.80	0.81	0.82	0.70	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.73
Europe	0.76	0.78	0.81	0.84	0.85	0.75	0.73	0.75	0.77	0.78
N. America	0.87	0.88	0.90	0.90	0.91	0.82	0.83	0.86	0.87	0.87

	Education Index					Health Index				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2011	1990	1995	2000	2005	2011
MENA-low	0.14	0.18	0.21	0.24	0.27	0.53	0.56	0.60	0.64	0.68
MENA-mid	0.38	0.43	0.49	0.54	0.58	0.70	0.75	0.79	0.81	0.84
MENA-high	0.54	0.58	0.62	0.65	0.69	0.78	0.80	0.82	0.84	0.86
Africa	0.32	0.36	0.35	0.39	0.41	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.49	0.54
Asia	0.42	0.45	0.48	0.53	0.56	0.71	0.73	0.74	0.76	0.79
LAC	0.52	0.56	0.61	0.65	0.69	0.76	0.79	0.82	0.84	0.86
Oceania	0.81	0.84	0.83	0.84	0.84	0.83	0.85	0.87	0.89	0.90
Europe	0.69	0.76	0.80	0.84	0.86	0.86	0.87	0.89	0.91	0.93
N. America	0.91	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.94	0.87	0.89	0.90	0.91	0.93

Note: Population weighted averages.

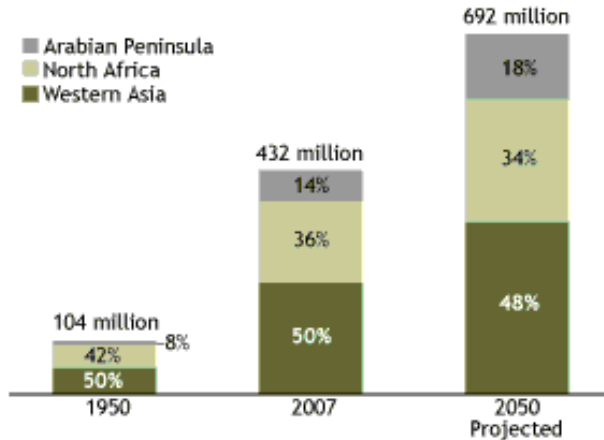
Source: UNDP 2012.

MENA countries as a group have performed relatively well in human development compared to other developing countries, but their experiences have been nearly as diverse as their income levels. HDI for the low – income MENA countries has increased faster than any other region, and faster than their index of GDP per capita. The high income group in 2011 enjoyed the second highest income index (0.80), after North America (0.87), but its HDI was only the fourth highest (0.78). The middle – income group in 1990 had a lower HDI (0.52) than Latin America (0.62) with similar average income, but partially closed the gap by 2005. This group enjoyed a relatively high level of health over the period and increased its education index rapidly after starting at a low level. Life expectancy in MENA countries averaged over 73 years in 2011, which is close to the average for non – MENA middle – income countries. However, as with income, life expectancy, life had enormous variation across the region.

• **Population Growth in the MENA Regions and Perspective :**

The Middle East and North Africa includes some of the world's fastest growing countries, and the region as a whole saw its population quadruple in the second part of the 20th century, from 104 million to 400 million. It added another 32 million by 2007. But growth of the mainly Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa has been slowed by a veritable revolution in marriage and childbearing in recent decades. While a young population structure ensures momentum for future growth, the pace has slackened thanks to fertility declines in some of the region's largest countries. MENA's total fertility rate (TFR), or average number of children born per woman, declined from about seven children in 1960 to three children in 2006.¹ The decline started first in Lebanon, then in a few other countries, including Egypt, Iran, and Tunisia. These last three countries were among the first to adopt policies to lower fertility as a way to slow population growth.

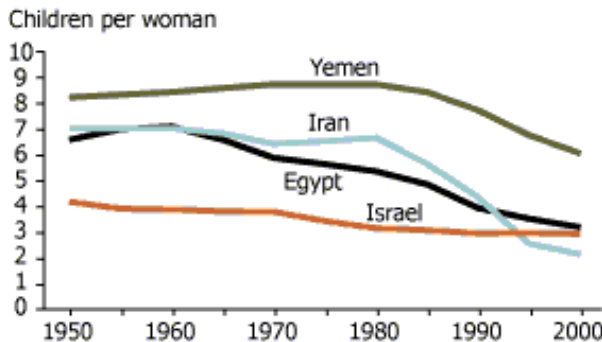
Figure 4 : Population Growth in the MENA Regions: 1950, 2007, and 2050



Source: UN Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision* (2007; <http://esa.un.org>, accessed April 7, 2007).

In Iran, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Turkey, fertility was at or below the replacement level of about 2.1 children per woman. Yemen's TFR has edged downward, but remains the region's highest at 6.2 in 2005. Israel's TFR was the region's lowest in the 1950s, but has not declined as far as in many other countries (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Patterns of Fertility Decline in Selected Countries in the Middle East and North Africa: Total Fertility Rate, 1950-2005



Source: UN Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision* (2007; <http://esa.un.org>, accessed April 7, 2007).

- **The Causes:**

The importance of Families

Strong cultural values attached to the family and traditional marriage and childbearing practices delayed the transition to lower fertility in MENA. The family is the center of life in MENA's culture. Families provide social security for the elderly, sick, or disabled, and an economic refuge for financially dependent relatives. Accordingly,

universal marriage and large families were highly valued in MENA. Muslim migrants from MENA countries often bring these family norms to their new homes. Muslims in France and Germany have somewhat higher fertility rates than non-Muslim French and Germans. Within Israel, Muslim women had 4.0 children on average in 2005, compared with 2.7 for Jewish women, and 2.2 for Christian women. These cultural factors helped delay the transition to lower fertility in MENA, even as the region was developing economically.

But several changes in recent decades hastened the decline in fertility: delayed marriage, wider acceptance of and access to family planning services, and increased education of girls and young women. In some countries, the laws that have restricted women's rights and participation in the wider society are being relaxed. Some observers have noted that these fundamental changes demonstrate that Islam is not itself a barrier to fertility decline or improved status of women as many had assumed, but that the high fertility that persisted in the region for so long reflected a constellation of social and economic as well as religious factors.

The waiting Longer to Marry

Marriage is an important turning point in a young woman's life in MENA. Marriage and childbearing define life for nearly all women in the MENA region. Until the last few decades, women throughout the region typically married while still in their teens or early 20s. The universal value placed on marriage, compounded by religious and social condemnation of premarital and extramarital sexual relationships, encouraged girls to marry young and to bear children soon thereafter. Only rarely did women remain single and childless.

But now, women are waiting until they are older to marry and are marrying men closer to their own age. And, couples want fewer children. The age at marriage in the region is rapidly changing. While the average age at first marriage for women was between 18 and 21 in most countries in the 1970s, it was between 22 and 25 by the late 1990s. North African countries saw an especially steep increase in marriage age. In Libya, the average rose from age 19 to age 29 between the mid-1970 and late 1990s. The average marriage was above age 25 in all the North African countries except for Egypt, where it was just 22 in 1998. In high-fertility Yemen, the average age at marriage was about 21 in 1998.

Another remarkable shift in marriage patterns of some countries is the increase in number of women who are not married by the time they reach their late 30s, many of whom will never marry. Lebanon stands out, with one-fifth of women ages 35 to 39 still unmarried. In contrast,

less than 5 percent of women stayed single into their late 30s in most of the Arabian Peninsula countries.

The rising Economic Aspirations

The delay in marriage also reflects rising economic aspirations for young people, including a trend toward more couples living on their own. The costs of getting married have been increasing in some countries. But the marriage delay also marks a broader shift in women's role in MENA society. Women who marry while still in their teens typically are more socially isolated, know less about family planning and reproductive health services, and often lack the power to make decisions about their own health, especially if their husbands are much older. Marriage may cut short girls' formal education and often traps them in a vicious cycle of low education, high fertility, and poverty. Later marriage mean a shrinking share of girls will be caught in this cycle.

The rising marriage age, along with increases in education and family planning use, has helped lower fertility in the region. The fertility decline of the past few decades is likely to continue, even accelerate, as education, economic opportunities, and access to family planning services expand.

- **The spring of Arab nations? Paths toward Economic development**

The Arab region has experienced considerable and ongoing instability , culminating in protracted conflict in Syria , Iraq , Lebanon , Somalia , Egypt , Sudan , and Yemen , in 2011 popular uprisings also took place in Bahrain , Egypt , Syria , and Tunisia . will the Arab spring initiate a blossoming of democracy or spread extremism , conflict and violence ?

Building strong , viable democracies from the rubble of failed dictatorships is a long , slow process with many formidable obstacles , it requires restructuring government institutions , especially constitutional reform , good leadership , willingness to compromise , fair and representative elections freedom of speech and press and respect for human rights and a strong civil society , among other things , many transitions to democracy that ultimately succeeded were often preceded by a period of conflict and war .

History abounds with examples, such as the American , French and Mexican revolutions , others countries , like Argentina , Chile , Greece and Spain have experiences coups or attempted coups on the road to democracy . the experience of the extremely varied countries swept up in the democratization process suggest there are no insurmountable obstacles to democratization in the Arab countries, they also emphasize the importance of adopting a long view of where the Arab spring can lead, the experiences

of other countries also demonstrate that democratic consolidation can be elusive and can take different paths before achieving the ultimate goal .

The causes of the recent revolutions in the Arab world are numerous and complex, and cannot be distilled into a single cause. Although there are distinct economic and political differences across the Arab region, it is clear that the demographic trends have exacerbated many of the challenges confronting the region. High rates of population growth during the 1980s and 1990s, has led to large cohorts of young people entering labour markets in recent years. In the transition countries of the Arab region, the large inflow of young people into the labour force has led to a situation in which young people confront high unemployment and high rates of inactivity. Demographic pressures are not the only reason behind the protests, but they compound the problems. Creating viable jobs for young people is a precondition for poverty eradication, sustainable development, and peace; and in countries emerging from conflict, access to employment for youth is integral to peace-building processes see (table 7).

Table 7. Total Unemployment and Youth Unemployment in the Arab Region and Select Countries, latest available year

Country or area	Latest year	Unemployment rate	
		Total	Youth
World	2011	6.0	12.6
Arab Region	2011	10.2	27.0
Algeria	2010	10.0	21.5
Bahrain	2010	3.7	--
Egypt	2011	11.9	30.7
Iraq	2006	15.3	43.5
Jordan	2010	12.5	28.1
Kuwait	2008	7.7	--
Lebanon	2007	9.0	22.1
Morocco	2010	9.1	17.6
Qatar	2009	0.3	1.2
OPT	2008	23.7	40.2
Saudi Arabia	2009	5.4	29.9
Sudan 1/	2009	20.7	--
Syria	2010	8.4	18.3
Tunisia	2011	18.9	30.0
United Arab Emirates	2008	4.0	12.1
Yemen	2009	14.6	--
Bulgaria	2011	11.2	26.2
France	2011	9.7	22.9
Germany	2011	5.9	8.6
Greece	2011	17.7	44.4
Italy	2011	8.4	29.1
Netherlands	2011	4.4	7.6
Portugal	2011	12.9	30.1
Spain	2011	21.7	46.4

As has been pointed out, the impact of youth bulges on political violence is expected to fade in the Arab region over the next decades because of declining fertility and shrinking youth bulge.

Furthermore, the relationship between age structure and conflict can be maintained if countries with declining fertility implement policies to benefit from the demographic dividend. However, for countries such as Somalia, Sudan and Yemen that continue to experience high fertility and large youth shares, the demographic potential for conflict will continue to be a cause of concern.

Fertility decline has led to transitory increases of the proportion of adolescents and youth in the population, which may open economic opportunities. A demographic dividend can be realized if the economies of transition countries are expanding and youth are provided with opportunities

for education and quality jobs for new entrants to the workforce. Conversely, worsening work and living conditions, and contradictions between higher levels of education of youth and scarcity of high-skilled jobs will feed frustration and continue contributing to social unrest. Finally, virtually all transition countries in the Arab region have included youth employment as a top priority on the political agenda and have taken measures in one way or another, so far with limited success.

Other demographic trends are also impacting negatively on the transition countries. Emigration and the related human resource drain on the one side, and additional pressure on labour markets as a result of immigration on the other will continue to pose challenges for countries. The deliberate reduction in the percentage of Arab migrants in the oil exporting countries of the Arab Region has eliminated a potential outlet for high unemployment in the transition countries. Finally, significant forced internal displacement of populations remains a serious obstacle to countries reeling from the consequences of the Arab Spring.

Divided wealthy monarchical regimes

Since wealthy Gulf countries remain somewhat divided by disparate tribal loyalties, one may wonder if there will be uprisings in these societies. Civil society hardly exists in these states, as old tribal loyalties combine with monarchical control over politics and large segments of the economy. While the Arab hereditary monarchies have proven more stable than regimes basing their legitimacy on ideology (e.g. Pan-Arab nationalism, socialism, etc.), they are not necessarily immune from regime change. Most of the Gulf monarchical regimes have low human capital (and an unevenly educated citizenry) along with vast economic resources. There is less likelihood of sustained upheavals in this category of states, as paternalist financial arrangements enable leaders to appease or coopt challengers (as has occurred in most Gulf Cooperation Countries). In the long run, however, these states have an opportunity to apply oil revenues toward strengthening human capital (through education, adoption of innovative technologies, etc.), while designing reforms to implement a gradual top-down transformation. To draw again on historical analogies, these countries can be compared with 19th-century Britain, when the British elite warded off revolutionary contagion from the continent in 1848 by gradually adopting democratic reforms. Yet England was endowed with a more vibrant civil society than that of the Gulf states; and for now Gulf monarchs are buying stability with generous welfare programs and by coopting disenfranchised groups. In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville deplored revolution that yielded to the tyranny of the majority, but at the same time blamed the French monarchists for failing to avoid the revolution, which, in

his view, they could have accomplished by undertaking substantive political reforms. Drawing on Tocqueville's insight, one may hope that, in the case of Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states, the Arab Spring will reinforce meaningful reform as the most viable long-term alternative to revolution. In that case, their enormous financial resources can allow progressive change through peaceful means. The question remains whether these countries are ready to take up these challenges.

Arab Spring : the Cost of the change :

- **Remittances**

Officially recorded remittance flows to developing countries are estimated to have reached \$372 billion in 2011, an increase of 12.1 per cent over 2010 (Table 8).

Table 7 : International immigrants and emigrants 2010, percentage of population, remittances 2011 and number of refugees, 2011

Country or area	Number of international immigrants	Percentage of total population	Number of international emigrants	Percentage of total population	Remittances	Number of refugees
	(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)	(US\$ millions)	(thousands)
	2010	2010	2011	2011		
World	214,199	3.1	214,199	3.1	501,000	10,400
Developing countries	86,232	1.5	147,000	2.6	372,000	8,440
Arab Region; of which:	32,790	9.1	18,342	3.9	42,000	1,700
Transition countries	6,468	2.8	15,367	6.7	22,420	1,226
Egypt	245	0.3	2,913	3.6	14,213	95
Iraq	83	0.3	1,598	5.0	77	35
Libya	682	10.4	300	4.7	..	8
OPT	1,924	43.6	5,543	137.2	1,106	0
Somalia	23	0.2	1,534	16.4	..	2
Sudan 1/	753	1.7	1,599	3.7	1,478	113
Syria	2,206	9.8	582	2.9	1,988	755
Tunisia	34	0.3	570	5.4	1,955	3
Yemen	518	2.1	728	3.0	1,603	215

1/ Includes South Sudan.

The growth of migrant remittances was higher in 2011 than in 2010 for all regions except the Middle East and Northern Africa, where flows were moderated by the Arab Spring. Contrary to the regional trend, remittances to Egypt have surged since 2010, due to a variety of factors including the return of migrants

from Libya and Syria and falling housing prices that likely spurred home purchases in Egypt by Egyptians residing abroad (World Bank, 2012a). With over \$14 billion in 2011, Egypt is the largest recipient of migrant remittances in the Arab region and sixth largest in the world. Lebanon is among the world's top 10 recipients of migrant remittances as a share of GDP, 18 per cent in 2011.

Remittances to developing countries are vulnerable to uncertain economic prospects in migrant destination countries. Recent political events in the region, especially in Libya and Syria, are likely to impact remittance flows in 2012. Additionally, high unemployment in Europe and the United States can adversely affect the employment prospects of migrants, while hardening political attitudes toward additional immigration have created political pressures to reduce current levels of immigration (Chamie and Mirkin, 2010). There are risks that if the European crisis worsens, immigration controls in these countries could become even tighter. A deepening and spread of the European debt crisis could reduce demand for migrant workers and further depress remittance flows to the Arab Region.

In its most recent assessment of global remittances flows, the World Bank issued a decidedly

more optimistic forecast than previously for remittances in the Arab Region. Among developing country regions, South Asia and Northern Africa and the Middle East saw the strongest growth in remittances in 2012, driven primarily by robust economic activity in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (World Bank, 2012b).

- **Refugees: the Cost of War**

Refugees constitute an important share of international migrants residing in the Arab region. By the end of 2011, the refugee population reached 10.4 million persons (Table 8). An additional 4.8 million Palestinian refugees were under the protection of the United Nations Relief and Welfare Agency, with the largest number of Palestinian refugees, two million in Jordan (UNRWA, 2012).

The Arab Region hosts some 1.7 million refugees or 17 per cent of the world total, with most

of these refugees, 1.2 million in transition countries (UNHCR, 2012a). Among the five largest

source countries of refugees in the world, three are transition countries: Iraq, 1.4 million; Somalia, 1.1 million and Sudan, 500,000. Southern Africa is hosting some of the refugees from transition countries, including 760,000 from Somalia and 462,000 from Sudan. More recently, the UNHCR announced in November 2012, that the number of refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria had reached almost 500,000 Syrians, who were being hosted by Turkey (122,000), Lebanon (121,000), Jordan (116,000), Iraq

(54,000) and Egypt (7,000) (UNHCR, 2012b). In most cases, host countries were struggling to accommodate the sudden and large influx of refugees and to provide already scarce resources. In addition, the European Union, along with Norway and Switzerland received more than 16,000 asylum requests from Syrians between early 2011 and mid 2012 (UN, 2012). The number of Syrian refugees is expected to surge, as the Syrian conflict continues and possibly intensifies. Also in late November 2012, there were almost 200,000 Sudanese refugees in refugee camps in newly independent South Sudan, having fled escalating violence and insecurity in the Sudanese states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile (UN News Centre, 2012b).

- **Internally displaced persons**

Conflicts and other crises frequently precipitate the sudden displacement of large numbers of people within national boundaries. By the end of 2011, the number of people internally displaced (IDPs) by conflict, generalised violence or human rights violations across the world stood at 26.4 million (IDMC, 2012a). The Arab region continued to experience an increase in population displacement.

The vast majority of the region's new displacement took place against the backdrop of the Arab Spring, resulting in the displacement of 75,000 people in Libya, and up to two million in Syria by early 2012. In Yemen, political instability, conflict, terrorist activity, surging fuel and food prices and food insecurity precipitated a population displacement of almost 500,000 Yemenis in remote areas of the country in 2012.

The country with the largest internally displaced population in the region is Iraq; over 2 million people were still displaced there at the end of 2011 (IDMC, 2012a). In Sudan, out of 2.2 million IDPs, some 700,000 southerners who had been internally displaced years before were no longer within the same country following the independence of South Sudan in July 2011 and their situation remained to be clarified. At the end of 2011, they had lost Sudanese citizenship with the new nationality law, but may not have had access to documents confirming their South Sudan citizenship. Without an effective central government since 1991, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia continued to worsen, due to a combination of warlords, pirates, bandits, conflict between the government, its allies and insurgent groups and drought across the Horn of Africa which led to famine in southern and central regions of Somalia. High rates of malnutrition and severe food insecurity as a result of drought and skyrocketing food prices were reported in most IDP settlements. At the end of 2011, there were 1.5 million IDPs in Somalia (IDMC, 2012b).

- **Summary and conclusions**

Over the past generation, the Arab world experienced rapid progress in human development outcomes, including declining child mortality, extended schooling and increasing stature of women. These development gains penetrated most Arab states and subpopulations. The pathway from human development to political mobilization rests on three interlinked points. First, basic human development led to a dramatic increase in population needs and expectations, creating new policy challenges and reducing public dependency on regimes. Second, human development and new information technologies created new opportunities for political protest, the collective realization of human development gains resulted in new values conducive to regime change. Each proposition builds on theories of human capital accumulation over the life course that isolate the human dimension of national development. In conclusion and more immediately: will a Arab courtiers need to develop a broad vision based on universal principles of rights, ultimately encoded in their constitutions.

At the same time, these aspiring hegemony will need to deliver the political, social and Philosophy and Social Criticism economic goods, fostering a greater sense of social equity and inclusiveness without alienating either the business community or the military.

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