



EUROMED STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Geopolitical context of Mediterranean youths:
considering human security



PRESENTATION

“EuroMed Essentials” training cycle tackled geopolitical issues of the Mediterranean area together with history and religion in three different training courses. This cycle has been developed together with Hellenic National Agency, Turkish National Agency and Maltese National Agency.

What have pushed all of us in making such a long term effort is that we believe that only through a sincere effort in understanding the geopolitical framework, historical background and religious beliefs of the Mediterranean area is possible to overcome harsh confrontations and dangerous misunderstandings.

“Challenge of EuroMed cooperation and geopolitical issues”

Greece, 21-26 June 2010

“History: knowing better the past to understand the present and prepare the future”

Turkey, 6 -11 June 2011

“Religion in the EuroMediterranean cooperation”

Malta, 2012

In June 2010 we organized the first module “Challenges to cooperation and geopolitical issues” in Athens. We started with this subject because international crises are seriously affecting cooperation projects, blocking intercultural learning processes and dialogues too. Organising a training course on geopolitics has been, therefore, a way to provide participants with the necessary conceptual tools, information, as well as a unique occasion to share experiences and ideas amongst themselves about the geopolitical framework in which they live and work.

This essay, written by an expert and trainer who took part to the training course about geopolitics, aims to provide trainers, youth workers and leaders, as well as social workers and beneficiaries of Youth in Action programme with basic information about the geopolitical relevance of EuroMed youth. We believe that especially after the so called Arab spring all the actors engaged in youth initiatives should be more aware of the wider geopolitical context, and we are confident that this essay is a useful tool to stimulate readers to further deepen their knowledge on this strategic issue.

SALTO YOUTH EuroMed Team



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some MENA countries are the biggest supplier of energy resources since the aftermath of World War II and still dispose of the greatest proven reserves in the world. The presence of oil and gas for almost 60 years now, has contributed at the development of a specific socio-political and economic system the "rentier state", and through migration and remittances it has deeply influenced the whole region. This system is now pointed out as one of the main obstacles to a true economic development of Arab countries. At the same time, climate change is increasing the vulnerability of the region to natural disasters, especially in coastal towns, where most of the population actually live and that are rapidly growing as people are fleeing the countryside because of the desertification process. In this framework the most vulnerable part of MENA societies are undoubtedly young people: they are now educated, thanks to mass education policies implemented at different paces during the XX century, but because of economic crisis and climate change they have less opportunities than their parents had.

Arabs youth and demands are particularly urgent as they already represent almost half of the total population; and the same time they are quite determined and ready to take the lead. As the Arab spring has shown, most of the Arab policy makers and leaders did not consider youth as one of the main political issue to tackle seriously and, by consequence, they were not able

to understand youth concerns and requests. Therefore, a blend of need for change and a growing new generation empowered by mass education and information and communication technologies, made the situation turns surprisingly quickly and effectively.

It is too early to assess if the Arab spring is really bringing about a regime change, an elite renewal or at least some economic and political reforms. However it has showed that a deep social and economic change is underway, basically pushed by demography, literacy and shrinking opportunities for youth. Actually, most of the regimes and governments in MENA region were developed in the second half of the XX century, after the decolonisation process, to govern populations in a local and global context with a certain amount of natural resources available. For different reasons, all these factors have deeply changed while some governments have not even implemented big reforms. It goes by itself that some sort of re-adjustments is inevitable.

In this framework it appears quite evident that working with and for youth is of utmost strategic importance not only for MENA countries, but for the whole Euro-Mediterranean area too. The particular historical moment we are living in is the first concrete window of opportunity to make a positive change since the '70s, and it would be a blind policy not to invest now in our future, as it is represented by youth.



INTRODUCTION: geopolitics of human security

This short essay aims at providing basic data about the main international issues that threaten stability and security in the Mediterranean area; presenting geopolitics as a methodology to interpret and represent them; and introducing human security as an effective paradigm to assess threats that is inspiring, to some extent, international decision makers in their action. This essay is not meant to be exhaustive, but to stimulate deeper research in this field by referring to primary data sources, high level analyses produced by international organizations, journalistic accounts and political scientists reflections.

We believe that analysing the geopolitical context, adopting the human security approach, is particularly useful to understand some of the deepest reasons of the Euro-Mediterranean wave of youth protests, as well as to define the opportunities and set of choices available to policy makers

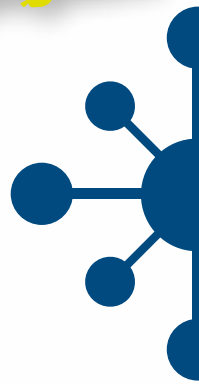
and youth, that after the Arab spring is commonly perceived as one of the main socio-political actors. The focus of the essay will be on MENA - Middle East and North Africa region, because it is bordering Europe and it is still one the major players in the energy sector, as well as one of the most vulnerable areas to climate changes.

A wider approach in assessing threats and safeguarding peace and prosperity is gaining more and more relevance in international instances: human security as defined by UNDP - United Nations Development Programme in the '90s. As far more people have been killed by their own governments or by famine and epidemics, rather than by foreign armies during the last 100 years, international organisations working for security, like NATO, UN and European Union, are considering security of individuals rather than states as their main concern.

Table I - State Security Vs. Human Security

Form of Security	Referent	The Object of Protection	Potential Threats
Traditional Security	The State	The integrity and safety of the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-state war and foreign intervention • Nuclear proliferation • Civil disorder
Human Security	The individual	The Safety and freedom of the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Disease • Environmental depletion • Human rights violations Conflicts, violence and repression

Source: UNDP, Arab Human Development Report 2009, page 19



Including the human security definition into the analysis means looking at consequences on individuals of traditional geopolitical issues and widening the scope of the analysis including factors like unemployment, climate change, poverty that recent events in Arab countries have proven their pertinence in assessing threats. Taking inspiration from this new paradigm this essay focuses on three main

elements: energy resources and their consequences on political and economic systems of single countries and the overall region; climate change as a process of reduction of natural resources and by consequence of opportunities for populations; human capital as a growing resource for southern Mediterranean countries that if unexploited it can become a factor of instability and insecurity.



HUMAN SECURITY: A NEW PARADIGM

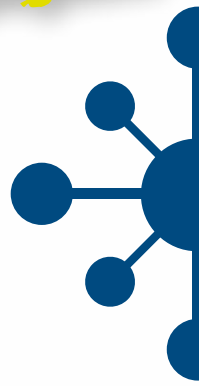
Since its first formal definition proposed by the Pakistani economist Dr. Mahbub ul Haq in 1994, the concept of Human Security has travelled a lot and it has underwent deep reinterpretations (Tadjbakhsh S., 2005). Protecting civilians from their own governments, a narrow interpretation of human security, has been claimed as the main reason to intervene in domestic conflicts like in Libya now, as in the Balkans back in the '90s. More widely, human security is the combination of threats associated with war; genocide, and the displacement of

populations and its main focus is not defending borders from external military threats, but human security is concerned with the security of individuals. Human security and national security should be, and often are, mutually reinforcing. However secure States do not automatically mean secure peoples and secure people does not mean secure States.

In its original definition published in 1994 Dr. Mahbub ul Haq argued that the scope of global security should be expanded to include threats in seven areas:



- **Economic security** requires an assured basic income for individuals, usually from productive and remunerative work or, as a last resort, from a publicly financed safety net. Unemployment problems constitute an important factor underlying political tensions and ethnic violence.
- **Food security** requires that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to basic food. Quite often the problem is the poor distribution of food and a lack of purchasing power.
- **Health security** aims to guarantee a minimum protection from diseases and unhealthy lifestyles that are due to malnutrition and insufficient access to health services, clean water and other basic necessities.
- **Environmental security** aims to protect people from the short and long-term ravages of nature, man-made threats in nature, and deterioration of the natural environment. In developing countries, lack of access to clean water resources is one of the greatest environmental threats. Global warming, caused by the emission of greenhouse gases, is another environmental security issue.
- **Personal security** aims to protect people from physical violence, whether from the state or external states, from violent individuals and sub-state actors, from domestic abuse, or from predatory adults.
- **Community security** aims to protect people from the loss of traditional relationships and values and from sectarian and ethnic violence.
- **Political security** is concerned with whether people live in a society that honours their basic human and civic rights.



THE WIDER GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT



STRATEGIC RELEVANCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

The Mediterranean Sea is a semi-enclosed sea with only two exits: Gibraltar, 14 Km wide, and Suez Canal, few meters wide, that are 3,700 km far from each other. It covers almost three millions square Km, with a 46,000 Km coastline and the two shores are never very faraway, between 145 Km and 800 Km. Mediterranean countries have a population of nearly 425 million, with an additional 170 million tourists visiting them each year. Especially in the south shore the population is concentrated in costal areas, along the Nile River, as few Km south the Sahara desert soon begins, and in twenty big towns, whose two megacities: Cairo and Istanbul (Escallier, 2004).

Notwithstanding its relatively small size it is one of the most strategic area in the world because of its geographical position, cultural richness and its natural resources. Europe, Africa and Asia meet in this small sea and the main trade routes connecting the Far East and the West are crossing this area since ancient times. This is also the cradle of the three main monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and at the same time it is the area where three civilisations meet: Catholicism in Western Europe, Orthodoxy in Eastern Mediterranean Sea, and Islam in the South.

Since ancient times, different powers have always tried to gain control of the Mediterranean Sea, but except from the Roman Empire when it was called "Mare Nostrum" – Our Sea – no one has ever succeeded. During the XX century the Mediterranean Sea has been the most strategic area where Western countries and the Soviet Block competed for the hegemony, as it was the southern flank of the Atlantic Alliance, as well as the only access to the ocean for the USSR via the Black Sea. In 1980 half of the world warships was cruising in the Mediterranean Sea. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union only one third of the global warships is patrolling the Mediterranean Sea. Nevertheless, the American sixth fleet is still operating as new threats are arising like international terrorism coming from the Muslim World.

The Mediterranean Sea has been dubbed also as a "liquid continent" in order to stress the intensity of flows of people, resources and ideas that cross it by making of the sea a sort of liquid continuation of the land. However deep gaps still exist between southern and northern countries. While European countries are becoming older MENA region is experiencing an unprecedented demographic pressure that is accelerating the urbanization process and requires the creation of almost 100 million jobs in the next twenty years.



Table 2- Age structure in EU and MENA compared, 2003

	Population in 2003 (millions)	Under 15 years old (millions)	Ratio %	Over 65 years old (millions)	Ratio %
European Union	379	62	16.4%	63	16.6%
MENA	432	152	35.2 %	63	4.2%

Source: Pourtier, 2006, p. 256.

While the difference in GDP per capita as well as the HDI (Human Development Index, a ranking developed by UNDP to measure the wellness of populations rather than the GDP) shows that European populations averagely nine times richer than southern countries, even though some of those dispose of the greatest reserves of oil and gas and

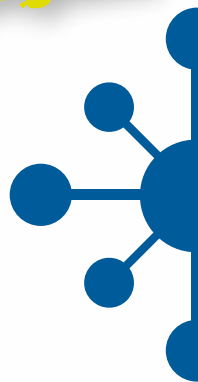
they currently have been the biggest suppliers of energy sources in the world. If we add to this framework the pending threat of climate change and water scarcity, it is quite evident that populations move out of this region to reach either Western countries (Europe and North America) as well as the more developed and rich countries of the Gulf region.



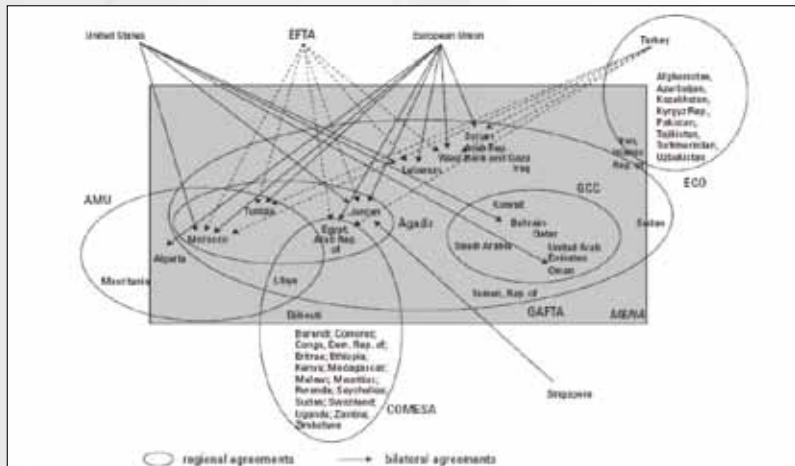
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Cooperation programmes are trying to bring the both sides of the Mediterranean Sea closer; and even to reinforce the Atlantic cooperation, however only few are focusing on youth problems and potential like Youth in Action and Euromed IV funded by the European Union. The incredible success and contagiousness of the Arab spring has underlined that

this lack is probably one of the weakest point in the European foreign policy toward Southern Mediterranean countries. As it is quite clear from the [Map 1](#), there is not a clear coordination among cooperation programmes across the Mediterranean Sea and several programmes are overlapping if not competing for the same aim.



Map I- International Cooperation Programmes Across the Mediterranean Sea



Note: only major agreements are depicted.

Agadir = Agadir Agreement for the Establishment of a Free Trade Zone between Arab Mediterranean Nations (4); AMU = Arab Maghreb Union (5); COMESA = Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (19); ECO = Economic Cooperation Organization (10); EFTA = European Free Trade Association (4), including Iceland, Switzerland, Norway, and Liechtenstein; GAFTA = Great Arab Free Trade Agreement (18); GCC = Gulf Cooperation Council (6).

Source: World Bank Staff

Another strategic issue for MENA countries and by consequence for the whole Mediterranean area is economic development, especially in such a critical moment for the world financial system. As some analysts has pointed out, the low level of intraregional market and integration is slowing down the economic development of the MENA region and Africa as a whole. While five African countries were among the world's 10 fastest growing economies between 2005 and 2009, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and

Sub-Saharan Africa's real gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to increase about 6% both this year and in 2012, only 12% of African commerce happens within the continent. That is the world's lowest rate of intra-regional trading. Members of the EU, by contrast, carry out about 65% of their trade with one another. "Africa is totally preoccupied with external markets, it doesn't buy what it can sell, which are commodities. And it doesn't really have the manufacturing capabilities to sell into its own market. So the fragmentation is an economic reality

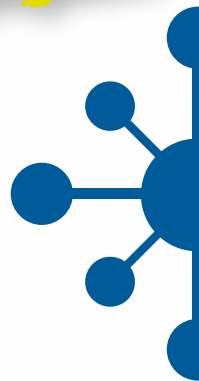


as much as a political one" (Wallace, 2011). This pattern of economic behaviour has been defined as the "hub-and-spoke" model.

Notwithstanding, hundreds of bilateral trade agreements have been signed, the most significant ones have been at the sub-regional level: the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) formed in 1981, and the Arab Maghreb Union formed in 1989 are the two most important trade agreements. "However, the most significant trade treaties continue to be those negotiated with the World Trade Organization, the European Union, and to lesser extent, the United States. [...] The same is true for investment agreements: MENA countries have signed nearly twice as many of these agreements with

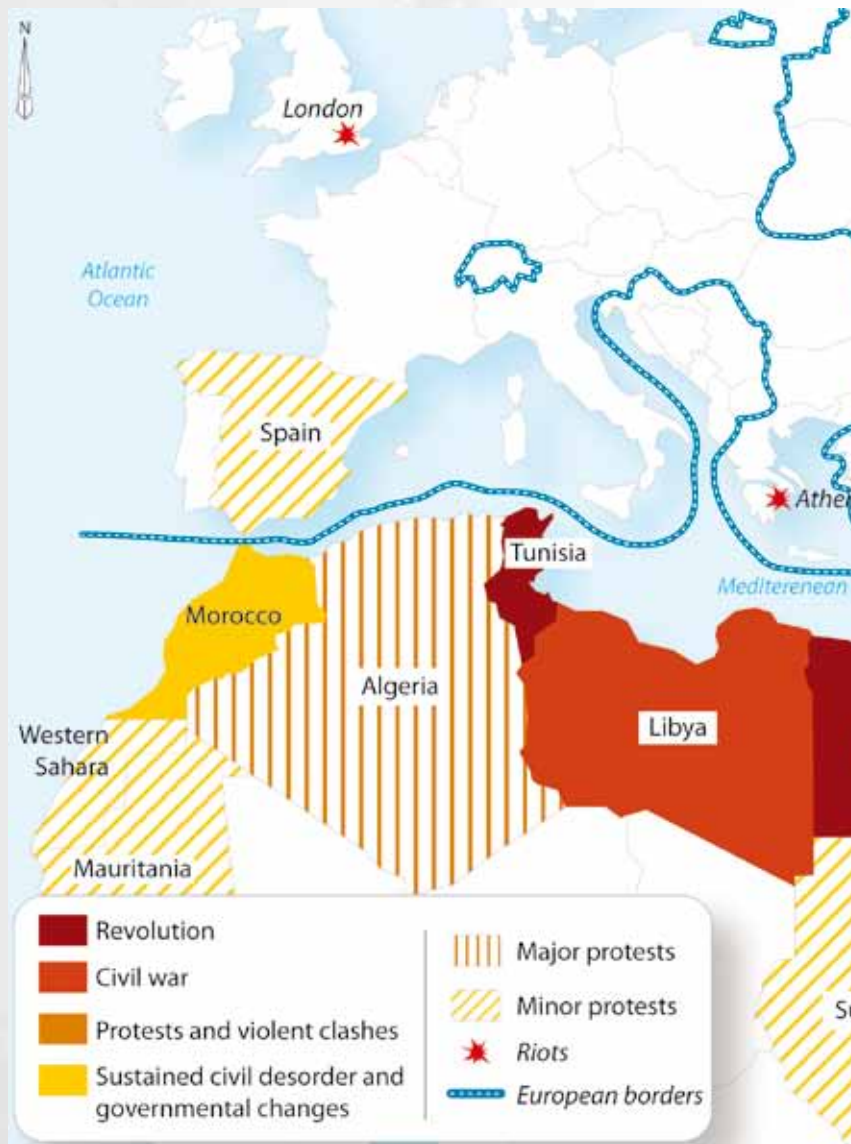
OECD countries than with each other (145 compared to 72)" (Richards & Waterbury, 2008, p. 386). In this framework of economic interaction, flows of labour rather than goods and capitals have driven regional economic integration and have contributed in transforming national political economies by connecting the most remote areas of the most backward countries to global labour market and regional economy.

Given this economic and political context, the choice between bilateral or multilateral approach in North-South international cooperation programmes has deep consequences on regional integration process and its economic development itself.



YOUTH DURING THE ARAB SPRING: the main socio-political actor

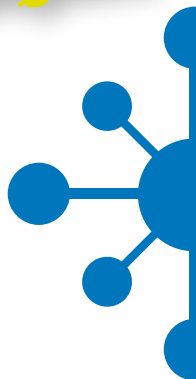
Map 2- A Contagious Wave of Protests



Studies and research



Realisation : E. Mariani, 2011.



The series of protests led by youth that started in December in Tunisia and reached almost all the Arab countries, few European countries and recently Israel, is the last, chronologically, evidence that the Mediterranean area is intimately interlinked, populations do share some common problems, take inspiration from each other even when they act locally. In particular this series have brought youth potential, problems and requests at the heart of the political debate, or at least at the front page of media for a while.

So far youth has not been considered, except probably by few political scientists, as a social actor able to trigger major political and social changes so quickly. On the contrary, since December 2010 and especially after the sudden fall of Tunisian and Egyptian Presidents, between January and February 2011, international media and audiences became very enthusiastic about the powerful Arab youth: peaceful, brave, apparently secular, well connected to the Internet and so social media friendly (sic).

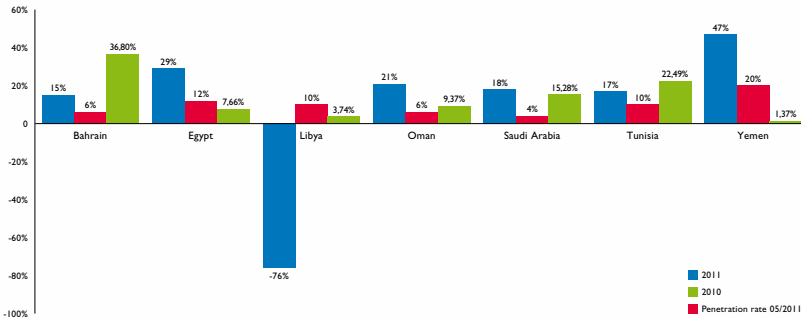
The uprisings, and the youth's stake in them, were so surprisingly successful that they immediately became contagious: similar protests mushroomed in several Arab countries: from Morocco to Yemen, and even in prosperous Arab monarchies of the Gulf like Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia. The Mediterranean Sea didn't contain

the "wave", and we have successively seen Madrid's streets full of young "indignados", few months later London embraced by riots, and finally the biggest protest ever in the history of Israel took place.

Trapped by the powerful marketing machines of some social media companies and mobile phones brands, media have sold the image of a transnational youth movements that organises itself using exclusively new communication technologies, particularly mobile devices (Accolla, 2011). Wael Ghonim, head of marketing for Google Middle East and North Africa turned-activist-leader, even declare on CNN that it is enough to provide masses with Internet access was claimed as the most effective way to liberate a society (Joyella, 2011).

Undeniably information and communication technologies played a key role in the organisation of protests, more specifically social media as 70% of the Arab population between 15 and 29 years old uses Facebook regularly (Dubai School of Government, 2011). Internet has enormously helped opposition movements in bypassing States censures and in telling directly to external audiences what was going on, and in providing local connected youth with the ability to express their concerns, requests and wishes. However, the Syria protests show that things are not as easy as it could appear from journalistic accounts.

Chart I- Facebook Users Growth Rate (2011 - 2010) and Penetration Rate in April 2011

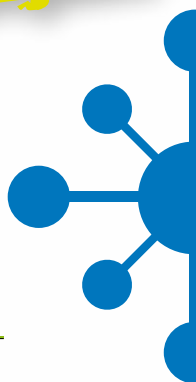


Source: data collected from Arab Social Media Report (Dubai School of Government, 2011)

As two political analysts, Gonzalez-Quijano (Gonzalez-Quijano, 2011) and Enrico De Angelis (De Angelis, 2011), have pointed out that notwithstanding the comparable Internet penetration rates in Egypt and Syria, the effects was completely different on the opposition movements. The Syrian regime, having learned important lessons from the Tunisian and Egyptian cases, developed a strategy of counter-information and discredit of opposition movements on-line. Syrian cyber-activists are quite unknown and there is no bloggers community like in Egypt because the Internet was opened to the public quite late if compared to other Arab countries, only in 2001 when the now President Bashar al-Assad was just the president of the Syrian Computer Society, and the crackdown on bloggers has been particularly brutal.

Both pro and anti-regime users and groups uploaded, shared and twitted

articles and videos on social media with the intent to proof different points, keen to confirm their own views and to dismiss others as 'propaganda'. Finally, it appears that social media have not favoured the overcoming of the deep differences among opposing groups divided, both in terms of how people perceive the President and how they think changes should come about. On the contrary, « the credibility issue, the decentralized structure of Internet and the tendency of social media to create barriers rather than bridges have all contributed to creating a state of cultural chaos around the Syrian unrest. [...] The wide circulation of news and videos without control could end in a boomerang for those who want a peaceful change towards democracy in Syria. The absence of any professional authority of those who are distributing the news on both sides makes it impossible to build up a shared sense of what's happening" (De Angelis, 2011).



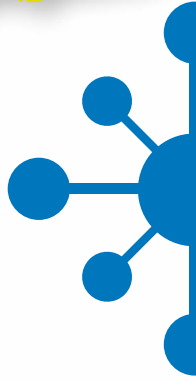


TIMELINE OF PROTESTS BY COUNTRY

Middle East, North Africa and Israel

18/12/10	<p>Tunisia Revolution on 14 January 2011, Protests subdued since March 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ousting of President Ben Ali and Prime Minister Ghannouchi 14 January 2011 • Dissolution of the political police; • Dissolution of the RCD, the former ruling party of Tunisia and liquidation of its assets; • Release of political prisoners; • Elections to a Constituent Assembly on 23 October 2011.
28/12/10	<p>Algeria Subdued since April 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting of the 19-year-old state of emergency
17/01/11	<p>Oman Ended May 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic concessions by Sultan Qaboos • Dismissal of ministers; • Granting of lawmaking powers to Oman's elected legislature.
21/01/11	<p>Saudi Arabia Subdued since June 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic concessions by King Abdullah • Male-only municipal elections to be held 22 September 2011
25/01/11	<p>Egypt Revolution on 11 February 2011 Protests ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ousting of President Mubarak on 11 February 2011, and Prime Ministers Nazif and Shafik • Assumption of power by the Armed Forces; • Suspension of the Constitution, dissolution of the Parliament; • Disbanding of State Security Investigations Service; • Dissolution of the NDP, the former ruling party of Egypt and transfer of its assets to the state; • Prosecution of Mubarak, his family and his former ministers.
26/01/11	<p>Syria Major protests Ongoing, significantly escalated since 15 March 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of some political prisoners • End of Emergency Law; • Dismissal of Provincial Governors; • Military action in Hama, Daraa and other areas; • Resignations from Parliament ; • Resignation of the Government; • Small defections within Syrian army and clashes among soldiers.





30/01/11	Morocco Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political concessions by King Mohammed VI • Referendum on constitutional reforms; • Respect to civil rights and an end to corruption.
03/02/11	Yemen Major protests Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignation of MPs from the ruling party; • On the June 4, President Ali Abdullah Saleh is injured in an attack on a mosque in his compound in the Yemeni capital Sana'a, causing him and 35 members of his family, including his wife, as well as the prime minister and the Speaker of the Yemeni parliament, to leave Yemen for Saudi Arabia. As of 31 August, Saleh has not returned to Yemen; • Vice President Abd al-Rahman Mansur al-Hadi takes over as Acting President on 4 June 2011.
14/02/11	Bahrain Ongoing, though moderately subdued since March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic concessions by King Hamad; • Release of political prisoners; • Dismissal of ministers; • GCC intervention at the request of the Government of Bahrain.
17/02/11	Libya Civil war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition forces seize control of numerous Libyan cities, including the capital, Tripoli; • Formation of the National Transitional Council; • UN-mandated NATO, Jordanian, Qatari, Swedish, and Emirati military intervention; • Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, leader of the Libyan Republic is killed on 20 October 2011.
14/07/11	Israel Ongoing Major protests Known as: Housing Protest, Social justice protest, or the Tents protest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 July 2011: 25-year-old Israeli video editor Daphne Leef had to vacate the central Tel Aviv apartment and she initiated a small-scale public tent protest, that soon became the biggest protest ever organized in Israel; • 30 July 2011: between 85,000 and 150,000 people took part in mass rallies in major cities across Israel; • 6 August 2011: between 200,000 and 350,000 protesters took part in mass rallies in major cities across Israel; • 3 September 2011: A protest billed as the "March of the Million" sees an estimated 460,000 people taking to the streets throughout the country, 300,000 of which in Tel Aviv.



European countries

05/05/10	<p>Greece Ongoing Major protests and riots</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the proposed spending cuts and tax increases, a nation-wide strike was called for 5 May 2010; between 100,000 and 500,000 people marched through Athens; a large group tried to storm the parliament building in Syntagma Square; Protestors set fire to several banks branches with Molotov cocktail; • After 25 May 2011: peaceful demonstrations in Athens and other major Greek cities, protesting the new austerity measures proposed by the government, without any support from trade unions in the same spirit of the Spanish indignant movement.
15/05/11	<p>Spain Ongoing Major protests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referred also as the 15-May Movement or the Spanish revolution, are a series of ongoing peaceful demonstrations in major Spanish towns whose origin can be traced to social networks and True Democracia Real Ya!; • Protesters demands radical change in Spanish politics, as they do not consider themselves to be represented by any traditional party nor favoured by the measures approved by politicians; • September - Parliament approves constitutional amendment setting legally binding cap on public sector borrowing.
06/08/11	<p>United Kingdom Demonstrations and riots</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following 6 August 2011 peaceful march in relation to the police response to the fatal shooting of Mark Duggan by Metropolitan Police Service firearms officers on 4 August 2011, a riot began in Tottenham, North London; • In the following days, rioting spread to several London boroughs and districts and eventually to some other areas of England: the most severe disturbances outside London occurring in Bristol and cities in the Midlands and North West of England; • The riots were characterised by rampant looting and arson attacks of unprecedented levels; • Five people died and at least 16 others were injured as a direct result of related violent acts; • An estimated £200 million worth of property damage was incurred, and local economic activity was significantly compromised.

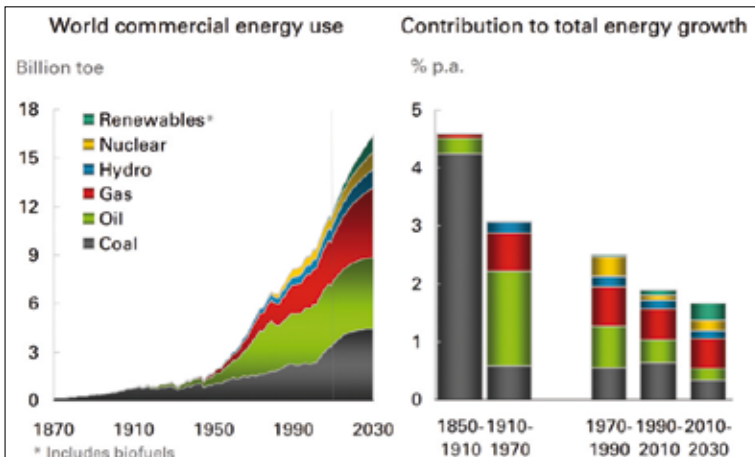


ENERGY: the strategic asset of MENA region

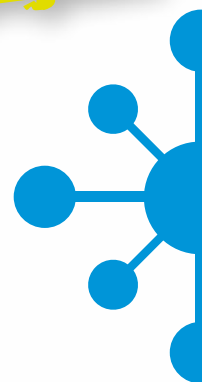
When we talk about Arab countries and the Middle East we usually talk about energy, as in this this region there are the greatest reserves and producers of oil and gas that the industrialised and developing worlds need and will need dramatically for quite a long time yet. According to several projections MENA region is currently one of the key players in the global energy market and it will keep this role for the next twenty years. At the same time the abundance of energy sources, exploited since the aftermath of the World War II, have determined a specific political and economic system.

Therefore understanding the energy market's developments is essential to understand political trends in the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time from the analysis of MENA region's supplying capacities and political developments will depend the future of industrialised and emerging countries as energy, either from fossil and non-fossil fuels, is indispensable to sustain the development. Even though energy efficiency is improving everywhere in the world thanks to globalisation and global competition even in energy production, the world population is increasing as well as their incomes, by consequence more and more energy is needed, particularly in developing countries (non-Oecd).

Chart 2- World energy use



Source: British Petroleum, "BP Energy Outlook 2030 Booklet", 2011, page 10
 Available on-line www.bp.com/energyoutlook2030



The XIX century industrial revolution was made possible by steam engines powered by coal that remained the main energy source till the World War II. When industries started to rely on electricity and internal combustion engines oil became the main source of energy for transportation of freight and passengers. While for power generation coal was gradually replaced by natural gas, and now by renewable sources (wind, solar and biofuels) but it still has a great share in this sector especially in India and China.

According to different projections renewables sources of energy will increase their share in the energy mix mainly because of concerns regarding the environmental impacts of extracting and exploiting fossil fuels. Nonetheless fossil fuels will have the greatest share and amongst them oil will still be one the major source, even though natural gas' share will notably increase.

However in Mena and Sub-Saharan countries there is a great potential for growth of renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy. Some projects that until few years ago were considered visionary are now more feasible and competitive because of several reasons: fossil fuels are more expensive than what they used to be few years ago and nobody expects they will ever be cheap again; great technological development in transporting electrical power have reduced dispersion and made long distance distribution more interesting; photovoltaic technologies has become much

more efficient and flexible to different climate and conditions. Some companies even in the oil-rich Gulf monarchies are investing a lot in research and development in renewable energies like Qatar Science and Technology Park (www.qstp.org.qa) and Masdar company (www.masdar.ae) in Abu Dhabi. As Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, chairman of Masdar, states clearly in his company's website: "In fact, as a major hydrocarbon exporter, Abu Dhabi has always been a global energy player; through Masdar, the Emirate not only demonstrates responsibility as an oil and gas producer, but also extends its energy leadership into the vitally important field of renewable energy."

As Desertec project shows, European institutions and private companies perceive MENA region as a potential supplier of renewable energy too. As it is stated in Desertec website (www.desertec.org): "within six hours, deserts receive more energy from the sun than humanity consumes within a year", therefore that area is definitely the most suitable site for developing large scale projects to generate electricity from renewable sources. Around 90% of the human population live less than 3000 km from deserts and could be efficiently supplied through a high-voltage direct current grid with a minimum loss of power. In desert regions near the coast, solar-thermal power plants can be combined with seawater cooling so that they not only produce electricity, but also drinking water, as it already happens in some desalination plants in the Gulf region.

Map 3- The Desertec Concept of a EU-MENA Supergrid

The symbols for power sources and lines are only sketching typical locations



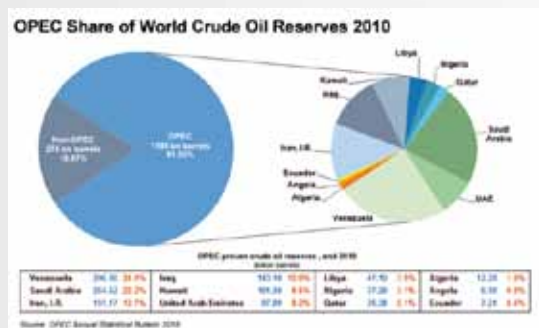


MENA REGION A KEY PLAYER IN THE WORLD ENERGY MARKET

MENA region is one of the most important players in the world market of oil and gas, because here there are the biggest reserves and production facilities (technically upstream and downstream, but not refineries) of fossil fuels. Arab oil exporters

countries, notwithstanding their deep differences and disagreements, act through the OPEC* to set and allocate production quotas of oil and gas in order to exploit at best the natural resources and controlling the barrels price.

Chart 3- World Oil and Gas Reserves



Source: OPEC website: www.opec.org/opec_web/en/data_graphs/330.htm, accessed 27/09/2011.

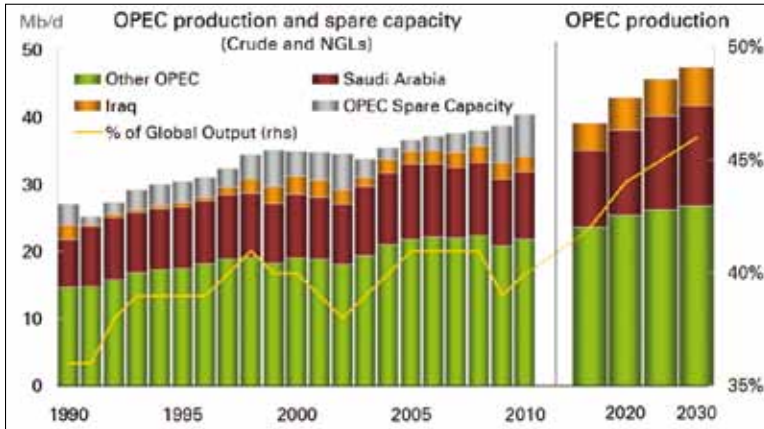
According to some projections the importance of OPEC is expected to grow, as its share of global production would increase from 40% in 2010 to 46% in 2030, partly utilizing the current spare capacity. However, in addition to natural gas growth, it is very likely that crude oil production capacity will increase greatly in Saudi Arabia and in Iraq. This country in particular appears to be the most influential in the future of energy market as it has huge potential but

its pace of production growth is still very difficult to predict. Looking at the service contracts awarded since mid-2009, Iraqi capacity could reach 12 Mb/d by 2020. However, political instability is still very high and infrastructural developments needed to exploit and to export oil and gas are constantly under serious threats. Key role of Iraq in the future energy market explains quite well foreign interferences in its domestic politics.

* OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is an international organization founded in Baghdad, Iraq, with the signing of an agreement in September 1960 by five countries namely Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. These countries were later joined by Qatar (1961), Indonesia (1962), Libya (1962), the United Arab Emirates (1967), Algeria (1969), Nigeria (1971), Ecuador (1973), Gabon (1975) and Angola (2007). From December 1992 until October 2007, Ecuador suspended its membership. Gabon terminated its membership in 1995. Indonesia suspended its membership effective January 2009. For further details < www.opec.org >



Chart 4- OPEC and Iraq Critical Role Will Increase



Source: British Petroleum, "BP Energy Outlook 2030 Booklet", 2011, page 23
 Available on-line www.bp.com/energyoutlook2030

From the following table it appears quite clearly that Middle East and Africa are not the main energy suppliers of Europe, that on the contrary relies enormously on Former Soviet Union countries especially for natural gas. While North America, apart from its relevant strategic reserves and the oil sands fields in Canada, imports crude oil from Middle East but the

greatest part of its supplies come from South America and West Africa. Nonetheless controlling or at least avoiding that enemies control the Middle East is still of global strategic relevance to influence the global energy market, setting its rules and contracts, and finally to determine the price of the barrel.

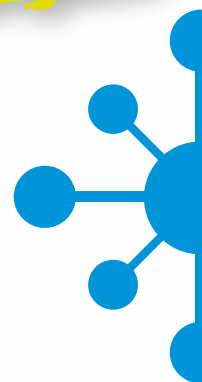


Table 3- World Crude Oil Exports by Destination, 2010 (1,000 b/d)

	Europe	North America	Asia and Pacific	Latin America	Africa	Middle East	Total World ¹
Middle East	2 074	1 901	12 188	92	456	648	17 371
Iran	764	-	1 734	-	18	-	2 619
Iraq	438	492	951	-	-	10	1 895
Kuwait	111	128	1 781	-	42	-	2 062
Qatar	28	14	867	-	-	-	909
Saudi Arabia	729	1 227	4 812	82	241	499	7 595
United Arab Emirates	4	40	2 043	10	55	139	2 291
North Africa	1 101	565	276	118	20	2	2 188
Algeria	274	517	144	87	-	1	1 023
Libya	827	48	132	31	20	1	1 165
West Africa	957	2 226	469	0	0	0	4 178
Angola	213	602	371	-	-	-	1 706
Nigeria	744	1 624	98	-	-	-	2 472
Latin America	97	950	253	864	1	0	2 679
Ecuador	-	175	21	170	-	-	367
Venezuela	97	775	232	694	1	-	2 312

Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin website
www.opec.org/library/Annual%20Statistical%20Bulletin/interactive/current/FileZ/Main.htm
 accessed 27/09/2011.



THE RENTIER STATE: DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE OIL “BONANZA”

The discovery of oil and gas fields is considered alternatively as a great blessing because it can bring prosperity and development, and at the same time as a great curse, dubbed as the “resource curse”, because it might bring about corruption, foreign interferences in domestic politics and even underdevelopment.

Oil and gas are the most strategic assets of the MENA region that make of it one of the key players in the global energy market now and, reasonably, for the next twenty years. At the same time, the abundance of energy sources, mainly fossil fuels that have been exploited since the aftermath of the World War II, has determined a specific political, social and economic system: the “rentier State”



The concept of the "rentier state" was first postulated by the Iranian economist Hossein Mahdavy with respect to pre-revolutionary Pahlavi Iran in 1970. The theory in its broadest sense defines rentier states as those countries that receive on a regular basis substantial amounts of external economic rent. According to the theory, further developed by the Egyptian economist Hazem Beblawi together with the Italian economist Giacomo Luciani in the '80s, these countries tend to become autonomous from their societies, unaccountable to their citizens, and autocratic. The theory is used to help explain why on economic level Iran, the Gulf States, many African states and other countries (e.g., Netherlands in the '60s) with abundant resource wealth perform less well than their resource-poor counterparts, and at the same time the extreme difficulty in reforming political systems of these countries.

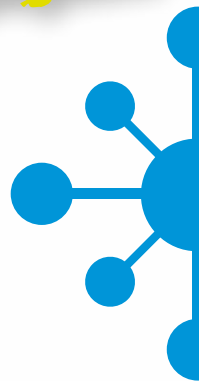
Beblawi delineates four characteristics of a rentier economy:

- 1- rent situations must predominate in that there really is no such thing as a pure rentier economy;**
- 2- the rent must come from outside the country;**
- 3- in a rentier state only the few are engaged in the generation of rent, while the majority is involved in its distribution and consumption. Translated, this means that government leaders make the deals and take in the revenue and then allocate to the public, which is not involved in creation of the wealth.**

4- the government must be the principal recipient of the external rent in the economy.

Rents do not derive exclusively from oil and gas export, but from any activity that does not require investment on the production sector like inflows of international aids, remittances, and to some extent even tourism. Therefore Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco economic and political systems function, to different extent, according to the rentier state model. These countries do actually benefit of important inflows of international aids because of their strategic relevance, and remittances as they dispose of human capital that mainly migrate in Western countries and in the Gulf region. More specifically remittances are increasingly becoming an important source of income for developing countries, quite resilient to crisis (Mohapatra, Ratha, & Silwal, 23/05/2011), that can promote economic growth. A great part of remittances for Arab countries is coming from oil exporting countries, which since the '70s have been attracting great flows of immigration.

At a regional level, attracting labour is the main regional consequence of oil and gas economies as human capital is largely the most traded goods in the region and oil money have not triggered regional integration and development. On the contrary, oil states have spent between the '74 – '84 most of their rents in internal investment projects, like infrastructure. While most of the surplus was held in short-term liquid assets in developed



countries, and only a smaller part of it was channelled toward development projects in poorer Arab countries, either directly or indirectly through development funds. During the '80s and '90s international aids decreased together with oil prices, nevertheless Saudi Arabia kept its international engagement in funding and assisting development projects and charities around the Muslim World, dedicating to this aim almost 2.4 billion dollars in 2003, about 1% of its GNI – Gross National Incomes.

On the contrary, at national level, it has been noticed by economists that governments of rentier states can embark on large public expenditure programmes without resorting to taxation, as all the incomes coming from the extraction and export of natural resources go straight to the public treasury. In such economies the State is the main source of incomes as there is almost no production, therefore economists speak of allocation state, rather than a production state. The difference between them is that a production state relies on taxation of the domestic economy for its income; by consequence taxpayers stay involved with government decisions because they are supporting them with onerous taxes. While, an allocation state does not depend on domestic sources of revenue, as it is the primary source of revenue itself in the domestic economy.

The primary goal of the allocation state's economy is therefore spending and buying its legitimacy.

Notwithstanding massive spending on government projects, such as dams and roads, without burdening the public debt, rentier states are not the most developed, on the contrary some of them seen the decline of their manufacturing sector; i.e. the so called "Dutch disease" *. This missing opportunity is explained partially by economic reasons, however some economists like Yates argues that rentier states have produced a "rentier mentality" that he explains as

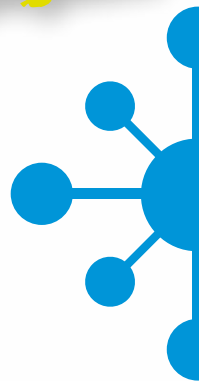
« Psychological condition with profound consequences for productivity: contracts are given as an expression of gratitude rather than as a reflection of economic rationale; civil servants see their principal duty as being available in their offices during working hours; businessmen abandon industry and enter into real-estate speculation or other special situations associated with a booming oil sector; the best and brightest abandon business and seek out lucrative government employment; manual labor and other work considered demeaning by the rentier is farmed out to foreign workers, whose remittances flood out of the rentier economy; and so on. In extreme cases income is derived simply from citizenship. » (Yates, p. 22)

* "In the 1960s, the Netherlands experienced a vast increase in its wealth after discovering large natural gas deposits in the North Sea. Unexpectedly, this ostensibly positive development had serious repercussions on important segments of the country's economy, as the Dutch guilder became stronger, making Dutch non-oil exports less competitive. This syndrome has come to be known as "Dutch disease." Although the disease is generally associated with a natural resource discovery, it can occur from any development that results in a large inflow of foreign currency, including a sharp surge in natural resource prices, foreign assistance, and foreign direct investment." (Ebrahim-zadeh, 2003).

Overcoming this political attitude is one of the most strategic challenges Arab states should take on to really develop their economies. To create the needed jobs for the new generations in a globalised labour market, Arab States should increase their competitiveness by improving the efficiency of their productive activities (from agriculture to industry and services). This means that they should not rely on external rents to live on, but to invest it in true development programmes.

Assuming that even Arab non-oil exporting countries have adopted the rentier State mentality and governance (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987) the following analysis published in the World Bank Development Report in 2004 explains one of the causes of the contagiousness of the Arab spring:

«A recurrent theme in the “rentier state” literature is that economic benefits and political liberalization are substitutes in the production of political support, at least in the short run. [...] Governments that restrict participation can maintain their legitimacy for only so long by providing public benefits. When forced to undertake substantial reforms however, these governments cannot maintain legitimacy unless they extend the political franchise to previously excluded segments of society. Economic crises undermine the authoritarian bargains struck between leaders and their supporters. More generally, poor economic performance diminishes the bargaining power of autocrats and increases the strength of the opposition.» (World Bank Development Report, 2004)

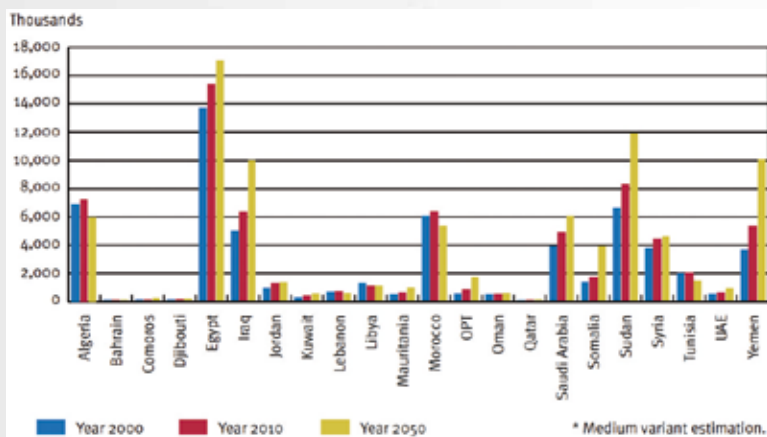


HUMAN CAPITAL IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Apart from oil and gas, and theoretically renewable energy sources, MENA region dispose of a great and largely underexploited resource: human capital. Human capital is the stock of knowledge, skills and competences gained through education and experience that enable people to

produce economic value. In MENA region human capital is mainly embodied by youth that represents already more than half of the active population. Unlocking the potential of youth has been pointed out as the key to sustain local development and, by consequence, to ensure human security.

Table 4- Projected Arab Population Aged 15-24 up to 2050*



Source: UNDP, Arab Human Development Report 2009, page 36.

Opportunities available to this huge part of Mediterranean societies are partially set by the rentier state system, as we have previously illustrated, and by the climate change. Actually, highly populated areas of the southern Mediterranean shore are the most vulnerable to natural disasters, which are more likely to happen in the next future because of the climate change aggravated by the unpreparedness of local governments to this global threat.

At the same time desertification process is reducing the availability of fresh water and, by consequence, it will make urban population increase, as well as international tensions about trans-boundaries rivers waters like the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates. This last issue was pointed out as the main reasons for the conflicts to come by the Secretary General of UN Ban Ki-Moon on 6 February 2008.





CLIMATE CHANGE: FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

Different methodologies have been applied to assess the impact of climate change on environment, and by consequence on economy and politics.

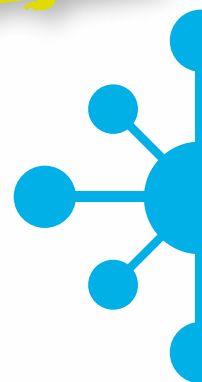
The Arab Human Development Report 2009 proposes a synthesis of different future scenarios.

Table 5- Climate Change Future Scenarios - water and agriculture

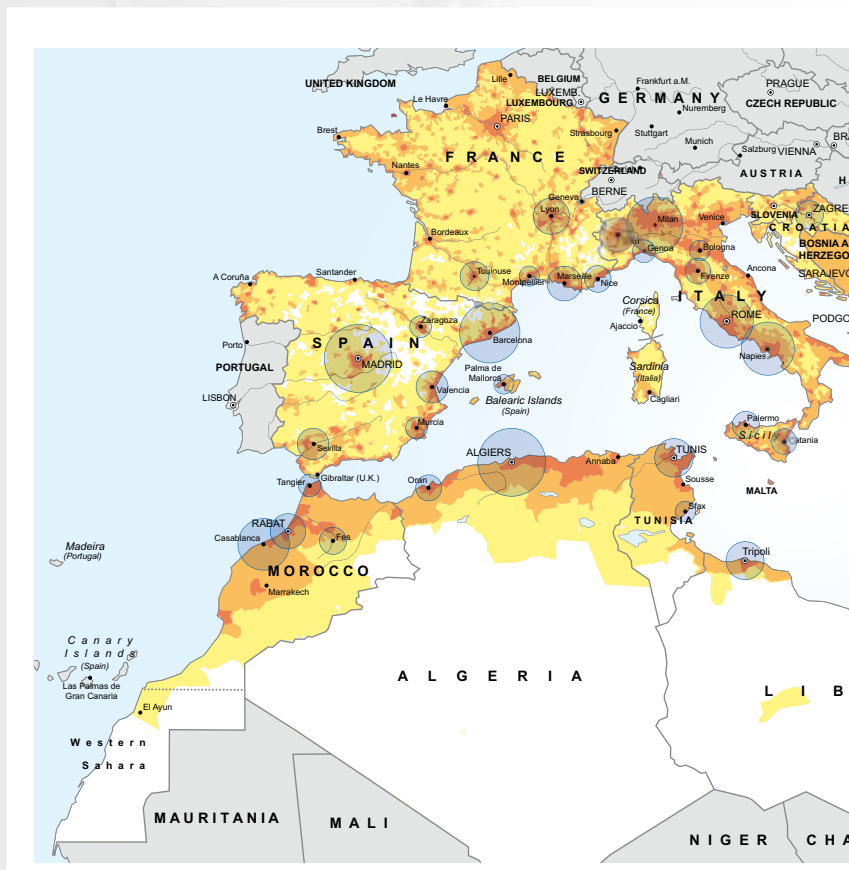
Scenario	Type of change	Effects on Human security	Affected area
Water	2°C rise in earth temperature	1 to 1.6 billion people affected by water shortages	Africa, the Middle East, Southern Europe, parts of South and Central America
	3°C rise in earth temperature	Increased water stress for additional 155 to 600 million people	North Africa
	Climate change	Repeated risk of drought known in recent years with economic and political effects	Mauritania, Sudan and Somalia
	Climate change	Reduced average rainfall	Egypt, Jordan, Jordan, and OPT*
	Rising sea level	Risk of flooding and threats to coastal cities	Gulf coast of Arabian peninsula
	Climate change	50% decline in renewable water availability	Syria
	1,2°C rise in earth temperature	Decreased water availability by 15%	Lebanon
	1°C rise in earth temperature	Reduced water runoff in Ouergha watershed by 10%	Morocco
	Climate change	Greater water shortages	Yemen
	Climate change	Reduced water flow by 40-60%	Nile river
Agriculture	3°C rise in earth temperature	Increased risks of coastal surges and flooding	Cairo
	2-3°C temperature rise in tropical regions	A drop by 25-35 % in crop production (with weak carbon enrichment) and by 20-15% (with strong carbon enrichment)	Africa and West Africa (Arab countries included)
	3°C rise in earth temperature	Reduced agricultural productivity and unsustainable crops	North Africa
	1.5°C rise in earth temperature	70% drop in yields of Sorghum	Sudan (Northern Kordofan)
Climate change	Flooding of 4,500 km ² of farmland and displacement of 6 million people	Lower Egypt	

* OPT – Occupied Palestinian Authority

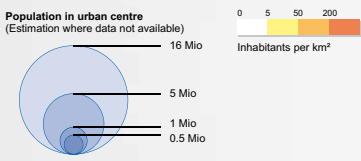
Source: UNDP, Arab Human Development Report 2009, page 48



Map 4- Population in the Mediterranean area



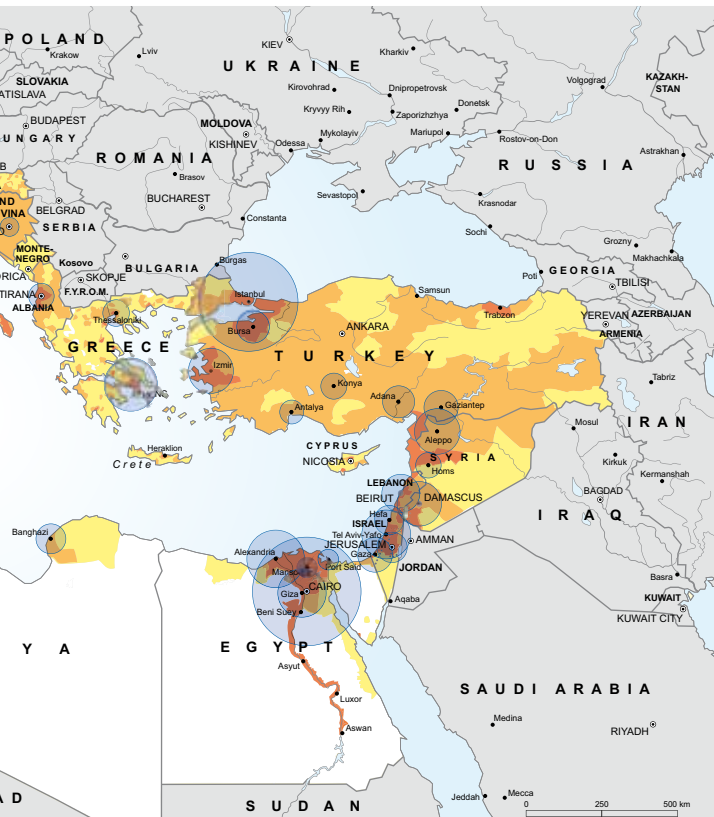
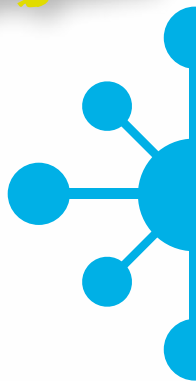
Environment and Security in the Mediterranean: Pop



Sources: Center for International Earth Science Inform
 Columbia University; World Gazetteer

Source : UNEP/GRID-Arendal Maps and Graphics Library 2009. Accessed 17/10/ 2011
<http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/population/>





Population

Population Network (CIESIN),



Water shortages, decreased agricultural productivity, drought and flooding will be the main consequences to which most of the local governments are completely unprepared, and notwithstanding several warnings climate change is still not taken into serious consideration notably by Arab (Tolba & Saab, 2009, p. X) and European policy makers. From a macroeconomic point of view, climate change will affect negatively the GDP (Jamet & Corfee-Morlot, 2009) and this means that countries will lose economic power; populations will be poorer and governments will hardly be able to guarantee food security, as it has already happened in the last few years in several MENA countries. Unless local governments implement major reforms and act internationally to implement adaptation policies to climate change the future scenario is preoccupying for the whole area, as it can fuel and exacerbate local and international conflicts.

As it was reported by journalistic accounts, the Syrian uprising began in the southern, drought-stricken Houran region in March with largely peaceful

protests. Actually in Syria, notwithstanding a marginal oil and gas production, the majority of the population is employed in the agricultural sector and relies on it for its livelihood. Five years of consecutive drought have deeply affected this sector and the lack of serious governmental response to this problem has contributed in exasperating the population.

Apart from this kind of extreme consequences, in the long-term climate change is accelerating the urbanization process as people flee the dried countryside. Towns are already in extreme conditions as the urban population is 57% of total population according to the World Bank, and the annual urban growth rate for Arab countries is between 2 and 3% according the Arab Human Development Report 2009, by consequence climate change might make towns more vulnerable to natural disasters and social tensions. On the international level it is very likely that climate change will either fuel or exacerbate international conflicts, and sustain migration and brain drain.



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Migration from southern Mediterranean countries is not a recent phenomenon. Since the aftermath of the World War II, internal conflicts, political repressions and unemployment have pushed people to leave their home countries in search for better life conditions. The oil boom of the

'70s has made of the Gulf countries an important pole of attraction for immigrants coming either from MENA countries and Asia. Qualified and unqualified young people especially from Egypt and the Levant have been massively migrating to the oil monarchies for decades now.

Table 6- Migration flows in MENA region

Emigration, 2010

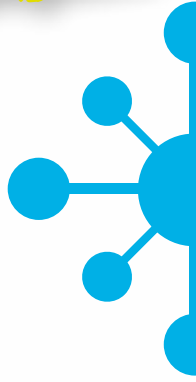
- Stock of emigrants: 18.1 million or 5.3 percent of population
- Top 10 emigration countries: the Arab Republic of Egypt, Morocco, West Bank and Gaza, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Algeria, the Republic of Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon
- Destinations: high-income OECD countries (40.2 percent), high-income non-OECD countries (23.2 percent), intra-regional (31.5 percent), other developing countries (1.2 percent), unidentified (4.0 percent)
- Top 10 migration corridors: West Bank and Gaza–the Syrian Arab Republic, the Arab Republic of Egypt–Saudi Arabia, Algeria–France, the Republic of Yemen–Saudi Arabia, West Bank and Gaza–Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt–Jordan, Morocco–France, Morocco–Spain, Morocco–Italy, the Arab Republic of Egypt–Libya

Skilled Emigration, 2000

- Emigration rate of tertiary-educated population (top 10 countries): Lebanon (38.6 percent), Morocco (17.0 percent), the Islamic Republic of Iran (14.5 percent), Tunisia (12.5 percent), Iraq (11.1 percent), Djibouti (11.0 percent), Algeria (9.4 percent), Jordan (7.2 percent), West Bank and Gaza (7.2 percent), the Syrian Arab Republic (6.1 percent)
- Emigration of physicians: 27,265 or 7.8 percent of physicians trained in the region

Immigration, 2010

- Stock of immigrants: 12.0 million or 3.5 percent of population (compared to 215.8 million or 3.2 percent for the world)
- Females as percentage of immigrants: 45.7 percent (compared to 48.4 percent for the world)
- Refugees as percentage of immigrants: 65.3 percent (compared to 7.6 percent for the world)
- Top 10 immigration countries: Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, Libya, the Republic of Yemen, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Algeria, Djibouti



Beyond their economic and political impact, migration and remittances have deeply influenced Arabic and Islamic culture and lifestyles. Actually migrants do not send back home only money, but also models and ideas that prevail in hosting countries. "In particular, emigration would have fostered education, i.e. the single most important determinant of the demographic transition, among non-migrant populations in migrants' regions of origin" (Fargues, 2006). Some recent researches have shown how Egyptian or Sudanese migrants in Saudi Arabia after years of being exposed to Salafi interpretation of Islam have changed their way of living their religion. While, as far as Moroccan immigrants in Europe are concerned some studies have demonstrated that they have contributed in decreasing the birth rate of their home countries.

"Like most of the LDCs [least developed countries], MENA countries sold their goods to, purchased their imports from, and admitted capital from the developed countries of the West, not from each other – the so-called "hub-and-spoke" system. Flows of labor, rather than goods and capital, remain the principal mode of regional economic integration" (Richards & Waterbury, 2008, p. 385).

According to this analysis human capital is the most traded goods between MENA countries. There is no agreement about the impact of migration on sending and receiving

countries, however local governments of emigration countries hesitate between implementing policies to reduce brain drain and welcoming emigration as a partial solution to unemployment and as an incredible source of foreign currencies. Everybody agree that emigration has been a safety valve for sending countries' labour market by providing jobs for the unemployed, especially university graduates. However it has contributed heavily in generating labour shortages and even blocking local development, as local employers, particularly public service, do not have the necessary economic resources to pay internationally competitive salaries. The overall economic impact of emigration on sending countries is positive according to Richards and Waterbury as it "lowers unemployment, raises wages and reduces poverty" (Richards & Waterbury, 2008, p. 397)

Even though oil and gas economies have not significantly invested in development programmes in poorer Arab countries, they have nevertheless influenced enormously in other countries economies via remittances, i.e. money send back home by emigrants. As it is shown in the table 7 remittances flows have grown of importance in the last 15 years and they currently represent one of the most substantial source of income for a great number of families, as well as one of the main sources of foreign currencies for local governments.

Table 7- Remittances in MENA Region

US\$ billions	1995	2000	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Inward									
Remittance flows	13,3	13,1	23,2	25,1	26,5	32,1	35,9	33,7 a	35,4
All developing countries	55,2	81,3	159,3	192,1	226,7	278,5	324,8	307,1	325,5
Outward									
Remittance flows	0,7	0,8	5,7	5,6	6,1	5,1	6,7	8,1 b	-
All developing countries	10,4	9,5	28,5	33,0	41,0	52,7	67,3	58,7	-

Note: This table reports officially recorded remittances. The true size of remittances, including unrecorded flows through formal and informal channels, is believed to be larger.

a. 3.1% of GDP in 2009.

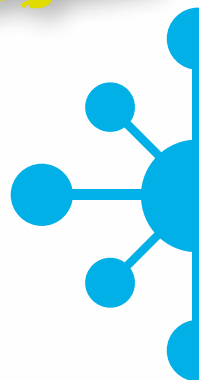
b. 0.6% of GDP in 2009.

Source: (The World Bank, 2011, p. 29-30)

Always according to data collected by the World Bank (The World Bank, 2011) the top 10 remittance recipients MENA countries in 2009 (percentage of GDP) were: Lebanon (22.4 percent), Jordan (15.6 percent), Morocco (6.6 percent), Tunisia (5.3 percent), the Republic of Yemen (5.2 percent), the Arab Republic of Egypt (4.0 percent), Djibouti (2.7 percent), Syrian Arab Republic (2.4 percent), Algeria (1.4 percent), the Islamic Republic of Iran (0.3 percent).

Critics of the macroeconomic effects of remittances argue that they contribute to increase inflation, as they are spent on consumption rather than on

productive activities, and on imports rather than domestic production. On the other hand there are evidences that show some positive effects especially on human capital: actually part of the this money has been spent on safer and healthier houses, or in girls' education (Richards & Waterbury, 2008, p. 400). Only a smaller part of this inflow of money has been invested into productive activities and with relatively poor results. Actually, many International Organizations, NGOs and analysts consider that channelling this external source of income to promote economic development is the biggest challenge policymakers should take on.



CONCLUSIONS

Working on international cooperation programmes means also transforming geopolitical issues that might fuel conflicts into opportunity for mutual development. Therefore a deeper understanding of international crises it is not simply suitable but it is the preliminary condition for an effective action, as it makes easier to assess risks pertaining every international, that are also intercultural, action, as well as defining needs.

The main aim of this essay is to make accessible to a wider public primary data sources and high level analysis, while showing that geopolitics might be a useful tool to represent and interpret current events. Journalistic accounts are used here as a precious source of information as they help readers in understanding events and stimulating further research.

The whole essay is focused on MENA region youth as the Arab uprisings and the consequent wave of protests in Europe have undeniably proved that horizontal links between North and South are stronger than ever; and that youth is one the main socio-political actor; too often neglected by policy makers and analysts. To understand some of the reasons of the recent uprisings and the opportunities

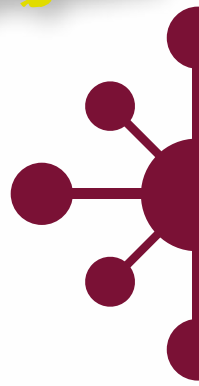
available to youth some key concepts have been introduced as human security, rentier state, climate change and finally human capital.

From the analysis of recent events and future perspectives we can it emerges quite clearly that: firstly, youth, especially in MENA region, is the most strategic actor in the area, therefore investing in youth should be at the core of domestic policies as well as of international cooperation programmes; secondly, the biggest challenge policy makers should take on is to exploit at best the human capital available in the Euro-Mediterranean region, as this is one of the solutions of the on-going global financial and economic crisis; thirdly, the impact of energy sector and climate change should on economy and political system should not be neglected as these two factors are heavily contributing in determining opportunities and set of choices available to youth and policy makers; and finally, keeping a wide scope in interpreting current events is more and more advisable as new threats to security are emerging and globalization is reinforcing horizontal links between faraway people and events.

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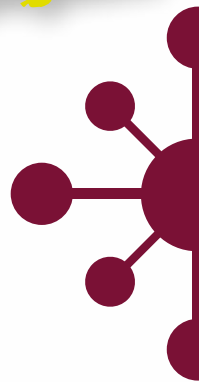
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Working on international cooperation programmes means also transforming geopolitical issues that might fuel conflicts into opportunity for mutual development. Therefore a deeper understanding of international crises is not simply suitable but it is the preliminary condition for an effective action, as it makes easier to assess risks pertaining every international, that are also intercultural, action, as well as defining needs.

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