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An Integrated Approach to the Security in The MENA Region

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Abstract

This paper addresses the instabilities and insecurities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, suggesting that the high number of interstate and intrastate conflicts since the end of World War 2 reflects a misconception of security by many of the states in the region, which led to ineffective security policies and strategies. Thus, the paper asserts that it is required to revisit the identification and prioritization of the political, economic, environmental, and social causes of these insecurities and instabilities as well as the international pressures, and regional interstate competitions. In doing so, the paper emphasizes on the root causes of the insecurities related to popular needs and human security, arguing that failing to meet these needs would undermine national security overtime as much as conventional external security threats. As such, the paper presents a comprehensive concept of security, and proposes an proposing an integrated, multi dimension approach to state and regional security with human security in its core.

Keywords

Integrated Approach, Security, MENA Region

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1. Introduction

The Middle East and North Africa has long been one of the most unstable regions in the world. Since World War 2, it remained at the heart of global security concerns. Every decade since the end of the Second World War has seen at least one interstate conflict (2 conflicts in the 1990s); it has also witnessed 25 types of intrastate war (on average, 2 per decade), including insurgencies, civil wars and protracted terrorism campaigns. Some of these conflicts are chronic, lasting for decades, like the Arab-Israel conflict, and other intrastate ethnic conflicts. In this timeframe, 2.3 million of its citizens have died as a result of political violence – 40% of the global total of battle-related deaths, although the region accounts for a mere 5% of the world's population⁽¹⁾. With the central location of this region between the three old continents, its proximity to Europe, and its huge oil resources, its conflicts and instabilities influences the globe directly and indirectly as evinced by the rise (and fall) of **ISIS** in Syria and Iraq, and the huge numbers of migrants from Mediterranean countries to Europe. This large number of inter and intrastate conflicts invite us to revise our concept of security and accordingly our approach to achieve it.

This instability is the result of a wide variety of political, economic, environmental, and social factors which are: internal within the states of the region, regional between the states of the region, and international from outside the region. Most observers, analysts, and practitioners agree on these factors being the causes of the instabilities in the region, but they differ in weighing their effects on security, and accordingly they differ in prioritizing when it comes to planning. The prioritization is the basis of setting effective security policies and strategies. What is considered as a low priority risk to security is often ill resourced in the nation security strategy. Thus, errors in prioritization

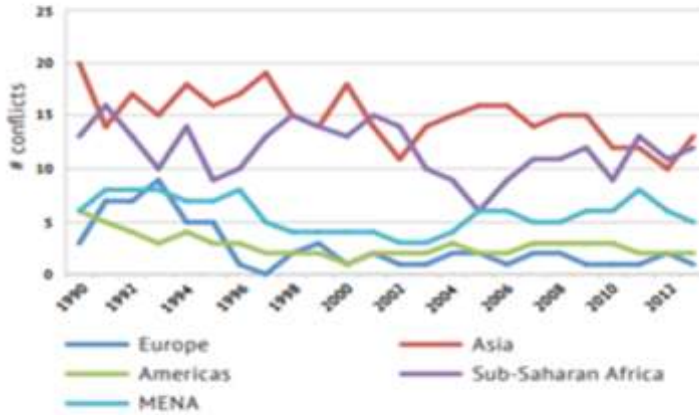
can lead not only to ineffective security policies, but also to unproductive security policies that produce other insecurities.

In this paper the stability and security in the MENA region is revisited with the aim of proposing an integrated, multi dimension approach to state and regional security with human security in its core. Section 2 addresses the causes and drives of instability in the region. To stress the importance of human security, we have classified the causes of instability to two main groups: conventional causes of insecurity and “civil” drives to state instability. The latter highlights issues related to human security including among others, quality of governance, distribution of wealth, political inclusion, basic services, and basic human rights. Section 3 proposes an “Integrated Approach to Security” which is multidimensional, integrating human security, economic development with state security while seeking to achieve regional security. In this section we present the challenges of implementing such approach, the principle that guide planning with in the approach, and the national and regional aspects of the approach.

2. MENA Region: Causes and Drives of instability

Since World War 2, the MENA region has been one of the most unstable regions in the world. During the period 1990-2012, it has been one of three regions experiencing the highest number of conflicts and battle deaths in the world [See **fig (1)** below].⁽²⁾ The aftermath of the Arab spring was a wider breakdown of regional order and dramatic intensification of violence in the region. [See **fig(2)** below]. Deaths due to political violence constitute 40% of global total of battle-related deaths, although the region accounts for a mere 5% of the world’s population⁽³⁾.

Figure 1: Global trends in intrastate armed conflicts by region, 1990-2013¹⁰¹



Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset V.4-2014a.

Fig. (1)

Global trends in interstate armed conflicts by region 1990-2012

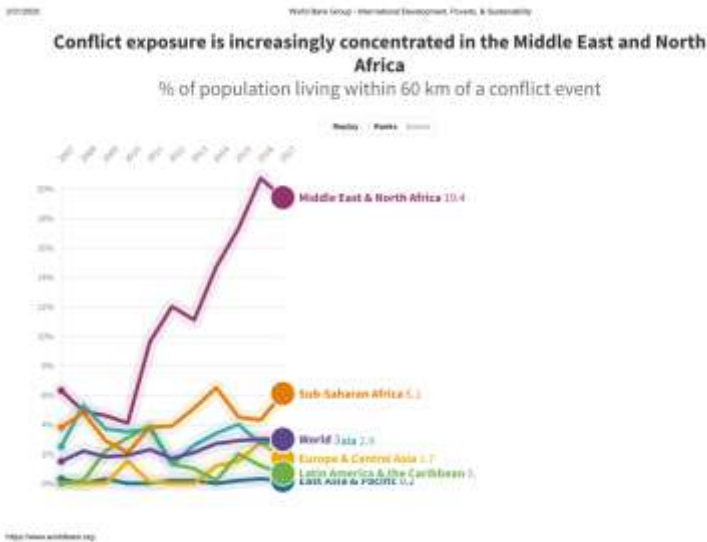


Fig (2) Conflict exposure by region 2007-2017

A second outcome of these insecurities and instabilities is a huge number of refugees mounting to more than 10 million refugees out of 25 million refugees worldwide ⁽⁴⁾. This again constitutes more than 42% of global total of refugees from a region that counts for a mere 5% of the world population. The large number of refugees was considered as a threat to national security of recipient countries in EU ⁽⁵⁾.

Instabilities in the region come from conventional causes of insecurity and “civil” drives to state instability.

2.1. Conventional Causes of Insecurity

Conventional causes of insecurity include internal conflicts, terrorism, Counterproductive security policies, environmental pressures, International Interventions, regional competitions.

2.1.1. Internal conflicts

Many regional countries experienced internal conflicts. Some of them evolved into protracted violent conflicts like The Kurds rebellion in Iraq ⁽¹⁵⁾, the Lebanon’s civil war ⁽¹⁶⁾, South Sudan and Darfur rebellions in Sudan, and the ongoing civil wars in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. In other countries there are tensions that can evolve into conflicts if no proper policies are placed to address the root causes. In many cases, internal conflict in one state threatens the security of other parts in the region.

2.1.2. Terrorism

Terrorist groups like AlQaida and ISIS, are threat to all international community. But most of their damage is in the MENA. More than 90 percent of all battle deaths in civil wars in the last five years have been in places where

a **terrorist** group is one of the principal actors in the fight. It is unfortunate and disastrous that instead of cooperating against terrorist groups, interested actors get involved via proxies, which amplifies the dynamics of violence. That happened in Iraq, and it is happening in Syria and Libya and Yemen.

2.1.3. Counter productive security policies\ Military Expenditures

Scholars and analysts noted that high military expenditure may have contributed to the instability, violent conflict and human rights violations in the region.^{(23), (24)} It is ironic that Arms imports to the MENA region increased by 86 per cent between 2007–11 and 2012–16, the years just before the Arab Spring protests toppled 4 regimes and shocked the whole regional order.

Military expenditure as a share of gross domestic (military burden) is particularly high in the region accounting for 29 per cent of global arms imports in 2012–16⁽²⁴⁾. **Fig (7)** below shows that eight of the ten top countries in the world by military expenditures percent of GDP are Arab countries⁽²⁶⁾.

Perception of threats priorities and allocation of resources to deal with them should be revised. Insufficient spending on popular needs and failure to meet their expectations undermines national security overtime as much as conventional external security threats. **Fig (8)** shows GDP, population, and military spending of the largest economies on the MENA region⁽²⁵⁾. **Fig (9)** shows military expenditure by the 5 largest spenders in the MENA region during 2007-2012⁽²⁴⁾

Top 10 countries Military expenditures percent of GDP

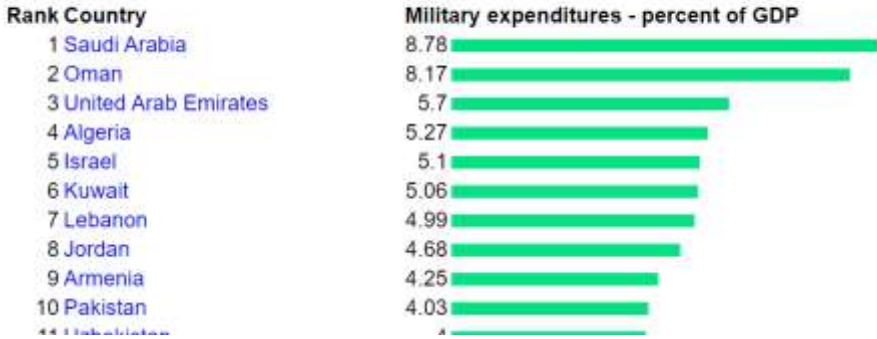


Fig (7)

GDP, MILITARY SPENDING, AND POPULATIONS OF THE LARGEST ECONOMIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

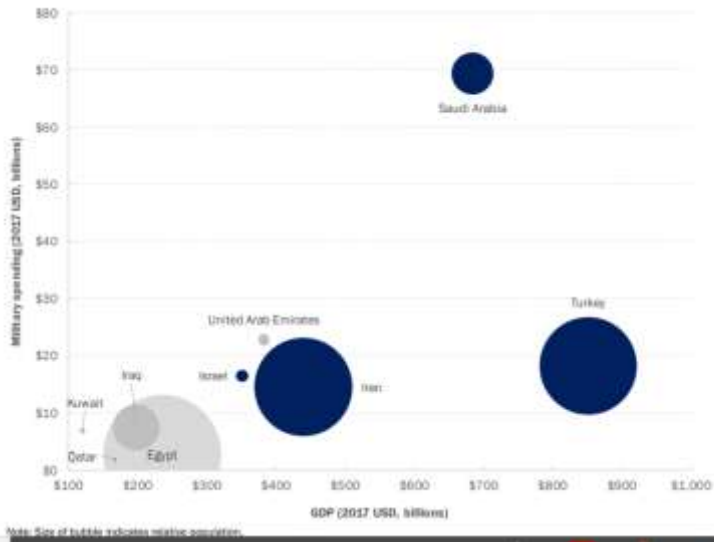


Fig (8)

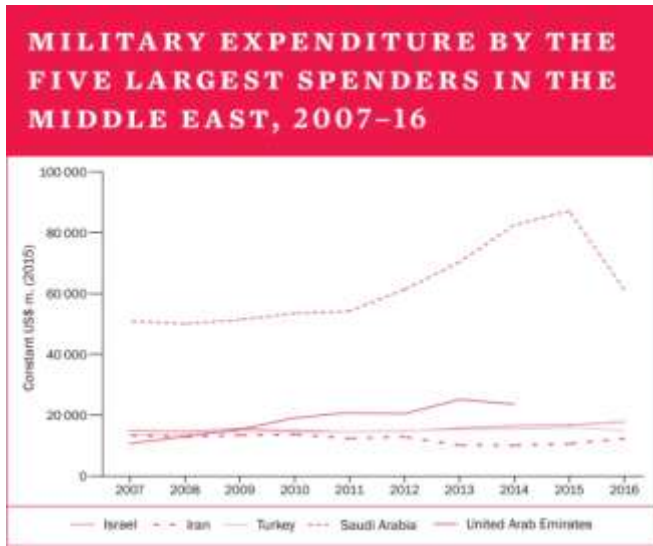


Fig (9)

2.1.4. Environmental Pressures

Climate change and environment deterioration do not recognize borders.

The region is faced with the most severe water shortage of any region in the world. While it is home to 6.3 percent of the world’s population, MENA holds only 1.4 percent of the world’s accessible fresh water. The projections of the dryness in 2040 of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where its basin extends in four densely populated countries supporting agriculture and life to tens of millions, is an alarm of regional historic disaster and international security threat.

2.1.5. International Interventions

The MENA region was shaped by the victorious super powers of WW1. The Sykes-Picot Agreement ⁽⁶⁾ divided the Arab land under British and French control and spheres of influence. It set the framework for the borders of the

Arab states founded later. Since that time, its stability was influenced to a great extent by the interests, competitions and insecurities of super powers.⁽⁷⁾

During the cold war, superpowers rivalry in the region was destabilizing. For example, US **supported its authoritarian local allies** (such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt) **to achieve its interests not minding** human rights and democratic aspirations in the region. Neither this policy helped to serve the credibility of US as a promoter of human rights and democratic values. Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger justified this policy “Support for moderate Arab monarchs and secular dictatorships was part of a successful Cold War strategy It helped secure the sea lines of communication between the oil-rich Middle East and the West, on which the wellbeing of Americans depended”⁽⁸⁾.

The post-Cold War era witnessed direct interventions that erupted the regional stability to an extent which cannot be fully understood yet. The invasion of Iraq, military intervention in Libya, and intervention in the Syrian war are examples. Non-military examples of intervention are the sanctions against Iraq in the 1990’s and the ongoing sanctions against Iran which gave rise to food insecurity and human insecurity, whose implications on stability needs more study.

The support of US to the rulers of Bahrain and to the Saudi military intervention against the protesters who demanded political reforms during the Arab Spring was based on US concerns because Bahrain hosts the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet and the naval elements of Central Command⁽⁹⁾. Another example of US destabilizing policies is its cooperation with Saudi Arabia in creating military forces to confront Iran. As Antony Cordson puts it: “The Gulf will not be a stable region for the foreseeable future, but it remains a vital American national security interest, and this means the US has even more

motive to cooperate with Saudi Arabia in maintaining a mixture of military and national security capabilities ..”⁽¹⁰⁾

Regional and superpowers intervention in Syrian protests led to the ongoing civil war with huge humanitarian and refugee crisis.

2.1.6. Regional Competitions

During the recent decades several events changed the geopolitics of the MENA region: The occupation of Iraq, revolutions, civil wars, U.S. war fatigue, the shale energy revolution, and the return of great power competition. A new geopolitical structure is evolving. These events caused: firstly, the outset of major players in the Arab world Iraq, Egypt and Syria creating a vacuum of leadership in the region. Secondly, the decrease of the role of Gulf oil in US decisions making, and the re-entering of Russia to the region. Thirdly, the emergence of competing regional actors on leadership of the region: Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and to some extent Qatar and UAE. The main foreign superpowers in the region now are US and Russia.⁽¹¹⁾

Iran resurged as a regional power after toppling Saddam regime in Iraq in 2003 and the failure of US to realize its objectives in that campaign. Iran sees it's self as a regional power seeking to extend her influence wherever possible. Her strategic vision is also shaped by ideology where Iranian leadership see themselves as exporter of Islamic revolution and leader of Islamic World. Countering Israel is deeply rooted in Iran's strategic thinking for ideological and strategic reasons. It also serves to rally the Arab street and embarrass the Arab governments. Iran strategic objectives is seen by Israel, and many Arab regimes - more so the Gulf- states as threat to their security. The US sees Iran as a competitor and destabilizer in the region.

Turkey, under President Erdoğan is looking much more toward the Middle East than it did before. His strategy in the region is not very clear though. The aspiration that Turkey be a leader in the Islamic world, if not the leader, possibly through solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood had provoked Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt.

Saudi Arabia is having more aspirations for regional leadership in the recent years than it has ever had. Saudi grand strategy is based on countering three threats. Firstly, Iran, Saudi's principal rival in the region. Secondly, countering revolutions or movements in the region that are toward democratic political reforms, which may threaten the stability of their absolute monarchy political system. Thirdly, is countering terrorist groups like al-Qaida and ISIS, which target Saudi Arabia.

The UAE strategic objectives are counter-revolution, counter-Muslim Brotherhood, protection of the Emirati government system, and crucially, stability in Saudi Arabia.

Israel view itself as in a better strategic position that it ever had been before. It has strengthened its power, while potential adversary Arab states have been weakened. On the political front, it has succeeded in building a clandestine alliance with some of the Gulf States against Iran. Its main strategic objectives is to counter Iran, its allies, and its influence in the region, countering Hezbollah, Hamas, and other Palestinian armed organizations, and encouraging further divides and splits in Arab states. Recently, Israel began to project its military power outside its classical sphere of interest.

The **US** has a lack of will to commit forces to the region because of its failure in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, the shale oil revolution made the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf area at reasonable prices no longer a vital strategic interest to the United States (although it remains an interest).

Russia seeks to have good relations with all states of the region, test and show their military might, disturbing US efforts to have more control in the region, and filling any vacuum or space the US leaves. ⁽¹¹⁾

Complicated Struggles: The emergence of new players in the region, with little or no experience in leadership and having different and sometimes conflicting interests, caused a number of different and complicated confrontations in the region.

These confrontations have two characteristics. Firstly, the alignments associated with them are not rigid and vary with time. Secondly, the players avoid direct military confrontation; rather they fight indirectly through allies and proxies.

Iran and Saudi: Each of Saudi Arabia and Iran view itself as the rightful leaders of the Muslim world. After the Arab Spring, the rivalry between the two powers has developed into a confrontation across the Middle East, from the Palestinian territories to Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and even Afghanistan.

In **Bahrain** the Saudi and Gulf states intervened directly against the Bahraini protesters. The intervention was motivated by a mix of causes: the perception that Bahrainis Shia are affiliated with Iran, a stance against democratic claims, and an anti-Shia attitude rooted in the Wahhabi Sect. In **Yemen**, Saudi succeeded in mounting an alliance to stop the Hothi rebellion, but the alliance crumbled and now it is more like a Saudi war against a Althothi's supported by Iran.

Syria is much more complicated where conventional political wisdom did not hold: friend of my enemy becomes my friend, and enemy of my enemy is also my enemy. US, Turkey, Saudi, UAE, Qatar, support anti Syrian regime armed groups. Russia and Iran support the regime. All mentioned states fight Al Qaida and ISIS, but support armed groups who cooperate with AL Qaida

and ISIS. US supports Kurds, while its ally Turkey fights Kurds. US targets ISIS, while Israel targets armed groups –affiliated with Iran- who fights ISIS.

Iran and Turkey: Turkey and Iran have a history of being competitors in the region. The resurrection of Iran as a regional power, the shift of turkey strategic interests toward its south, and opportunity to exploit the emerging new order (post the Arab spring) in the ME to their respective interests, have intensified the competition between the two countries. Yet the two countries share certain economic and security interests that prevent their relations from deteriorating badly ⁽¹²⁾. Turkey has dependency on Iranian energy, especially natural gas. Also Turkey does not want to take actions that could push Tehran to support the PKK. After the Arab Spring, they repositioned themselves as popular protest champions ⁽¹³⁾. Their competition in Iraq is clear. In the Syrian civil war they intervened on opposite sides. However, both parties showed that they are willing to contain their competition as seen in the Astana process.

Israel, Turkey, Iran: Since 1967, with a few exceptions, Israel has mainly retained dominance over its frontline neighbors, attempting not to meddle in affairs of more far-flung states. Netanyahu's is pursuing new aggressive interventionist policy. Israel is threatening Iran with attack. It did carry out attacks on Iraq. Israel plan for placement of an Israeli air base on Crete Island, to protect the new Israeli-Cypriot-Greece joint gas project, which is disputed by Turkey, may be perceived by Turkey as an invasion of its sphere of influence, which can only bring a confrontation at some point. ⁽¹⁴⁾

2.2. Civil drives to state instability.

Failure to meet popular expectations and needs undermines national security overtime as much as conventional external security threats. The Arab Spring up rises in 2011, brought down 4 regimes, and gave rise to civil wars in 3 countries. Later, protests in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Algeria, and Sudan caused regime changes in Sudan and Algeria, and government changes in Lebanon and Iraq at the expense of huge economic losses and human lives. The events highlighted the fragility of the MENA states, and the challenges to their stability and the internal human security. The revolutions were the result of deep-seated political and economic grievances that resulted in the absence of economic prosperity or the hope of advancement paired with the despair from the political elites to do reforms. Even the states which survived the Arab spring have structural challenges that will only emerge over time, and threaten their stability if no meaningful reforms take place that meet the needs of people.⁽¹⁰⁾ In this paper we address the causes of these grievances as “Civil drives to Instability”, which are *Poor Governance, Economic Pressures, Political Inflexibility, Demographic and Social Pressures, and Ideological Issues*.

2.2.1. Governance

The lack of good governance ranges from corruption to severely repressive regimes. Stability and security require effective governance that makes development possible to provide the benefits that improve the lives of people. Popular dissatisfaction with governance comes from: *Unemployment, Favoritism and Corruption, discrimination by group, and lack of Rule of Law*.

Unemployment The region has one of the world’s highest unemployment rate – 14.4 percent versus a world average of 6.3 percent. **Figure(3)** below shows high unemployment rates in Arab countries compared to that in the

world.⁽¹⁷⁾ The Arab spring began with protests that erupted in the Tunis, Egypt centering on unemployment and rising food and fuel prices . Similar demands were the core of other protests in the region. The ongoing protests in Iraq that began in 2019 started in Basra province with unemployment and basic services in the core of protesters demands. It began in Baghdad by a demonstration of post graduates of high education demanding employment. In Arab countries, where the public sector is the main job provider, unemployment becomes an important source of political stability when it is compounded by the perceptions of **favoritism and corruption** in government activities.



Fig (3)

Discrimination by group is another important source of instability. Even if the real causes of inequities have existed throughout history, warring people and nations, fighting over power and resources, the perception of the group would be that their suffering is due to religious or ethnic prejudice.

Failure to achieve rule of Law and poor conduct of security forces is another important source of instability. In Iraq 2013 protests, one of the major grievances of the protesters was the quality of justice system and security forces conduct. At that time terrorist groups were based in Sunni populated areas. Security measures were applied clumsily and in corrupt ways serving the local security forces leader's interests. When terrorist attacks happen, security forces make large number of arrests, the majority of which were based on intelligence with little or no forensic evidence and leads. Judicial processing of these cases takes a long time: several months and occasionally more than one year. Bribes took place to accelerate the process or even to manipulate it. Those practices were perceived as sectarian policies and lead to unrest and sympathy with terrorists.

2.2.2. Economic Pressures

Although there are big differences between MENA region states in their ratio of GDP to population, there are common alarming indicators. For example the GDP growth has fallen far short of the percentages normally needed to keep pace with high levels of population growth in the region. Opinion polls and interviews with protesters has shown that the key to popular unrest in most countries is not at the extremes of income and services, but the failure to meet the expectations and to provide decent life of a much wider range of the population such as housings and utilities. These problems are amplified by a mixture of massive population growth and social change coupled by broad perceptions that narrow elite is benefitting at the expense of other groups ⁽¹⁸⁾.

Oil producing states are not immune from instability. Revenues generated from exporting Oil is not bringing stability to many exporting states because neither do the broad population feel that it is distributed fairly, nor it had led to a sustained development. There are serious gaps between "haves" and "have not". Moreover, in key exporting states, the populations size makes the oil wealth limited in terms of per capita [as shown in **table(1)** below]⁽¹⁹⁾

1	Qatar	1,240.04 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
2	Kuwait	1,042.88 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
4	United Arab Emirates	663.37 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
7	Saudi Arabia	371.36 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
8	Libya	305.62 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
	Middle Eastern and North Africa average	260.77 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
9	Oman	222.88 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
18	Iraq	76.15 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
21	Bahrain	68.6 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
23	Algeria	65.19 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007
24	Iran	61.67 bbl/day per 1,000 peopl	2007

Table (1) Oil wealth per Capita by country

Pasted from <<https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Energy/Oil/Production/Per-capita>>

Moreover, the economies of many states in the region are not resilient enough to withstand a shock. For example the financial crisis of 2008

hit hard the states of the region. Countries like Jordan, Egypt, and Tunis among others reduced subsidies on commodities leading to price increase which was a key source of unrest.

2.2.3. Political Inflexibility

A rigid and/or repressive regime is the first challenge to security and stability as shown by the transformation of protests into armed insurgency in Libya and Syria. But democracy and freedom of expression are only one set of issues. More critical is a combination of an electoral system that fails to provide a political alternative, while the political system suffers from elitism, corruption, concentration of wealth, and failure of government services as demonstrated by the 2019-2020 protests in the more democratic states of Iraq and Lebanon. [See **fig (4)** below]

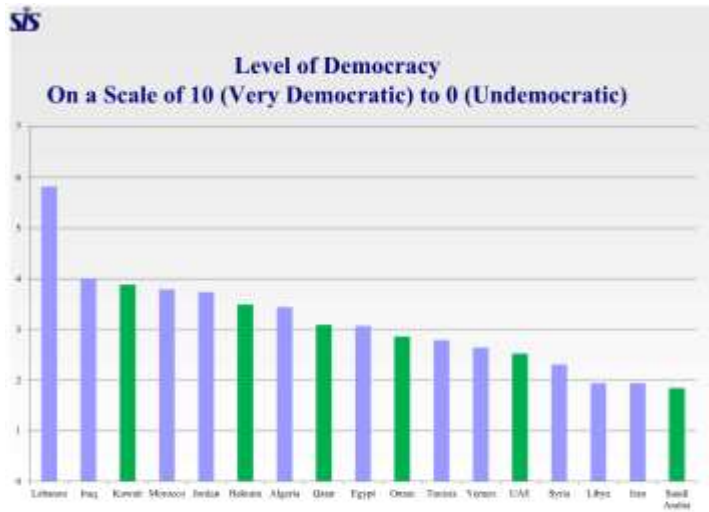


Fig (4)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit, "Democracy Index 2019"

2.2.4. Demographic and social pressures

The MENA region has a massive population growth -the highest of any region in the world over the past century-. The total population of the region increased from around 100 million in 1950 to around 380 million in 2000. **Fig (5)** below shows the ratio of population size in 2000 to population size in 1950 for different regions in the world. ⁽²¹⁾

Ratio of population size in 2000 to population size in 1950

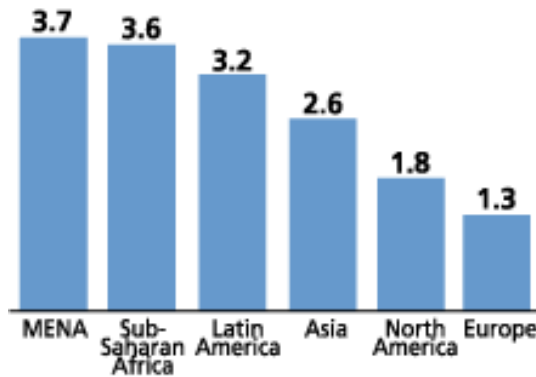


Fig (5)

Working age population growth is more rapid. UN reports show for example that in 1996 the ratio of youth who enter the labor market to those who retire is about 5 to 1. **Fig (6)** shows the age to population distribution in Jordan and Saudi in 1996 which illustrates the very high number of young people entering the market in comparison to those closing retirement age. ⁽²²⁾

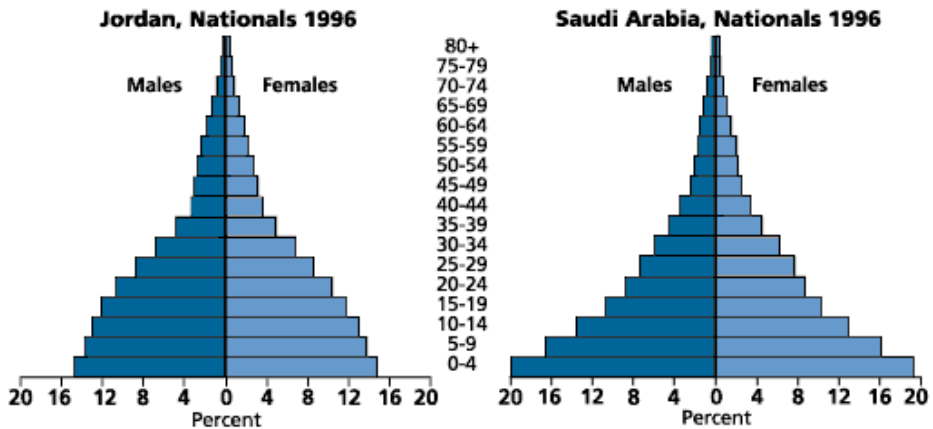


Fig (6)

With the increase in population, slower development and fewer services in rural areas, decrease in water for agriculture, many of the region states witness **hyper urbanization**. Urbanization creates a massive enclave of urban poor with inadequate government services. With such a density, popular communication and unrest can take on a very different character.

2.2.5. Ideological Issues

Ideology is an important element in the radicalization process⁽³¹⁾. The rise of terrorism in the last decades urges the governments to address the issues of secularism, religion, justice, and other ideological issues socially and in their education systems.

3. An Integrated Approach to Security

3.1. The Need for an Integrated Approach to Security

The very high arms import in the MENA region, the high number of armed conflicts, in addition to the states fragility that the Arab Spring starkly

unveiled, invite us to revisit our strategic thinking and rethink our approaches to state and regional security.

Typically, national security in the states of the region is centered on the security of state from internal and external threats. The preferred means to achieve security is the hard security apparatus, often the military. Furthermore, in most countries, the primary function of the military is to protect the state from internal rather than external enemies.⁽²⁷⁾ The dilemma here is that on the one hand, the large resources allocated to the hard security apparatus deny development efforts from valuable resources leading to internal instability in the long term, on the other hand, military expenditure in one state may be perceived as a threat by other states thus starting a cycle of militarization. This logic led a number of security practitioners and scholars to call for the need to open up the concept of security. Some of them have proposed the concept of human security as an alternative. Human security is a concept that acknowledges the inherent linkages between economic and social development, respect for human rights, and peace. It prioritizes non-military mechanisms as a means of achieving security. It recognizes that peace and social justice will not be realized unless people are protected from threats to their rights and basic needs.⁽²⁸⁾

However, the concept of human security is contested. Critics of the concept argue that its vagueness undermines its effectiveness,⁽²⁹⁾ and that it does not help the decision makers to formulate good policies. Another debate is its suitability in situations of acute crises. For example, in Iraq during the height of terrorism in 2005-2008, activists promoting human security concept focused on solutions to root causes of violence and terrorism such as poverty and education. Those proposals seemed to be impractical, when the terrorist groups targeted the lives of the public servants who were providing the government

services. For example, in 2005-2006, the daily number of attacks on electric power distribution network exceeded the government capacity to repair them. Hard security and justice measures are essential to protect the lives and properties of the people, and to set an environment where the government can provide the services and needs of the people. Yet, an excessive reliance on hard security means can be counterproductive especially if security and justice services were incompetent and/or corrupted. One of the principle grievances of the protesters in 2013 in Iraq comes from the conduct of the security and justice apparatus.

It is thus a must to re-engineer security. National security is important, but the strategy to achieve it must be multidimensional, integrating human security, economic development with state security. Until we place welfare of the individual and human rights in the core of the security strategy, we will not have security.

3.2. The challenge of implementation

Achieving human security requires long term structural reforms, while in most MENA states, there are severe public dissatisfactions with poor governance and economic pressures compounded by demographic, and environmental pressures mentioned in the previous section. There are no short-term structural solutions. No change in government, or existing patterns of governance, can produce enough major changes in government services and the economy quickly enough to meet popular expectations.⁽¹⁸⁾ Thus, reorienting the development plan, trades off resources allocation between development, human security, and conventional security, the prioritization of action, is of crucial importance in planning for integrated security.

3.3. Principles of an “Integrated Approach to Security”

In planning for an “Integrated Approach to Security”, the following principles should be met:

First. Collective solutions. Collective security is the ultimate solution. Until that goal is reached, planners of security should be aware that the plan and its implementation would not be perceived as a threat by other states or groups. Otherwise, the security plan will cause unintended insecurities.

Second. Human security should be the guiding principle in setting the security strategy, whether in determining strategic objectives, assessing strategic threats, or planning ways to achieve the objectives. If security plan compromises human needs it will be a cause of instability in the long term. Unless the people live in freedom, dignity, and enjoy human and community rights, national security is meaningless.

Third. Dialogue and negotiation should always be a priority in finding solutions. Resolving conflicts and reducing tensions mean less military expenditures, more resources allocated for developments, and an opportunity for cooperation to meet common challenges.

Fourth. Inclusion. No one actor can succeed alone in preventing or mitigating violence. The inclusion of civil society as a partner to work with the state in advising and implementing security strategies is vital. Mechanisms should be set to facilitate greater collaboration among the practitioners in (hard and soft) security activities and activists in different strands of human security such as human rights, dialogue and reconciliation. Private sector must also be engaged to play a greater role. In the fight against ISIS in Iraq 2015-2017, there were many examples that show how valuable the contributions of civil society: be it religious institution that promoted moderation, or international organizations and NGO’s that helped civilians in the displaced people and prevented human crisis.

3.4. Aspects of an “Integrated Approach to Security”

“Integrated Approach to Security” should include efforts to achieve state security and regional security through human security lens. Insecurity in any part of the region is insecurity to all parts of the region. The region has to learn lessons from its past. Terrorism seemed at one point of time as a threat to one state in the region. Soon it evolved to a threat to the entire region. Covid19 Pandemic is another lesson on transnational threats. The civil wars in Afghanistan and Syria caused migration of several millions that posed challenges to security in Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and even Europe. Scarcity of water will be the near future threat of larger scale.

3.4.1. National Aspects of “Integrated Approach to Security”

An Integrated Approach to Security is achieved by a multidimensional strategy that integrates human security, economic development with state security, while seeking to achieve regional security. In addition to conventional state security it focuses on the following:

Institutions Reform: The state needs competent institutions to implement its plans. Incompetent or corrupted institutions are the graveyards of good policies. In Iraq during 2010-2013, the poor conduct of security and justice institutions alienated part of the population. On the other hand, during the wide military operations against ISIS to liberate the towns under its control, there was great cooperation from the local populations. That was one fruit of the reforms that took place since 2014. One of the important reasons why the local populations switched their position is the different practices of the security forces and institutions regarding the civilians.

Political Inclusion: A major source of internal conflicts and instability in the states of the region is the lack of inclusiveness in political life. This is very

clear in non-democratic Arab countries. In six Arab countries, there is an outright ban on the formation of political parties, while restrictions on political activities and civic organizations in other countries often amount to *de facto* prohibition. In several other Arab countries there is a clear marginalization of some of the constituents of their societies. Even in more democratic Arab countries like Lebanon and Iraq, the election systems are not flexible enough to include new emerging political forces quickly enough. Recent protests in both countries showed that one of the grievances of the youth they didn't see the political parties are representing them.

Good governance: In general, governments of the region need to decrease its military expenditures and Increase investment in government services. The Arab spring up rises showed that governments who invested more in government services seemed to be more stable than others.

Improving of the education system is specifically important to meet development and market requirements. Although some of the regional countries such as Turkey, Iran, and some Gulf states have done well in their education systems, many other Arab countries need to invest more in education. For Job creation policies to succeed, we need the education system to qualify the youth to market requirements.

Improving Public Health Care is another very important government service and essential part of human security which needs to be boosted by expanding access to affordable, quality healthcare with an emphasis on preventive medicine. Health should be treated not just as the absence of disease, but as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

Enforcing the rule of law is key to guarantee essential rights, freedoms and opportunities for all, and to resolve conflicts over power and resources which create great instability.

Transparency of government and effective communication with the people is important to build confidence. Perception is more important than reality. In the age of internet, old tactics of controlling the media simply do not work. If the population does not trust the government information, they will access other sources of information.

Addressing the Demographic challenge: An Integrated Approach to Security needs to focus particularly on three demographic issues: high growth rate, large young population ratio, and ethnic/religious difference within multi ethnic/religious states mentioned in section (1).

Governments of the region need to enact effective policies for **controlling population growth rate**.

While **large young population ratio** in MENA region is a challenge in terms of the need of creation of huge number of jobs yearly, this challenge can be turned into a benefit. Investment in health and human resources, and sound economic policies can turn the population challenges to “demographic bonuses.” when a large young population is healthy, educated, trained, and ready to be absorbed in a market economy and to contribute to the national economy.

Lastly, the **ethnic/religion divide lines** in many states in the region can be a source of insecurity, but it can also be a source of strength if the state provided insightful management under the larger concept of full citizenship.

Economic security and food security are critical components of human security. From a stability point of view, in the MENA region, economic difficulties for the population are more important than poverty defined by international criteria. Poverty line is too low that it does not include broader populations who suffer from difficult economic situations like the ability to afford proper housing, good health care, and other commodities. Oil exporting states are also exposed to economic pressures. These countries have structural

weaknesses that are unmasked by the impact of oil prices fluctuations and the inability to provide sufficient employment. These countries need to address these insecurities and diversify the economy.

3.4.2. Regional Aspects of “Integrated Approach to Security”

As pointed in section1, the region is trapped by many conflicts and challenges. Protracted conflicts like the Israel-Palestine conflict make other conflicts more challenging to resolve. Non-state actors pose another difficult challenge. Regimes response to these challenges by increasing arms imports and military alliances is perceived as threat by other regimes. Pandemics and Environmental pressures like scarcity of water and desertification are other cross-border challenges. The status quo is unable to provide precondition for co-existence, pluralism and human security. An Integrated Approach to Security aims to establish cooperation in the region, ending **occupation, armed conflict**, and *military intervention* which cause human suffering, impediment of economic development, undermining political reform, and undermining moderate voices.

A first step to address regional problems is to have a mechanism: an institution that is inclusive, guided by international law and commitment from all actors in the region to refrain from direct or indirect military intervention outside of international law. Such an institution is to politically manage conflicts and handle misperceptions, building on the experience from recent crises in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen, but also looking into the underlying root causes to the present instability, such as the Israeli occupation and unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict. Different states concerns and vulnerabilities should be addressed as well. For example, we cannot address nuclear non-proliferation while ignoring nuclear disarmament.

Finally, the region does not need only to resolve interstate conflicts and non-state actor threats. Regional states need to cooperate on many other issues ranging from *protecting the environment* to improving education and exchanging experiences.

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