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RECONCEPTUALISING SECURITY: Why Now?



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Introduction

According to the latest Global Peace Index GPI 2018 report, the world is less peaceful today than at any time in the last decade.¹ Covering 99.7 per cent of the world's population in 163 independent states, the results of the 2018 (GPI) find that the global level of peace has deteriorated by 0.27 per cent in the last year, marking the fourth successive year of deterioration.² Said results are attributed to unresolved global tensions and conflict, especially in the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) region,³ which has experienced the most significant deteriorations across almost every Pillar of Positive Peace, according to the same report. In parallel, this regional deterioration is further instilled by increased levels of violent extremism and radicalisation **amongst youth**;⁴ the most recent manifestation of which is the rise of Daesh. To defeat radicalisation and violent extremism more than a military strategy alone is needed, a comprehensive ideological battle is also a must.

Inevitably, this raises the question of regional security in the WANA region. Notwithstanding the noticeable contextual differences between countries in the region, they all traditionally share an overwhelmingly **state-centric security lens**. This particular conceptualisation of security entails reinforcing the state's ability to protect its national sovereignty, enhance its deterrence, and monopolise the exercise of power over its territory.

However, the regional security deterioration seen today, and the consequent adversarial impact it has on regional peace and development, bears a loud testimony: so far, existing security programming paradigms have not served well in achieving/consolidating regional peace. The 2016 Arab Human Development Report further substantiates such testimony. It makes reference to the Arab Uprisings of 2011 to prove that “employing a predominantly security-based approach to responding to demands for change without addressing the root causes of discontent may achieve temporary stability and ward off cycles of protest...but does not reduce the possibilities of their re-emergence more violently.”⁵ Clearly, a new security paradigm is needed.

Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the regional peace and security nexus, with a specific focus on youth. It argues that **without human-centric security paradigms with youth at their core, the persistence of state-centric security paradigms will continue to flare anger, yielding further regional instability and insecurity**. In five sections, the paper highlights how a strict focus on state-centric security programming has come at the expense of sustained human

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Peace Index: Measuring Peace In A Complex World*, June 2018, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global-Peace-Index-2018-2.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ According to the report, WANA countries included 20 countries: 18 Arab countries in addition to Iran and Israel.

⁴ Richard Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees*, The Soufan Center (October, 2017), available at: <http://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017-v3.pdf> and Lizzie Dearden, *Isis documents leak reveals profile of average militant as young, well-educated but with only 'basic' knowledge of Islamic law*, The Independent (April, 2016), available at <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-documents-leak-reveals-profile-of-average-militant-as-young-well-educated-but-with-only-basic-a6995111.html>

⁵ The 2016 Arab Human Development Report, available at: <http://www.arab-hdr.org/reports/2016/english/AHDR2016En.pdf>

security, which has eventually widened the peace deficit⁶ in the region and exposed young people to greater risks and vulnerabilities. The first section will address some definitional issues regarding both state-centric and human-centric security; the second will answer the question of ‘why youth?’ by briefly discussing the regional demographics and the evolving social contract; the third section will examine the limits of the existing state-centric security programming paradigm; the fourth will make a case for an alternative, human-centric security paradigm with youth at its centre; and the fifth section will present the conclusions.

⁶ Within this context, the term refers to the decline in the numeric quantification of peace (use of metrics to measure peacefulness). See more via: http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/09/Risk-Report_Web_Final.pdf

1. Problematising Definitions

Inevitably, issues arise when attempting to unravel widely-used, and contentious, terms such as security and youth. This is due to their repetitive and ambiguous usage in policy papers, as well as in academia and media outlets. Hence, this brief section is dedicated to challenging a number of traditional concepts of youth and security, prior to providing clarity on the meaning of such concepts within the context of this paper.

1.1 State-centric Security

In classic terms, **security** refers to the basic protection from danger or threat, and it has been traditionally associated with the interest of the **state**. A consensus is also established on the so-called “referent objects,”⁷ i.e. the central focus of a security approach, to frame the discussions around security. In brief, referent objects refer to the “security dialectic evolving between elements of the state-centric and human-centric approaches.”⁸ A state-centric security approach takes the state as the referent object, placing the state at the centre of the approach. If the individual is considered the referent object in conceptualising the security approach, this makes it a human-centric one. Hence, the type of referent object determines the type of security, and dictates not only what “threats” the referent object is faced with, but also the “means”⁹ to protect it.

Little distinction is made as to whether this entails protecting the state against an aggressor, advancing its foreign policy interests, or ensuring its monopoly over the use of power on its territory.¹⁰ The literature emphasises how the state-centric approach to security appeals to the use of military means in order to protect the national interests of the state.¹¹ In other words, the referent object of security in this case is the **state**, as conceptualised by the Westphalian Foundations of modern international relations,¹² and hence the framework hereby is referred to as the state-centric security framework.

However, this conceptualisation of security is problematic on two levels. First, it suggests that the most significant threats to states are *external* factors. Yet, there is little to support this suggestion in today’s interconnected world. For instance, reflective of the significant impact of *internal* threats, as the Qatari government became increasingly more sensitive to *internal* criticism in relations to the recent boycott, Qatar experienced the “single largest deterioration in peacefulness of any country on the 2018 GPI” due to the deterioration in the *intensity of internal*

⁷ Pauline Kerr, *The Evolving Dialectic between State-centric and Human-centric Security*, Department of International Relation at the Australian National University, September 2003, accessed June 17, 2018, <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/42112/2/03-2.pdf>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Stephen Sachs, *the changing definition of security*, available at http://www.stevesachs.com/papers/paper_security.html

¹¹ For example, see Buzan, B., “Human Security: What it means and what it entails” paper presented at the 14th Asia-Pacific, Kuala Lumpur, 3-7 June 2000

¹² Vladislav B. Sotirovic, *Westphalian Foundations of Modern International Relations, Global Politics and Global Security*, *Oriental Review* (November, 2017), available at: <https://orientalreview.org/2017/11/25/westphalian-foundations-modern-international-relations-global-politics-global-security/>

conflict measure.¹³ Problematising this conceptualisation is key to avoid downplaying the significance of internal factors.

Second, this conceptualisation also suggests that these threats emanate exclusively from other *states* with national borders that are clearly defined and respected, which simply is not the case. Regional stability has been significantly impacted by the emerging danger of today's Violent *Non-State* Actors (VNSAs), who acknowledge and respect no borders. In fact, affronting the existing international order is exactly what such groups have sought to achieve by claiming affiliates across the globe; not only in WANA countries such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Egypt, but also across the globe from Nigeria, Russia, Afghanistan, to making inroads into southeast Asia (the Philippines in particular).¹⁴

The OECD Secretary-General recently addressed this during the Ministerial conference on the *Fight against Terrorist Financing: The Other War against Daesh and Al-Qaeda*, by stating that: “none of us is immune to the threat of terrorism.... This is not a poor country problem; this is not a rich country problem; this is not a European or an African problem; terrorism knows no borders.”¹⁵

1.2 Human Security

The aforementioned shortfalls of the traditional security concept, with states at its centre, has made the discussion of human security all the more relevant. As a concept, **human security** has emerged and proliferated since the release of a 1994 Human Development Report authored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The report argued that “the concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly”¹⁶ and, “forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives.”¹⁷ As a response to this concern, an all-encompassing idea was developed including seven central pillars of security: **economic, food, health, environmental, personal, political, and communal**.¹⁸

However, it is important to note that while there is **no consensus** on the exact definition of human security, leading scholars and practitioners agree on certain general features of the term. First, **the unit of analysis is the individual**, as opposed to the nation-state, or any other group or institution.¹⁹ Second, human security **includes, but is broader than, protection from physical violence**. Other aspects involve access to basic goods necessary for life such as nutrition, water, health care, clothing, and shelter. Underpinning these aspects is a realisation that

¹³ GPI 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global-Peace-Index-2018-2.pdf>, page 21. For information on the diplomatic rupture, see CRS Insight IN10712, *Qatar and its Neighbors: Disputes and Possible Implications*, by Kenneth Katzman and Christopher M. Blanchard, June 2017, available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IN10712.pdf>

¹⁴ Karen Leigh, Jason French and Jovi Juan, *Islamic State and Its Affiliates*, WSJ, available at: <http://graphics.wsj.com/islamic-state-and-its-affiliates/>; and Colin P. Clarke, *Expanding the ISIS Brand*, February 2018, available at: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/expanding-the-isis-brand-24550>

¹⁵ <https://medium.com/@OECD/terrorism-knows-no-borders-it-requires-a-global-response-7e17ad310ac8>

¹⁶ United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 22 accessed through http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Amartya Sen, “Birth of a Discourse,” in *Routledge Handbook of Human Security*, ed. Mary Martin and Taylor Owen (London & New York: Routledge, 2013), 18.

the different pillars of human security are mutually reinforcing; if one aspect is improved, it can potentially improve other areas of concern.

Therefore, human security concerns the individual level that takes into account a variety of threats to human survival and wellbeing. In the WANA region, these threats often relate to broader contextual issues, including regional instability, inequality amongst youth and citizens, and potential forced migration due to climate change.²⁰

For example, on migration alone, different challenges can dominate the debate. For instance, an increase in sea level between 1.01 and 1.44 metres is estimated in Egypt for 2050, which will result in a 15 to 19 per cent loss of liveable surface area and could affect 14 to 16 per cent of the total population.²¹ Not to mention that the past five years have seen one of the largest forced displacement crises unfold from the region. Approximately 10.3 million Syrians have been displaced, with 2.9 million registered by UNHCR in Turkey, over 1 million in Lebanon, 660,000 in Jordan,²² 241,000 in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and 122,000 in Egypt.²³

1.3 Youth

As for **youth**, the definitions also vary and lack universal consensus. For instance, the European Union defines youth as the age group between 15 and 24 for its **youth unemployment rate**.²⁴ The United Nations have long used the same range for the youth cohort,²⁵ however, the UN Security Council notes in its Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security that youth are individuals between the ages of 18 and 29.²⁶ Several UN entities and regional organisations have different definitions of youth. Table 1.1 gives a brief insight into some of these definitions, as reported and recognised by the UN secretariat.²⁷

Worth noting, these variations have led to an increased momentum around acknowledging the diversity of today's youth at the global level.²⁸ After all, youth is not a homogenous group; but is

²⁰ For more, see *A Region in Motion: Reflections from West Asia-North Africa*, WANA Institute (April, 2018) available at: http://wanainstitute.org/sites/default/files/publications/ARegionInMotion_EnglishOnline_HighRes_0.pdf

²¹ Dr. Pragnya Paramita Jena, *Climate Change and Forced Migration*, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (June, 2018), available at: <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2023%20Issue6/Version-2/E2306023543.pdf>

²² UN, "Refugees," n. d., www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/index.html

²³ UNHCR, 3RP Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2015–2019: In Response to the Syria Crisis. Regional Strategic Overview (Geneva: UNHCR, 2017).

²⁴ Eurostat (April 2018), available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Youth_unemployment#Definition_of_unemployment_and_youth_unemployment_indicators

²⁵ Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly, A/36/215, 1981

²⁶ UNSCR 2250, Available at:

[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2250\(2015\)&referer=/english/&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2250(2015)&referer=/english/&Lang=E)

²⁷ UN Fact-Sheet, available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

²⁸ For more, see the Global Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, accessed through:

[https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-](https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-03/Progress%20Study%20on%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20%26%20Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH_0.pdf)

[03/Progress%20Study%20on%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20%26%20Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH_0.pdf](https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-03/Progress%20Study%20on%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20%26%20Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH_0.pdf); check the different reports and analysis on youth trends via the Work Assembly of Youth website, accessed here

<http://www.way.org.my/reports>; the recent European Youth Strategy, accessed here: <https://www.youthforum.org/eu-youth-strategy-promising-plan-europes-youth>; and the different ASDA's Burson-Marsteller Arab youth Surveys, accessed here: <http://arabyouthsurvey.com/index.html>

rather a heterogeneous ‘moving target’ characterised by intersectionality with notable gender differences,²⁹ which further begs the need for establishing more contextual youth definitions.

Table 1.1: Youth Definitions		
Entity	Age	Reference
UN Secretariat/UNESCO/ILO	Youth: 15-24	UN Instruments, Statistics
UN Habitat (Youth Fund)	Youth: 15-32	Agenda 21
UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA	Adolescent: 10-19, Young People: 10-24, Youth: 15-24	UNFPA
UNICEF/The Convention on Rights of the Child	Child until 18	UNICEF
The Africa Youth Charter	Youth: 15-32	African Union, 2006

Source: UN Fact-Sheet, available at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

²⁹ Check the Global Youth Development Index and Report, accessed here: <http://cmydiproduct.uksouth.cloudapp.azure.com/sites/default/files/2016-10/2016%20Global%20Youth%20Development%20Index%20and%20Report.pdf>

2. Why Youth?

Given the demographic make-up of the region, the case for a more youthful human-centric paradigm holds strong grounds. The YouthPolicy.org think tank estimates that young people are the fastest growing segment of Arab populations, noting that “some 60 per cent of the population is under 25 years old, making this one of the most youthful regions in the world with a median age of 22 years compared to a global average of 28.”³⁰ For governments in the region, such figures have presented a “**worry** that youth populations, if left unchecked, will once again become a powerful driver of demands for political and social transformation.”³¹ In this regard, the case for a human-centric security paradigm builds on this potential power of youth. This **opportunity** should be seized and directed into cultivating positive contributions, as opposed to seeing youth as a security challenge to deal with.

Indeed, Arab youth populations are already craving more influence in public spaces. They are also challenging the authoritarian bargains that have long marked the region, whereby “political liberties were exchanged for socioeconomic rights.”³² However, with this growing power of young people in mind, continuing with the dominant state-centric security focus risks taking the region further towards dysfunctional states. This form of weak governance “with consociational bargain – where national loyalties compete with subnational and transnational ones”³³ provides no channel for youth energy to be cultivated positively. In fact, it does quite the opposite: fuels more anger and frustration.

So far, existing security paradigms turned Arab youth increasingly pessimistic. After over a decade of regional unrest, the majority of Arab youth feel that the Arab world has been moving in the wrong direction.³⁴ In addition, youth unemployment in the region is the highest in the world,³⁵ which makes the situation even more critical, highlighting the urgency of moving towards an inclusive human-centric paradigm. On a positive note, young people continue with their activism and push back against structures that limit their potential. But the question becomes: how long can the existing state-centric security paradigms sustain this status quo, and where does it lead the region to?

A brief look into the evolving **social contract** in the region provides part of the answer.³⁶ Historically, the dominant social contract which emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War until the early 1970s and 1980s entailed a model of social welfare guaranteed by existing

³⁰ MENA Youth Facts, available at: <http://www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/regionalyouthscenes/mena/facts/>

³¹ Charles W. Dunne, *Human Rights, Democracy, and the Changing Middle East: A Status Report*, Arab Center Washington DC (June, 2018), available at: http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/human-rights-democracy-and-the-changing-middle-east-a-status-report/

³² Bassel F. Salloukh, *A New Grand Bargain for the Middle East, The Search for a New Constitutional and Geopolitical Order*, The Century Foundation (February, 2018), available at: <https://tcf.org/content/report/new-grand-bargain-middle-east/?agreed=1>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ MEED, *Dissatisfied Arab Youth Speak Out*, (June 2018), available at: <https://www.meed.com/dissatisfied-arab-youth-speak-out/>

³⁵ James Reinl, "Arab 'Brain Drain' Accelerates after Arab Spring: UN," *Middle East Eye*, May 8, 2015, accessed June, 2018, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/un-arab-brain-drain-accelerates-after-arab-spring-1752815577>

³⁶ Barik Mhadeen, *What Social Contract Do Arab Youth Want?*, WANAI Institute (December, 2017), available at: <http://wanainstitute.org/en/blog/what-social-contract-do-arab-youth-want>

political regimes, and transformed agricultural communities in the region into industrial societies. A university degree meant a secure job in the public sector. The government was seen as the solution to regional socioeconomic issues, and it exercised a monopoly over information and communication.

Fast forward to 2011, the situation was different. Not only was the Arab population far more educated, it also had greater access to the internet and was more connected than past generations. For instance, the number of internet users in the region has seen a growth rate of 2500 per cent over the past 10 years.³⁷ Entrepreneurship is also highly regarded among the region's young population. The World Economic Forum indicates that the region not only has the youngest average age for entrepreneurs (26 years old), but that they seem to work the hardest compared to the global average for millennials.³⁸ These are not mere statistics; they are unseized opportunities.

Importantly, the evolving social contract seems to be also challenging the sense of relative deprivation felt by many across the region. Prior to the uprisings — whilst the socioeconomic grievances faced by young people were building and leading to intensified experiences of social inequality and deprivation by their governments — levels of education, civil movements, and exposure (kudos to the power of social media and internet) were also on the rise.³⁹ This exacerbated the sense of individual relative deprivation and a clash (leading to instability) was a natural outcome. The failure of the standing political regimes, who have long relied on state-centric security paradigms, to address the gap between unmet expectations and a harsher reality on the ground led to political violence, a clear sign of a failed social contract.⁴⁰

Lastly, this young generation of Arab citizens no longer seeks change and reform from their government. In fact, governments are seen as part of the problem, no longer as the solution. As such, it is no luxury to place the young population at the centre of the human-centric security paradigm. It is an absolute necessity for harnessing the historic dividend they present.

³⁷ ArabNet Infographics, available at: <http://news.arabnet.me/mena-internet-statistics-nutshell-infographic/>

³⁸ Chaymae Samir, *Entrepreneurial, Creative, Sceptical. The Truth about MENA Millennials*, World Economic Forum (August, 2017), available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/08/everything-you-need-to-know-about-mena-millennials/>

³⁹ Dr. Sadaf Farooq, Saiqa Bukhari and Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, *Arab Spring and the Theory of Relative Deprivation*, International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol. 8, No.1 (January 2017), available at:

https://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_8_No_1_January_2017/13.pdf

⁴⁰ Ibid.

3. Regional State-Centric Security Paradigms

Perhaps the most strident critique of the existing state-centric security paradigms in the region is that they fail to recognise the normative human-centric dimensions of security, and the borderless nature of the evolving security threats. Therefore, this section will expose the shortcomings of state-centric security policies by, first, **unpacking how state-centric security policies are not inclusive, and, second, highlighting their incompetency at dealing with borderless threats such as those emanating from violent extremism, migration, or climate change.** Radicalisation in prisons is one example of the former. In parallel, the proliferation of VNSAs, including online hackers, deems the exclusive state-centric security policies an outdated approach to dealing with today's complex security challenges.

3.1 Stricter State-Centric Security?

State-centric security policies have grown stricter in light of the popular wave of uprisings that swept across the region in 2011, which adversely impacted trust levels and tolerance. Niels Spierings shows a number of changes when measuring the uprisings' impact by synchronising over 40 Arab Barometer and World Values Surveys on Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen, from before and after the uprisings.

One such change relates to the regional political-institutional trust. The study shows that political-institutional trust fell after the uprisings in countries that went through some democratic reform or regime change.⁴¹ The study's main observation is that the long-term downward trend in political-institutional trust seems to have fed the uprisings in the first place. Yet, the poor democratic behaviour that followed, has had a reverse impact on the short-lived gains of political-institutional trust.

Egypt is cited as the case in point for undemocratic behaviour. In the immediate aftermath of ousting President Mubarak, trust levels were considerably higher than in 2008, the year of the previous survey.⁴² Yet, they sharply declined after the military intervention in 2013. And whilst some voices have suggested that this intervention may actually have been the right thing to do to prevent an outbreak of a violent civil war following the un-abating street protests,⁴³ the fact that the underlying social and economic issues are still standing did not guarantee more stability.

Similarly, the levels of high political-institutional trust achieved in light of the uprisings in Tunisia also did not prove to be durable, despite the stable democratisation the country has become known for. The drop is attributed to the still-lingering socio-economic issues, which were at the core of the uprising. Likewise, the minor democratic reforms introduced in Morocco and Jordan, which slightly weakened the decline of trust at first, did not prevent these countries from experiencing stronger declines in trust some years after the reforms. Yemen experienced a minor

⁴¹ Niels Spierings, *Trust and Tolerance across the Middle East and North Africa: A Comparative Perspective on the Impact of the Arab Uprisings*, Politics and Governance (March, 2017), available at: <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/750/750>

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Casey Friedman, Dominic K. Albino, Yaneer Bar-Yam, *Political Stability and Military Intervention in Egypt*, New England Complex Systems Institute (July, 2013), available at: <http://www.necsi.edu/research/social/egypt/egypt.pdf>

increase in trust after Saleh handed over power and signed a transition plan in 2012. However, the plummeting levels of trust after the country's break-down and decline into civil war supports the same reasoning.⁴⁴ As such, each of these cases explain the “nullification of the democratisation trust boost” seen temporarily in these countries following the uprisings, adds the study.⁴⁵

This makes clear that **state-centric security paradigms have a counterproductive impact on the levels of political participation and trust.** Regardless of whether these paradigms took the form of a strong state-centric security policy, such as a military intervention in the case of Egypt, or of weak human-centric security programming, such as the unresolved socio-economic grievances (Tunisia), cosmetic political reform (Jordan and Morocco), or unaddressed human rights violations (Yemen). Equally important, the decrease in social trust in democratic transition countries such as Egypt and Tunisia reflected the pattern of political-institutional trust indicating a spill-over effect.⁴⁶ This **testifies to how state-centric security policies cannot escape the borderless nature of social change.**

3.2 Marginalisation

An extensive body of literature cites marginalisation as a driving force for insecurity in the region.⁴⁷ In what an Oxford Research Group Paper refers to as a ‘control paradigm,’ the current security paradigm adopted by most governments tries to control ‘insecurity’ through ‘military force or containment’ that ‘fights the symptoms’ as opposed to ‘curing the disease.’⁴⁸ In the region, this marginalisation manifests itself in different forms: political, economic, social and others, all fuelling a chronic crisis of social injustice and persistent inequality.⁴⁹ In brief, marginalisation refers to the limiting environment an individual feels he/she is placed within; while opportunities of employment, political participation, economic empowerment, religious/sectarian freedom, and formal civic engagement are lacking or non-existent. This marginalisation is an important factor for it drives the individual towards disengaging from formal political processes, and developing a sense of apathy and distrust of the existing institutions along the way.

⁴⁴ Mareike Transfeld, *Yemen's transition to political stability was doomed to fail. Here's why.*, the Washington Post, October 2015, available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/10/27/yemens-transition-process-was-doomed-to-fail-even-before-the-houthi-takeover/?utm_term=.24b62d386484

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Hannah Brock, *Marginalisation of the Majority World, Drivers of Insecurity and the Global South*, Oxford Research Group (February, 2011), available at:

<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/138984/Marginalisation%20and%20Insecurity%20in%20the%20Global%20South,%202012.pdf> and European Policy Brief on Youth, March 2017, available at: http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/p2y_pb_3.pdf

⁴⁸ Hannah Brock, *Marginalisation of the Majority World, Drivers of Insecurity and the Global South*, Oxford Research Group (February, 2011), available at:

<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/138984/Marginalisation%20and%20Insecurity%20in%20the%20Global%20South,%202012.pdf>

⁴⁹ UN-DESA, for example, breaks social justice down into different socially desirable goods or ends: the fair distribution of goods, opportunities and rights, income, assets, work opportunities; access to knowledge, health services, and social security; and the provision of a safe environment, civic, and political participation. For more, see United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Social Justice in an Open World: The Role of the United Nations* (New York: The United Nations, 2006), 15-16, accessed June, 2018, <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/ifsd/SocialJustice.pdf>.

In this context, Adam Hanieh examines some of the quantitative and qualitative trends of inequality for the Arab world and explores their relationship to contemporary political dynamics. Elusive formal employment, unequal access to state services and social support, uneven distribution of economic growth and benefits, along with a widening gap in power and wealth within and between countries in the region, were some of the key trends he identified.⁵⁰ The same research attributes these trends to a number of causes, including high levels of violence and conflict, military occupation, and autocratic and non-representative political systems,⁵¹ all of which are the results of stricter state-centric security policies.

As such, the continued marginalisation resulting from state-centric security policies is disadvantageous to regional peacebuilding efforts. Under the title, *Breaking the triple marginalisation of youth? Mapping the future prospects of youth inclusion in Arab Mediterranean countries*, a Sahwa Policy Report warns against this marginalisation and the “form of class violence” it breeds, as “it depicts the hordes of low-income, unemployed youth as potential threats to the security of both their own countries and Europe (as terrorists, migrants or refugees).”⁵² This is important as it ties in with the earlier point on the need for inclusive, long-term policies; today’s most pressing global security issues are the result of real-world socioeconomic/socio-political grievances, addressing these grievances in a structural, dignified way is key to harnessing the peace dividend provided by the suppressed potential of today’s marginalised groups.

On this note, the Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security, supported by the UN but carried out and produced independently,⁵³ goes as far as describing these inequalities and exclusionist policies as “structural”⁵⁴ factors that contribute to youth poverty and powerlessness. The study further documents evidence showing that many governments in societies with large youth populations “pre-emptively adopt repressive approaches in anticipation of youthful dissent.”⁵⁵ Yet, such attempts to address these ‘structural’ issues with pre-emptive repressive measures, outside the more comprehensive human security framework do not minimise the risks of conflict and instability. Nor do they yield an impact that goes beyond being cosmetic; for this approach fails to see people as being best placed to define their own security threats and priorities.

⁵⁰ Adam Hanieh, *Inequalities in the Arab region*, an article features in the World Social Science Report 2016, UNESCO and the ISCC (2016), available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002459/245947e.pdf>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Karim Maïche, Henri Onodera, Bruno Lefort, Sofia Laine & Martta Myllylä, *Breaking the triple marginalisation of youth? Mapping the future prospects of youth inclusion in Arab Mediterranean countries*, Sahwa Policy Report (January, 2017) available to download at:

http://sahwa.eu/content/download/1538/11517/file/SAHWA_Policy_Report_FYRN_Future_Prospects_FinalVersion.pdf

⁵³ The UN Secretary-General appointed in August 2016 an independent lead author, Graeme Simpson, to develop the Progress Study, as well as an Advisory Group of Experts, including 21 scholars, practitioners and young leaders. UNFPA and PBSO jointly provided secretariat functions for the development of the Study, working in close collaboration with the Office of the Envoy on Youth. A **Steering Committee**, composed of 34 partners from the UN system, civil society and non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations, foundations, etc. oversaw the preparation of the Study. The Study is supported by the UN system and partners but it is **independent**, demonstrating young people’s positive role in sustaining peace and proposing concrete **recommendations** for the peace and security community to work with young people in new ways.

⁵⁴ Progress Study, accessed here: [https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-](https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-03/Progress%20Study%20on%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20%26%20Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH_0.pdf)

[03/Progress%20Study%20on%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20%26%20Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH_0.pdf](https://www.youth4peace.info/system/files/2018-03/Progress%20Study%20on%20Youth%2C%20Peace%20%26%20Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH_0.pdf)

⁵⁵ Ibid, quoting Ragnhild Nordås and Christian Davenport, “Fight the youth: youth bulges and State repression”, *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 57, issue 4 (October 2013), pp. 926–940.

Alarmingly, the security obsession emanating from state-centric security policies has also contributed to establishing a narrative that sees young people as passive actors, victims of armed conflict, ‘security threats,’ and a ‘burden’ that needs to be dealt with. For instance, the insights on how UNSCR 2250 was adopted are telling of the policy panic underpinning the conversation about youth. These include **creating** a policy framework for the positive contributions of young people, **convincing** the Council that the youth issue is relevant to maintaining global peace and security in the first place, and **having to negotiate** definitional issues, language and mechanisms for follow-up.⁵⁶ In retrospect, this further marginalises young people and other social groups for it is a disservice to their positive contributions, whether it was in terms of their entrepreneurial quest,⁵⁷ contribution to sustainable development,⁵⁸ or to peacebuilding efforts.⁵⁹ Inclusive policy frameworks should not be optional to member states, they should be a given.

3.3 Radicalisation in Prisons

This narrative manifests itself into policy in the regional **arrangements within prisons and/or legislations landing a person in prison**. The next paragraphs elaborate on the effectiveness of state-centric security policies in dealing with radicalised inmates in prisons, and ensuring that these policies do not contribute — albeit unintentionally — to a prison environment that serves as a breeding ground for radicalisation.

While prison and probation systems have the potential of playing a key role in de-radicalisation and rehabilitation efforts, a discussion on the state-centric security policies that deal with radicalised inmates at prisons becomes crucial. **These policies take two forms: legislative and procedural**. Whilst the legislative form relates to laws and regulations governing the length of sentences and reasons for indictments for instance, the procedural relates to arrangements within prison cells after an individual has been sentenced.

Algeria provides one case in point for the former. According to the 2016 Country Report on Terrorism, “the [Algerian] penal code outlines punishments, including fines and prison sentences, for anyone other than a government-designated imam who preaches in a mosque. The Algerian government monitors mosques for possible security-related offenses and prohibits the use of mosques as public meeting places outside of regular prayer hours.”⁶⁰ It should be mentioned that these measures are best understood through the context of Algeria’s “Black

⁵⁶ What’s in Blue, Insights on the work of the UN Security Council (December, 2015) available at: <https://www.whatsinblue.org/2015/12/adoption-of-resolution-on-youth-peace-and-security.php>

⁵⁷ Suparna Dutt D’Cunha, *Plagued By A 30% Unemployment Rate, Arabian Youth Turn to Start-ups For A Lifeline*, Forbes (May, 2017), available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/suparnadutt/2017/05/11/can-startups-drive-new-job-growth-in-the-mena-region-where-youth-unemployment-rate-is-30/#229b5d2b34f4>

⁵⁸ Habib Ahmad, *Contributions of Islamic Finances To The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, (November, 2017), available at: http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/high-level-conference-on-ffd-and-2030-agenda/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/11/Background-Paper_Islamic-Finance.pdf

⁵⁹ Margaret Williams, *Youth, Peace and Security: A New Agenda for the Middle East and North Africa*, Journal of International Affairs at Columbia University (June, 2016), available at: <https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/youth-peace-security-new-agenda-middle-east-north-africa> and Theo Dolan, *Peacebuilding Reality Show for Iraqi youth Gains Pan-Arab Appeal*, United States Institute of Peace (September, 2013), available at: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2013/09/peacebuilding-reality-show-iraqi-youth-gains-pan-arab-appeal>

⁶⁰ U.S. State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016* (July, 2016), available at: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/272488.pdf>, page 174.

Decade,”⁶¹ in which a 10-year civil war left some 200,000 civilians dead as the government fought a fierce battle against a number of Islamist insurgencies. Whilst some suggestions point to the Algerian experience as a potential lesson learnt, and a potential solution to the ongoing crisis in Syria,⁶² a noticeable body of scholarship and analysis believes that the scars left by this decade of violence are yet to heal.⁶³

Either way, the facts still stand: the country has adopted broad definitions of terrorism, with a raised concern that these definitions could include acts of political dissent. It also has adopted criminal procedure provisions that lowered certain restrictions for investigating crimes labelled as crimes of terrorism, according to a report by the Law Library of [the US] Congress.⁶⁴ Algerian Penal Code art. 87bis states that anyone who praises, encourages, or finances acts of terrorism by any means must be punished with five to ten years of imprisonment and a fine between 100,000 Algerian dinars (USD840) and 500,000 Algerian dinars (USD4,200).⁶⁵

Other regional examples reflect a similar trajectory. Recently, legal amendments in the United Arab Emirates have criminalised convening ‘unauthorised’ religious gatherings, which include Qur’anic recitation and memorisation gatherings, and could land an individual in a penalty of three years in prison and a fine of USD1,360.⁶⁶ In Morocco, after the Casablanca suicide bombings of May 2003, several controversial legal measures were adopted that facilitated the arrest and sentencing of 3,000 individuals between 2003 and 2017. Some were subsequently sentenced to death or imprisoned for long periods.⁶⁷ Worth noting is that in 2014, other provisions were added in relation to Moroccans fighting on behalf of extremist groups abroad.

On the procedural front, Hamed El-Said argues that “the rise in the number of individuals arrested and charged with terrorist-related activities has increased apprehension about the possibility of turning prisons into a recruitment arena for the terrorist activities and turning

⁶¹ Miriam Lowi, *Algeria, 1992-2002: Anatomy of a Civil War*, in *Understanding Civil War: Africa*, World Bank Publications, 2005, free publication available at:

https://books.google.jo/books?id=OnGQQVuIBjgC&pg=PA221&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁶² Yasmina Allouche, *Is there a solution for Syria to be found in the Algerian civil war?*, Middle East Monitor (January 2017), available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170114-is-there-a-solution-for-syria-to-be-found-in-the-algerian-civil-war/> and Michael J. Willis, *Lessons From Algeria’s ‘Dark Decade’*, Foreign Policy (January 2014), available at:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/31/lessons-from-algerias-dark-decade/>

⁶³ Tarik Chelali, *Algeria yet to heal from Black Decade scars*, Gulf News (Sept, 2017), available at:

<https://gulfnews.com/news/mena/algeria/algeria-yet-to-heal-from-black-decade-scars-1.2093062>; Djamilia Ould Khettab, *The ‘Black Decade’ still weighs heavily on Algeria*, Al Jazeera (Nov 2015), available at:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/black-decade-weighs-heavily-algeria-151102100541203.html>; and Eleanor

Beardsley, *Algeria’s ‘Black Decade’ Still Weighs Heavily*, National Public Radio Station (April 2011), available at:

<https://www.npr.org/2011/04/25/135376589/algerias-black-decade-still-weighs-heavily>

⁶⁴ The Law Library of Congress, Sep. 2015, available at: <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/counterterrorism/response-to-terrorism.pdf>

⁶⁵ Ibid, and the full text of the Algerian Panel Code, along with art. 87bis is found here via this link (in Arabic):

<http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/ar/dz/dz020ar.pdf>

⁶⁶ Mohammed Alkhereiji, *UAE takes new measures to fight radicalisation*, The Arab Weekly (December, 2017) available at: <https://theArabweekly.com/uae-takes-new-measures-fight-radicalisation>

⁶⁷ Masbah Mohammed, *The Limits of Morocco’s Attempt to Comprehensively Counter Violent Extremism*, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University (May 2018), available at:

<https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB118.pdf>

incarceration centres into ‘universities of terrorism’ or ‘universities of Jihadism.’⁶⁸ On this factor, Tunisia is one case in point. An inmate imprisoned for theft at the Rabta prison in Tunis described the situation as following: “The recruiters are everywhere; in the corridors, the walkways, the cells. They approached me dozens of times. They said if I wanted an easy time of it, it would be best for me to follow the path they were going to show me.”⁶⁹ Importantly, this is a regional issue, not exclusive to Tunisia. After all, the most prominent figures of violent extremist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda were radicalised in prisons, including Ayman Al-Zawahri in Egypt, Nasir al-Wuhayshi in Yemen, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Jordan, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Iraq.⁷⁰

Thus, it can be suggested that traditional state-centric security measures, in both legislative and procedural forms, fuel existing resentment and could cultivate radical ideologies, whether by limiting certain freedoms and reinforcing feelings of marginalisation between the state and its citizens, including youth and other societal groups,⁷¹ or by the risks such policies pose through their harsh, and arguably counterproductive, ‘probation’ or ‘punishment’ schemes.

3.4 Borderless Threats

Another critique of the state-centric security paradigm is its inadequacy in dealing with borderless threats. This critique is based on the changing nature of security threats that now include violent extremism, organised crimes, climate change, mass migration, and cyberspace. For instance, the threat of environmental degradation, which is pushing people away from their traditional livelihoods — for example farming in Iraq⁷² — is expected to pose increased challenges to regional stability, and is likely to affect areas beyond Iraq’s national borders.

In addition, researchers of the German Max Planck Institute for Chemistry and the Cyprus Institute in Nicosia have concluded that the “Middle East and North Africa could become so hot that human habitability is compromised.”⁷³ Further, they expect the number of climate change refugees to increase dramatically in the future.⁷⁴ By mid-century, 80 instead of 16 extremely hot days are to be observed annually, resulting in prolonged heat waves and desert

⁶⁸ Hamed El-Said, *Deradicalization: Experiences in Europe and the Arab World*, IEMED- Mediterranean Yearbook 2017, available at: http://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2017/IEMed_MedYearbook2017_deradicalization_europe_arab_ElSaid.pdf

⁶⁹ Jeremy Felkowsky, *Radicalisation in prison cells in France and Tunisia*, *The New Arab* (April, 2018), available at: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/Comment/2018/4/16/Radicalisation-in-prisons-cells-in-France-and-Tunisia>

⁷⁰ Raneem Hannouch, *When Prisons Become a Hotbed for Religious Extremism*, *Asharq Al-Awsat* (June, 2015), available at: <https://aawsat.com/home/article/383836/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%BA%D8%AF%D9%88-%D8%A8%D8%A4%D8%B1%D9%8B%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A> (In Arabic)

⁷¹ David Zucchino, *As ISIS Is Driven From Iraq, Sunnis Remain Alienated*, *The New York Times* (October, 2017), available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/world/middleeast/iraq-isis-sunni.html>

⁷² *The Economist*, *Climate Change is Making The Arab World More Miserable*, (May, 2018), available at: <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/05/31/climate-change-is-making-the-arab-world-more-miserable>

⁷³ Max Planck Society, *Climate-exodus expected in the Middle East and North Africa*, (May, 2016), available at: <https://phys.org/news/2016-05-climate-exodus-middle-east-north-africa.html>

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

dust storms which will significantly worsen the living conditions in the region, according to atmospheric researcher Jos Lelieveld.⁷⁵

Increased temperatures which have led to sporadic rainfall patterns and floods are expected to stay, if not intensify. For instance, Lakshini Mendis writes about the increased number of major floods that have occurred in Saudi Arabia since 2009, stating that according to the International Disaster Database,⁷⁶ the flash flood in Jeddah in 2009 caused more than 100 fatalities and an economic loss estimated to be in excess of USD900 million.⁷⁷ Similarly, she adds that “these unstable rainfall patterns increase the frequency and intensity of drought. For example, the drought in Syria from 2007 to 2010 was the most severe in 1,100 years and caused considerable economic losses and the displacement of more than one million people.”⁷⁸

Clearly, this real, and not too-distant, non-traditional security threat could hardly be addressed or mitigated through the traditional state-centric security paradigm. This is not a threat emanating from another state, an organised army, or a group of rebels/extremists. Rather, it is an existential natural threat which necessitates propelling the argument for an increased focus on human security efforts as opposed to traditional state-centric security. State-centric security policies are adept at dealing with limited, spatial threats. Yet, as shown by the few examples above, most of today’s global security challenges are neither limited nor spatial. In this context, it is argued that “the narrow, subterranean networks”⁷⁹ whereby “modern security governance takes place and tries to tie together different actors at different governance levels”⁸⁰ is loose, which limits their ‘spatial’ ability to deal with such non-traditional threats that cross-border networks. In other words, traditional state-centric security paradigms lead to narrow security governance, taking place in small circles of decision-makers that are centralised, bureaucratic, and perhaps clandestine.

Going beyond geography, security concerns emanating from cyberspace must also be taken into account. Traditional deterrence theory, which was long limited to the military domain, is now expanding to other domains, including cybersecurity for instance.⁸¹ It is reported that “the [Arabian] Gulf is a lively cyber conflict zone.” According to Symantec's annual Internet Security Threat Report,⁸² Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two most targeted WANA countries for ransom-ware attacks, in which cyber criminals steal and encrypt files until a ransom is paid. Consequently, in 2016 the global average ransom spiked with 266 per cent with criminals

⁷⁵ Max Planck Society, *Climate-exodus expected in the Middle East and North Africa*, (May, 2016), available at: <https://phys.org/news/2016-05-climate-exodus-middle-east-north-africa.html>

⁷⁶ The International Disaster Database can be accessed here: <https://www.emdat.be/>

⁷⁷ Lakshini Mendis, *Water Scarcity Predicted to Worsen*, Nature Middle East (December, 2017), available at: <https://www.natureasia.com/en/nmiddleeast/article/10.1038/nmiddleeast.2017.172>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Book review by Mark Rhinard, the book is “Governing Borderless Threats: Non-Traditional Security and the Politics of State transformation” by Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, (February, 2016) found and accessed here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/padm.12245>

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ More on this discussion can be found here: Annegret Bendiek and Tobias Metzger, “Deterrence Theory in the Cyber-Century,” German Institute for International and Security Affairs, May 2015, accessed June, 2018 via the following link: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/Bendiek-Metzger_WP-Cyberdeterrence.pdf

⁸² The Symantec’s annual Internet Security Threat Report is accessed via this link: <https://www.symantec.com/content/dam/symantec/docs/reports/istr-22-2017-en.pdf>

demanding an average of USD1,077 per victim, up from USD294 as reported for the previous year.⁸³ Such emerging risks present a whole new dimension to conflict dynamics, and require a technical knowledge that most traditional security policy-makers do not necessarily have without the help of the private sector and other stakeholders such as policy think tanks, civil society organisations, cybersecurity providers, etc. Reconceptualising security is key to this effort.

⁸³ Amar Diwakar, *GCC Businesses are Facing a Major Cybersecurity Deficit*, the New Arab (June 2017), available via the following link: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/comment/2017/6/12/gcc-businesses-are-facing-a-major-cybersecurity-deficit>

4. Reconceptualising Security

In an effort to reconceptualise security, this section will make a case for an alternative, human-centric security paradigm with youth at its centre, as opposed to the traditional state-centric security paradigm discussed thus far. This effort is inspired by three realisations. **First, traditional security policies have not been successful at achieving sustainable regional peace. Second, emerging security threats are challenging the existing security paradigms. Third, the demographic make-up of the region necessitates placing young people at the centre of policy-making and programming.** Importantly, the region does not have the luxury of dismissing the aforementioned realisations. Addressing them is a prerequisite for a peaceful and inclusive future for all. Alternatively, human-centric security paradigms are more inclusive, they safeguard development gains and prospects, account for the borderless nature of threats, and tackle the security challenges in a comprehensive way.

4.1 Inclusivity

The alternative for marginalisation is inclusion. Inclusion is also key to human-centric security paradigms and it can be understood at two levels. Primarily, a greater space for dialogue and engagement with the population is created by placing the **individual**, not the state, at the centre of programming and policies. Through this, the cycle of grievances can be managed more effectively because an inclusive new security paradigm enhances the sense of national ownership, and cultivates the energy of youth in addressing their concerns.

Importantly, the fertile ground for such a shift already exists. The 2011 uprisings have propelled large segments of the Arab population, particularly youth, to the centre of public policy debates, forcing governments to respond to their individual **human needs** — even if temporarily to forestall protests.⁸⁴ Iraq⁸⁵ and Syria⁸⁶ for instance, two Arab countries known for their heavy state-centric security paradigms, are examples of how such paradigms could yield non-representative governance that triggers a widespread sense of injustice, leading to open and violent conflict.

The second level relates to the discussion around **institutional functionality**. In short, **inclusion ensures that institutions function in a way that accommodates for, and meets, the basic needs and rights of individuals in society.** This includes universal societal access to justice and equal enforcement of the law, both determinant to personal and communal security.

In addition, the region's institutional dysfunctionality, manifested in high levels of corruption and inefficient bureaucracy, has been a significant source of regional discontent and anger, hence

⁸⁴ Charles W. Dunne, *Human Rights, Democracy, and the Changing Middle East: A Status Report*, Arab Center Washington DC (June, 2018), available at: http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/human-rights-democracy-and-the-changing-middle-east-a-status-report/

⁸⁵ Zaid Al-Ali, *How Maliki Ruined Iraq*, Foreign Policy (June, 2014), available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/19/how-maliki-ruined-iraq/>

⁸⁶ Hashem Osseiran, *How Sectarianism Can Help Explain the Syrian War*, Syria Deeply (March, 2018), available at: <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2018/03/06/how-sectarianism-can-help-explain-the-syrian-war>

of instability.⁸⁷ A 2016 survey detailing the views of 105 experts from almost every Arab country has overwhelmingly shown that local political challenges such as authoritarianism, corruption and the lack of accountability are prioritised over geopolitical ones such as regional conflict, sectarian rivalries, and foreign intervention.⁸⁸ The famous outcry of protestors for *human dignity* during the Arab uprisings meant putting an end to the different forms of marginalisation, corruption, state rights abuse, and sectarian policies. This must be translated into inclusive, people-centred human security paradigms which will **reinforce freedom from the network of lost opportunities and injustice, as opposed to being trapped by it.**

4.2 Safeguarding Development

The fifth volume in the series of Arab Human Development Reports considers human security as the “rear-guard of human development. Whereas human development is concerned with expanding the individual’s capabilities and opportunities, human security focuses on enabling peoples to contain or avert threats to their lives, livelihood and human dignity.”⁸⁹ This framework of merging security with development is key to ensuring regional stability, given that instability has causal links to voids in development in all of its types.

A recent report by the Centre for Strategic & International Studies discussing the range of factors shaping stability in the Arab World underlines the same argument. The report cites the inherited legacy of inadequate development and economic growth as **state-driven** key causes of regional instability.⁹⁰ In a later report by the same Centre, the development challenge is outlined further: “many Arab states lag badly in economic development and effective governance at a time when they are under serious population pressure, face a major youth ‘bulge,’ employment problems, and have failed to create fair and balanced patterns of income distribution to meet the needs of their peoples.”⁹¹ The report also argues that the states have not invested enough in infrastructure and health and educational services to meet these needs, thus, blaming the state for human insecurity and potential instability.⁹²

This comes at a time when military expenditures in the WANA region are rising. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) notes an increase in military expenditure in the

⁸⁷ Roger Sapsford, Gerasimos Tsourapas, Pamela Abbott and Andrea Teti, *Corruption, Trust, Inclusion and Cohesion in North Africa and the Middle East*, Springer (December, 2017), available at:

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs11482-017-9578-8.pdf>

⁸⁸ Perry Cammack and Marwan Muasher, *Arab Voices on the Challenges of the New Middle East*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (February 2016), available at:

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/ArabExperts_Survey_English_final.pdf

⁸⁹ Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries,” UNDP (May, 2009), accessed June 2018,

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/arab_human_developmentreport2009.html

⁹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, *Stability in the MENA Region: The Range of Forces Shaping Future Stability*, Center for Strategic & International Studies (March, 2018), available at: https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180403_Stability_in_MENA_Region_slides.pdf?rZU5QTupJNjeGE6GU7uvOWTAwmmDs.KD

⁹¹ Anthony H. Cordesman, *Improving Stability in the Arab World*, Center for Strategic & International Studies (May, 2018), available at: https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/180514_Improving_Stability_Arab_World.pdf?XsBivrGCCqcDxkkrhco2DLgMiRWyxhIX

⁹² Ibid.

region by 6.2 per cent in 2017.⁹³ More alarmingly, SIPRI also reports that “in 2017, military expenditure as a share of GDP (known as the ‘military burden’) was highest in the Middle East, at 5.2 per cent. No other region in the world allocated more than 1.8 per cent of GDP to military spending.”⁹⁴ These figures testify to the strict state-centric security paradigm dominating the scene in the region at the expense of a more human-centric security tilt. This tilt ensures effective programming and policy-making in relation to the seven pillars of human security, identified earlier in the report as **economic, food, health, environmental, personal, political, and communal**.⁹⁵

To tackle the development challenge, a clear human security element is required. In essence, stronger human security measures are part and parcel of achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁹⁶ Human security is concerned with the **root causes** of the various threats as outlined by the seven pillars of human security. A human-centric security paradigm **does not act on a single issue, but rather takes a holistic approach combining traditional/physical security threats and the broader structural socioeconomic issues**. This approach can then promote targeted and contextual developmental responses to eliminate drivers of insecurity. In return this contributes to building and enhancing resilience at the local level. It is worth mentioning here that resilient communities are pivotal to sustaining peace not just at the grassroots level, but also nationally, which eventually feeds into regional stability.

A further nuance relates to how the empowered individual, fight for global sustainable development, and functional institutional structures resulting from human-centric security paradigm are **mutually reinforcing**. Likewise, the lack of empowerment, unequal development and dysfunctional institutions are mutually reinforcing in the case of the state-centric security paradigm. Hence, the region has an existential choice to make. This choice has the capacity of addressing the region’s structural security and developmental needs.

⁹³ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Global Military Spending Remains High At \$1.7 Trillion* (May, 2018), available at: <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2018/global-military-spending-remains-high-17-trillion>

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ United Nations, *Guide Into The Sustainable Development Goals 2018*, available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

5. Conclusion

This paper explored the regional peace and security nexus, with a specific focus on youth. In four sections, the paper sought to prove how a strict focus on state-centric security programming has come at the expense of sustained human security, which has eventually widened the peace deficit in the region and put young people at greater risks and vulnerabilities.

In the first section, the definitional issues relating to youth and security were set out. The definition of **security** was conceptualised around the notion of “referent objects.” **State-centric security** was defined through its appeal to the use of military means in order to protect the national interests of the state. As for **human-centric security**, a number of generally accepted features of the term were highlighted, including that it considers the **individual** as the key unit of analysis, as opposed to the **state**. Therefore, it defines security at the individual level, taking into account the **human needs and rights**. In the next section, an acknowledgment was made that youth is not a homogenous group, but rather a moving target characterised by intersectionality with notable gender differences, thus highlighting the need for more contextual youth definitions and capturing the evolving changes to the social contract in the region.

In the third section, regional state-centric security paradigms were discussed. In the aftermath of the popular uprisings of 2011, stricter state-centric security policies were adopted, which have had a counterproductive impact on regional peace and development prospects. Additionally, the cementing of a harder traditional security approach to regional issues does not bode well for long term stability and security in the region. In fact, it was shown that it further reinforces structural marginalisation and institutional exclusion, both of which eventually fuel the chronic crisis of social injustice and persistent inequality. The argument was further re-emphasised by a discussion of radicalisation at prisons and some of the borderless threats emanating from and experienced by the region, such as Violent Non-State Actors, climate change, environmental degradation, and cyberspace.

The fourth section presented a case for a youth-focused, human-centric security paradigm. Moved by a three-folded realisation that traditional security policies have not been successful at achieving sustained regional peace — with emerging security threats challenging existing traditional security paradigms and an unprecedented demographic make-up — the section stressed that a human-centric paradigm is **a pressing necessity, not a luxury**. **The region cannot simply afford going on with the existing state-centric security paradigms**. To this point, the inclusivity of human-centric paradigms was discussed at both the **individual** and **institutional** levels. Further, the section discussed how human-centric paradigms safeguard development by acting comprehensively, as opposed to acting on single issues, addressing the root causes, and downplaying state-driven barriers to sustainable development and economic growth.

Overall, this paper realises the historic demographic dividend of the region’s young population, and pushes for a youth-focused human-centric security paradigm. A paradigm that sees young people as an opportunity — albeit a missed one so far — rather than as a threat.



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