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"Startups and entrepreneurship in the Arab world:

Insights into a silent revolution

with an emphasis on Amman"

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Preface

For M. H. – you taught me never to settle.

In the Levant all hell has broken loose after 2010. Countries I had been sure of living in when deciding to learn Arabic and to delve into the regions fascinating history and diverse culture might be lost for decades to come. The Arab world, from this angle, seems to be stuck in a deep crisis, unable to move forward: Resignation, corruption, destruction, extremism, refugees, brain drain – hopelessness.

Yet at the same time hundreds of new companies have been launched, capitalizing on the rapid spread of the Internet in a region where the median age stands at twenty-two years. Entrepreneurs are the complete opposite of the *takfiri* cult of death and destruction. They hold the potential of tackling some of the root causes of the current tragedy. Their startups are about creativity, cooperation, problem solving, resilience – and hope. About convincing educated people not to leave, for they could have a huge impact in their homelands.

Both narratives exist, and both have their justification. Like most transition economies, Arab countries are surprising, contradictory, and multi-faceted. The next decade has to show which narrative wins. Until then, conducting research on entrepreneurship might be considered as a humble contribution towards the second scenario.

In this vein I feel urged to pay tribute and show my deepest respect to every single martyr that fell defending his country against the worshippers of death – for it is their bravery that ultimately is going to make life worth living again in the Fertile Crescent.

<div align="right">
Jonas Feller
Beirut, Lebanon
November 1st, 2015
</div>

1   Introduction

That which seemed to be a spring turned out to be a dream. It is gone, at least for now. Five years into the uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), henceforth referred to as the Middle East or the Arab world,[1] people continue to being deeply dissatisfied with the prevailing economic, political and societal state of affairs in their countries.[2] This can be attributed largely to the tremendous challenges faced by the Arab world, most prominent among them being the world's highest unemployment rate.[3] The so-called youth bulge requires over 50 million jobs to be created until 2020 to accommodate the growing work force.[4]

Startups and small companies create most new jobs.[5] Fueled by technological innovation, most importantly the internet, a small but rapidly growing number of people are standing up to old challenges, trying to solve problems instead of emigrating, attempting to launch their own business instead of applying at unproductive ministries. By thinking out of the box they are challenging the status quo.[6]

This trend caught the attention of several observers. As one writer put it, "a quiet revolution is stirring up the Arab world. […] this revolution might just succeed where the 'Arab Spring' has failed."[7] She was referring to these entrepreneurs that might accomplish that which demonstrations were unable to achieve: Initiating lasting change that encompasses economic, political and societal domains.

Startups could strengthen the underdeveloped private sector, diversify the economy, increase competition and transparency while creating jobs for the high numbers of unemployed university graduates. The emerging business communities could drive demand for the rule of law and accountability while challenging the quasi-monopolies that to date control much of the Arab economies. Scaling their businesses, entrepreneurs will rely on the merit-based professional networks of the internet for hiring – instead of wide-spread cronyism, tribalism and favoritism.

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[1] The region encompasses the Arabic speaking countries, thus excluding Israel, Turkey and Iran which by some definitions are included.

[2] Jon Clifton, "Mood of the World Upbeat on International Happiness Day," *Gallup.com*, March 19, 2015, http://www.gallup.com/poll/182009/mood-world-upbeat-international-happiness-day.aspx.

[3] WEF, "Outlook on the Global Agenda 2015" (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2014), http://www.weforum.org/reports/outlook-global-agenda-2015.

[4] M. Al-Rasheed et al., *Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, 2009), 10.

[5] Tim J. Kane, "The Importance of Startups in Job Creation and Job Destruction," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, July 1, 2010), www.kauffman.org/~/media/kauffman_org/research%20reports%20and%20covers/2010/07/firm_formation_importance_of_startups.pdf.

[6] Christopher M. Schroeder, *Startup Rising: The Entrepreneurial Revolution Remaking the Middle East*, 1st ed. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[7] Sabine Saade, "A Startup Fever with a Middle Eastern Twist," *Open Democracy*, April 12, 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/arab-awakening/sabine-saade/startup-fever-with-middle-eastern-twist.

While these are general effects of entrepreneurship, many startups apply new technologies or business models to solve very specific problems ranging from renewable energy to healthcare and education. They are thus tackling problems which governments have proved being incapable to solve. By taking things into their own hands they dissolve the century-old pattern of unchallenged central powers and top-down policies.

This phenomenon is less likely to make headlines than uprisings. It initiates change that needs time to unfold. More important, it is a very recent trend that has not been covered extensively by media, academics and international institutions. In the long run, however, it might change the face of the Arab world forever. A true revolution does not destroy a countries infrastructure to replace one autocrat with one of another color; instead, it drives lasting change beginning with the deeply held values of a society.

Entrepreneurs solve problems, envision a brighter future and prefer deeds over words. They take risk, are eager to learn and work hard. They pursue dreams. And they refuse to become embroiled in sectarianism or elitist disrespect for their societies. Instead, they empower themselves with knowledge and technology to liberate their societies.

This thesis sets out to investigate what the Economist recently called the "startup spring":[8] Entrepreneurship in the Middle East in general and in Amman in particular, with an emphasis on its potential of changing the status quo. Is the region undergoing a silent revolution? Does entrepreneurship and technological progress change the economic, political and societal state of the Middle East?

1.1 Structure

To investigate the hypothesis, section two discusses current challenges by means of a literature review, considers their historical roots and points to the potential role played by technology and entrepreneurship in solving these challenges. The chapter looks into the demands of the Arab protest – bread, freedom and social justice – followed by three distinct approaches trying to explain the origins of these economic, political and societal problems. Building on this, a look at the role played by the internet revolution, the young "digital generation" and their startups lays the foundation for section three.

Taking the example of Amman, Jordan, the third section tries to test the hypothesis of the startup revolution by means of a field research. The chapter first introduces the entrepreneurship ecosystem of the country, followed by an examination of a range of

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[8] The Economist, "Start-up Spring: Clusters of Internet Firms Are Popping up All over the Region," *The Economist*, July 13, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/business/21581737-clusters-internet-firms-are-popping-up-all-over-region-start-up-spring.

interviews conducted with young people living in Amman. By listening to their perceptions, a diverse, sometimes contradicting picture of a young generation in an Arabic capital emerges that at least partially supports the notion of a historic shift taking place driven by educated, modern minds that long for freedom, democracy and an innovative, strong economy.

The section concludes with a discussion of Arabizi, the language of choice for many entrepreneurs in the Arab world. Highlighting the unprecedented change that can be observed in the spoken language, a third argument is being added to the findings of the literature review and the interviews. The last section summarizes the findings, implications and limitations of the present thesis.

1.2   Methodology

To investigate whether a silent revolution is taking place, a literature review is supplemented by a field research. The second chapter draws on publications by international institutions, a few books, papers from journals and newspaper articles covering economic, political and societal aspects of the current crisis and potential historical roots. In the same vein, the role of the internet for the Arab world as well as the concept of entrepreneurship is introduced and supplemented by selected case studies.

The field research in Amman considers literature as well, but soon builds on a set of notes taken and interviews conducted during February and September 2015. The notes concern the Startup Weekend in March, the Trip to Innovation in April, and Wamda`s MixNMentor workshop in Mai 2015. Interviews were conducted with young people living in Amman. Seven questions have been compiled and the answers to the open questions were recorded and transcribed. The full transcripts are enclosed in the appendix.

Arab terms and sentences are transcribed using the system of the German Oriental Society (*Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*, DMG) with a few exceptions according to the tradition at the University of Vienna. Terms that are commonly used in English have not been changed. Similarly, Arabic names were excluded from the transcription.

1.3   Limitations

This thesis does not come without several limitations. The greatest strength of this thesis – its multi-disciplinary, wide scope – can simultaneously be regarded its most important limitation. Most aspects mentioned deserve more in-depth investigation and might have fallen prey to generalizations that have not been intended at the outset. The thesis lays the ground for a wide range of potential research questions with a more narrow scope. A few suggestions are mentioned in the conclusion.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the literature review is very selective and limited because of the wide range of aspects involved and the tremendous amount of publications on, for example, the Arab spring alone. The absence of generalist papers on entrepreneurship in the Middle East required a contextualization of this topic: A revolution can only take place if there is something to revolt against, and in order to do so its roots need to be understood lest the issues can be solved.

Reversely, the geographic focus on Jordan helps to compare and discuss the results of the field research easily. However, Jordan might be regarded as a very positive example of entrepreneurship. In fact, MENA countries differ substantially in their support for startups. Thus, the observations can only cautiously be regarded as exemplary for the Middle East and North Africa as a whole.

Another limitation is linked to the limited number of participants that does not allow for statistically significant results and might be not representative even for the entrepreneurship community in Amman. Mass survey findings have not been intended, though, as Arab Youth Surveys and similar reports already provide findings on values and aspirations across Arabic countries. Of more concern is the ease by which an interviewee might be manipulated by the way an interviewer asks questions and the way he formulates his question.

In this vein it should also be noted that I am aware of the shortcomings in the transcriptions attached in the appendix. From dialectological perspective these are not free of inconsistencies. Yet the emphasis of this thesis is the content of the interviews rather than dialectology and linguistics. They were included as a point of reference for the field study and they may be useful as source of future sociolinguistic analysis.

Last but not least, the nascent state of literature available on entrepreneurship in the MENA region made it necessary to cite a wide range of different sources. To my awareness no comprehensive, established models and academic publications exist on the topic discussed. Hence in several instances only newspaper reports and blog posts were available.

It should be pointed out here that I have been interning part-time at the *Wamda Research Lab* in Amman which gave me very valuable insights into many aspects of the emerging ecosystem. However, no aspect of this thesis has been part of my work at Wamda and no part of my work has been replicated here.

2   The stillborn revolution: A literature review

"People are always shouting they want to create a better future.
It's not true. The future is an apathetic void of no interest to anyone.
The past is full of life, eager to irritate us,
provoke and insult us, tempt us to destroy or repaint it.
The only reason people want to be masters of the future is to change the past."
Milan Kundera, The Book of Laughter and Forgetting[9]

On December 17th 2010 Muhammad Bouaziz set himself on fire. The 26-year-old Tunisian had been a street vendor for seven years, selling vegetables on the streets of his impoverished hometown Sidi Bouzid. Muhammad worked hard so that his sisters could go to school and university, a dream that would not be fulfilled for himself after his hard working father had passed away. Being the only breadwinner for his family he was often working 14 hours a day, yet he barely made $70 a week.[10]

It was not poverty and hardship that made him immolating himself, though. Looking forward, this humble vendor was trying to save for a truck so he could grow his small business. What enraged and hurt Bouaziz was being prevented from doing his business: Unobtainable vendor permits, police harassment, confiscation of his goods in case he was not able to pay bribes and, ultimately, being humiliated by the state authorities.[11]

Ten days after Muhammad Bouaziz passed away due to his severe burns the Tunisian dictator who had governed the country since 1987 fled the country. The Arab Spring had begun. People from Morocco to Bahrain rose up, demanding ʿayš, ḥurriyya, ʿadāla iǧtimāʿiyya – "bread, freedom, and social justice." Millions called for the fundamentals of prosperous societies. Hopes were high that a new era had begun.

But they were mistaken, at least for the time being. Economic, political and societal challenges remain pressing and may well have gotten worse since 2010 in many countries, including those which were not subject to ensuing civil and proxy wars. This section is concerned with the stillborn revolution: The present challenges that triggered the uprisings, the past that brought about these many-faceted current problems, and the future that might solve at least some of them.

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[9] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Revised Edition (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 22.
[10] de Soto Hernando, "The Real Mohamed Bouazizi," *Foreign Policy*, December 16, 2011, https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/12/16/the-real-mohamed-bouazizi.
[11] Hernando de Soto, "The Capitalist Cure for Terrorism," *Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2014, http://www.wsj.com/articles/the-capitalist-cure-for-terrorism-1412973796.

2.1   The Present: Uprisings

"If, one day, a people desires to live, then fate will answer their call.
And their night will then begin to fade, and their chains break and fall.
For he who is not embraced by a passion for life will dissipate into thin air,
At least that is what all creation has told me, and what its hidden spirits declare..."
Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi, Tunisian Poet (1909 – 1934)[12]

The "Arab Spring" as a set of mass demonstrations across the Arab world was neither anticipated nor planned by the participants. While it has been rightly pointed out[13] that the demonstrators even in neighboring Egypt, Libya and Tunisia differed in terms of their socioeconomic backgrounds and political grievances, it was one simple and clear slogan that appealed to millions between Morocco and Bahrain: Bread, freedom, and social justice.

The following examination of the present state of the Arab world attempts to gain some insights into each of those demands. While it is apparent that they are deeply intertwined, the distinction may further an understanding of the complexity of the challenges faced by the Middle East. And while cross-country differences should be considered by policy-makers, we follow the approach of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that treats the region as one. In one way or another, all aspects discussed here apply to all MENA countries. The Economist accordingly endorsed[14] the approach taken by the UNDP when discussing the five Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs) that warned of the impending problems prior to the uprisings.

2.1.1   Bread: Economic challenges

"It is capitalism, not democracy, that the Arab world needs most."
The Telegraph, July 4th, 2013[15]

To the poor, bread has a very literal meaning. The Arab world imports half of its food consumption from abroad. When prices spike on world markets, the poorest that spent a substantial share of their income on food are suffering disproportionally. In the three years prior to the uprising, food prices in Egypt rose by 37 percent.[16] The economic vulnerable probably constitute at least half of the Arab world: 53 percent of the MENA population lives on four US dollar a day or less – an amount upon which it is virtually "impossible" to live in the

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[12] Mohamed Daadaoui, "Tunisia's 'Will of Life,'" *The Huffington Post*, accessed September 24, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mohamed-daadaoui/tunisias-will-of-life_b_7689544.html.

[13] Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 3 (2011): 2–7.

[14] The Economist, "Arab Development: Self-Doomed to Failure," *The Economist*, July 4, 2002, http://www.economist.com/node/1213392.

[15] Fraser Nelson, "It Is Capitalism, Not Democracy, That the Arab World Needs Most," *Telegraph*, April 7, 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/10159983/It-is-capitalism-not-democracy-that-the-Arab-world-needs-most.html.

[16] The Economist, "Food and the Arab Spring: Let Them Eat Baklava," *The Economist*, March 17, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21550328.

region.[17]

The single most important challenge in MENA is unemployment. The AHDR from 2009 already concluded that youth unemployment in MENA "is nearly double that in the world at large," concluding that over 50 million new jobs would be needed by 2020 to absorb new entrants into the labor market.[18] The latest report on youth unemployment by the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates unemployment at over 28 percent in the Middle East and over 23 percent in North Africa, the highest numbers in the world.[19] More specific, Arab countries have "some of the world's highest unemployment rates among college graduates and youth, and the lowest participation of women in the labor force."[20]

The youth constitute the majorities in their societies. While the global median age is 28, in MENA it stands at 22 years. With up to 60 percent of its population below 25 years old, the Arab world is one of "the most youthful regions in the world."[21] This human potential remains largely untapped as weak economies fail to provide the jobs needed while governments seem to be slow with initiating the required reforms.

Looking into the efforts paid by Arab governments, widespread poverty and pressing unemployment rates are astonishing at first sight. In many aspects, past development in the region has been encouraging. Looking at statistics ranging from child mortality and life expectancy, reduction of hunger and increased literacy, enhanced infrastructure to internet connectivity, scholars noted that the "region has made notable strides" towards surpassing many UN development goals.[22] Success is especially remarkable in the field of education. Measuring increase in average years of school attendance between 1980 and 2010 by people aged above 15 years, scholars found eight out of the leading 20 countries being from the Arab world.[23]

Governmental spending in the Arab world accounts for nearly ten percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) – the highest figure in the world.[24] As a part of that, regimes often provide huge

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[17] Mina Al-Oraibi, "World Bank Vice-President: Half of Region's Population Living on Less than $4 a Day," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, October 15, 2014, http://english.aawsat.com/2014/10/article55337518/world-bank-mena-vice-president-half-of-regions-population-living-on-less-than-4-a-day.

[18] Al-Rasheed et al., *AHDR 2009*, 10.

[19] International Labour Office (ILO), "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013" (International Labour Office (ILO), n.d.), 4, www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_212423.pdf.

[20] Schiffbauer, Marc et al., "Jobs or Privileges: Unleashing the Employment Potential of the Middle East and North Africa" (Washington DC: World Bank, 2014), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20591.

[21] Al-Rasheed et al., *AHDR 2009*, 36.

[22] Martijn Burger and Elena Ianchovichina, "Unhappy Development: Determinants of Social Wellbeing in Arab Countries," 2015, www.iariw.org/egypt2015/ab-burger.pdf.

[23] Filipe R. Campante and Davin Chor, "Why Was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 26, no. 2 (2012): 174, doi:10.1257/jep.26.2.167.

[24] Ibrahim Saif and Joulan Abdul Khalek, "Youth in the Middle East and the Job Market," *Carnegie Middle East Center*, October 27, 2011, http://carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=45851.

subsidies to ease the burden for their citizens – "or so they claim."[25] At closer look, these costly policies often fail to reach the poorest while failing to target root causes of poverty.[26] In fact, the combination of abnormal high government spending and staggering unemployment is less a contradiction but an expression of the same illness as pointed out by the World Bank,[27] the UNDP[28] and papers investigating the current state of MENA economies: They reflect a dominant yet largely unproductive public sector combined with failed attempts to liberalize economies and virtually no regional trade.

Malik and Awadallah accordingly describe the Arab economies as economies of "unearned income streams" because of their reliance on "rents derived from fuel exports, foreign aid, or remittances."[29] The state, receiving the lion share of these rents, pays significant higher salaries than the private sector. Its institutions are not only overstaffed but continue to play a central role by protecting the status quo. Rather than to embark on a road of serious reforms, they prefer to continue distributing subsidies. Yet only courageous reforms could lead to the emergence of a strong private sector which would create the jobs so desperately needed, and only an effective social safety net can offset the ill-designed subsidies.

The strong role of the public sector has been functioning for a long time due to the old social contract in which the state wielded control over much of the economy in return for free access to education, health care and jobs. A range of developments rendered this solution increasingly infeasible. One of them was the fall of the Soviet Union which had preferable trade agreements with some countries. The accelerating forces of globalization were incompatible with the inflexible state controlled monopolies. But most importantly, the growing youth bulge "stretched existing welfare systems beyond capacity."[30]

As the welfare system became increasingly infeasable, growing numbers of increasingly better educated graduates saw their prospects in the job market dwindling. Since the public sector remains the preferred employer, governments often try to balance offering even more positions in their bureaucracies with reforming their institutions. While many developing countries outside of the Arab world liberalized their economies under similar circumstances, investment

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[25] Hana Brixi, "It Is Time for the Arab World to Invest in People Not Subsidies," Text, *Voices and Views: Middle East and North Africa*, (February 15, 2013), http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/it-time-arab-world-invest-people-not-subsidies.

[26] Shanta Devarajan, "Corrosive Subsidies in MENA," Text, *Future Development*, (November 12, 2014), http://blogs.worldbank.org/futuredevelopment/corrosive-subsidies-mena.

[27] Schiffbauer, Marc et al., "Jobs or Privileges."

[28] Al-Rasheed et al., *AHDR 2009*.

[29] Adeel Malik and Bassem Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," *World Development* 45 (Mai 2013): 297, doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2012.12.015.

[30] Ibid., 298.

and development in MENA remained "domains of the state."[31] When governments "incapable of or disinterested in building strong economies" eventually introduced reforms they were so poorly designed that they have been identified as one of the main causes behind both unemployment, dissatisfaction and the uprisings.[32]

The failed privatization project created quasi-monopolist, well-connected companies that build on cronyism and increased corruption.[33] This was exacerbated by the third weakness of Arab economies: Their deep fragmentation that severely affects the prospect of increased regional trade.[34] With the unearned income streams[35] deriving from countries outside of MENA little incentives for regional trade existed. In fact, "few Arab countries consider their neighbors as their natural trading partners."[36] While MENA trade with Turkey and Southeast Asia increased, pan-Arab trade did not exceed 10 per cent – the same level it stood at in the 1960s.[37]

This negatively affects competition, divison of labour and incentives for foreign investment. The Jordanian or Tunisian market is very small compared to countries such as the United States or China. Noting the benefits of regional trade agreements, smaller countries elsewhere have been keen to establishing a common market – most notably the members of the European Union. Following the same logic, agreements have been signed among countries in Latin America (Mercosur), North America (NAFTA), South East Asia (ASEAN) and Central Asia (Eurasian Customs Union). In the Arab world, home to over 370 million people sharing a common language, no attempts in this direction yielded any results so far. The most advanced project, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), seems to be stagnating as well. Considering these aspects it is not surprising to learn that the combined MENA region, accounting for four percent of the world population, holds less than one percent in non-fuel exports to the world market. Firms fail to enter new markets while economies struggle to diversify.[38]

Together, these dire economic circumstances offer little hope for the poor and, more importantly, the young generation. Hence, the majority of protestors in Egypt and Tunisia "[…] prioritized economic concerns over desires for civil and political freedoms."[39] The man who

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[31] Sohrab Ahmari, "Welcome to Startup Egypt," *Wall Street Journal*, March 26, 2015, sec. Opinion, http://www.wsj.com/articles/sohrab-ahmari-welcome-to-startup-egypt-1427315557.

[32] M. Chloe Mulderig, "An Uncertain Future: Youth Frustration and the Arab Spring," The Pardee Papers (Boston: Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future, 2013), https://www.bu.edu/pardee/pardee-papers-16-arab-spring/.

[33] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 299.

[34] Ibid., 296.

[35] Ibid., 297.

[36] Ibid., 299.

[37] Ibid., 300.

[38] Ibid., 299.

[39] Mark R. Beissinger, "Who Participated in the Arab Spring? A Comparison of Egyptian and Tunisian Revolutions" (Department of Politics, Princeton University, 2012), 2, http://www.princeton.edu/~mbeissin/beissinger.tunisiaegyptcoalitions.pdf.

triggered the uprisings had burned himself to protest for his basic right to buy and sell. He was humiliated again and again by corrupt employees of the public sector that demanded bribes for him being able to run his small business.[40] The question of whether the uprisings achieve their goal or not does less depend on the degree to which following elections would be fair: "The struggle for a new Middle East will be won or lost in the private sector."[41]

2.1.2 Freedom: Political demands

> "He knew in advance what O'Brien would say. [...]
> That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness,
> and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better."
> *George Orwell, 1984*[42]

The Arab world is one of the least free regions in the world. This was true both before and after the uprisings. Already the first AHDR report argued that the Arab world's "freedom deficit undermines human development and is one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development."[43]

Today, 121 out of 192 states worldwide are considered being electoral democracies – over 70 percent. In the Middle East, eight out of 22 Arab states are hereditary monarchies while only one – post-revolutionary Tunisia – has a fully elected government. The formal republics "score among the highest in the longevity of presidential rule, which has steadily eroded the difference between monarchies and republics in the region."[44]

The lack of freedom is resembled by countless indices and reports. The World Press Freedom Index draws a bleak picture with journalism being in a "difficult" or "very serious" situation in every[45] Arab country.[46] For political and economic elites to be held accountable, a free press is vital. Freedom House, analyzing political rights and civil liberties, categorizes countries as *free*, *partially free* or *not free*. On global average, only three percent of countries observed remain *not free* – however, in MENA a majority of over 70 percent (13 out of 18 countries) fall into this category.[47]

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[40] Nelson, "It Is Capitalism, Not Democracy, That the Arab World Needs Most."
[41] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 310.
[42] George Orwell, "1984 - Part 3, Chapter 3," *The Complete Works of George Orwell*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.george-orwell.org/1984/19.html.
[43] Nader Fergany, A. L. Y. El Hamed, and R. K. Hunaidi, *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, 2002), 2, www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf.
[44] Lynken Ghose, "Regenerating the State in the Arab World: The Role Of the European Union in Democracy Building," *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance*, 2010, http://174.129.218.71/resources/analysis/upload/Abboud_low_1.pdf.
[45] With the exception of Lebanon and Kuwait, where "noticeable problems" exist.
[46] Reporters Without Borders, "World Press Freedom Index 2014," accessed September 25, 2015, https://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php.
[47] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World: Regional Country Status Breakdown by Year (EXCEL)," 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Regional%20Country%20Status%20Breakdown%20by%20Year%2C%20FI

An often cited argument for this lack of freedom is stability. Nassim Nicholas Taleb questioned this claim by applying his influential black swan theory to the Arab Spring. A black swan is an unexpected outlier from the norm that has a huge impact. The more minor outliers are suppressed, the higher the impact of the one event that cannot be prevented from taking place.[48]

The argument forwarded by Taleb seems contradictory at first sight: "Those who seek to prevent volatility on the grounds that any and all bumps in the road must be avoided paradoxically increase the probability that a tail risk will cause a major explosion."[49] Stable regimes that try to oppress divergences will be unable to control the one surprising outlier that ultimately will occur. Applying the argument on the Levant, the scholar has recently compared instable but functioning Lebanon to the tightly governed Syrian republic that became shaken by a civil and proxy war.

Looking at the highly centralized Arab regimes, Taleb warns that although strong centralism "reduces deviations from the norm, [...] it magnifies the consequences of those deviations that do occur. It concentrates turmoil in fewer but more severe episodes [...]."[50] If the statistician and risk analyst is right, and he supports his thesis by numerous examples from around the world, the worst could still lie ahead for tightly controlled, highly centralized Arab monarchies that have not been shaken yet.

In the meantime there are more obvious consequences of the lack of freedom. Because of the lack of transparency and accountability, corruption and inequality intensify. This holds true to varying degrees to both the formerly socialist republics (Egypt, Syria, and Iraq) and the conservative monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco), as both found ways to ensure power being vested in a small circle of decision makers.

Following this notion, the Arab Spring has been compared to the 1989 democratization wave.[51] Similarly, the Arab Opinion Index cites "corruption, dictatorship and the lack of justice and equality" as the perceived causes of the uprisings.[52] It is probably reasonable to assume at least some significant cross-country differences,[53] and it has been argued that political freedom was

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[48] Nassim Nicholas Taleb, "The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable," *The New York Times*, April 22, 2007, sec. Books / First Chapters, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/22/books/chapters/0422-1st-tale.html.

[49] Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Mark Blyth, "The Black Swan of Cairo: How Suppressing Volatility Makes the World Less Predictable and More Dangerous," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 3 (2011): 34.

[50] Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Gregory F. Treverton, "The Calm Before the Storm. Why Volatility Signals Stability, and Vice Versa," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2015): 89.

[51] Lucan Way, "The Lessons of 1989," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4 (2011): 13–23.

[52] The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS), "The Arab Opinion Project: The Arab Opinion Index," April 29, 2012, http://english.dohainstitute.org//home/getpage/5ea4b31b-155d-4a9f-8f4d-a5b428135cd5/5083cf8e-38f8-4e4a-8bc5-fc91660608b0.

[53] Burger and Ianchovichina, "Unhappy Development: Determinants of Social Wellbeing in Arab Countries."

the main demand of only a minority.[54] However, with the increased access to a variety of independent news outlets and a growing share of university graduates, the likelihood of political activism increases.[55]

The generally positive correlation between economic development and increased democracy however seems not to apply for the Arab world.[56] While the standard of living increased throughout the region, no steps have been taken towards more democracy and civil rights. In this vein it has been argued by ESCWA that the middle class constituted the main driver behind the political, democratic face of the Arab spring.[57] For those whose basic needs are met, participatory rights gain increased importance. If the government is perceived as being unaccountable and corrupt, a strong desire to change it might arise. In fact it was not the poorest who protested but those who were "economically more secure."[58]

It is one of the distinctive features of the Arab world that the middle class emerged against colonial powers, not against "ruling national aristocracy."[59] As an oligarchy in many countries seems to offer less and less of its share to the citizens of their countries, the uprisings were as much political as they have been driven by economic grievances. Both are intrinsically interlinked. Only the middle class – educated, but not part of the ruling wealthy elite – is able to push for the reforms needed.[60]

2.1.3 Social justice: The state of society

> "Wealth converts a strange land into homeland
> and poverty turns a native place into a strange land."
> *Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (600-661)*[61]

Social justice has been a key demand during the uprisings. Although economic growth figures had been solid for the last two decades, dissatisfaction and living conditions have decreased.[62] According to a recent Gallup survey, people in MENA have the lowest share of respondents

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[54] *E.g.*, The Economist, "Arab Spring Cleaning: Why Trade Reform Matters in the Middle East," *The Economist*, February 25, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21548153.

[55] Campante and Chor, "Why Was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring," 174.

[56] Ibrahim El Badawi and Samir Makdisi, "Explaining the Democracy Deficit in the Arab World," *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* 46, no. 5 (2007): 830.

[57] ESCWA, "Arab Middle Class: Measurement and Role in Driving Change," United Nations Publication (Beirut: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), 2014), www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/E_ESCWA_EDGD_14_2_E.pdf.

[58] Amaney A. Jamal and Michael Robbins, "Social Justice and the Arab Uprisings," Social Justice & Development Policy in the Arab World (Beirut: American University Beirut (AUB), April 2015), 7–8, https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/publications/Documents/working_papers/20150401_sjau.pdf.

[59] Rachid Ouaissa, "Thesis: The Misunderstandings about the Role of the Middle Classes," *Middle East-Topics & Arguments* 2 (2014): 14.

[60] ESCWA, "Arab Middle Class," 17.

[61] "Quotes of Imam Ali (as)," *Nahjul Balagha*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://balaghah.net/old/nahj-htm/eng/id/article/61/01.htm.

[62] Saif and Abdul Khalek, "Youth in the Middle East and the Job Market."

describing their life as "thriving in purpose", which is a "strong indication of constrained economic opportunity."[63]

It is no coincidence that many opposition parties[64] in the Middle East carry the term *'adāla* or justice in their name: The Moroccan (and Turkish) *Justice and Development Party*, the (banned) Egyptian *Freedom and Justice Party*, and the Libyan *Justice and Construction Party* all attempt to capitalize on a wide-spread sense of societal injustice. This injustice can be manifest in two forms: Unequal distribution of wealth and unequal access to opportunities and resources.

It could be expected that unfree, centralized societies come particularly high inequality. Throughout the region, "a thin layer of the population dominates the economy, controlling everything from banks, businesses to telecom."[65] Not only does this discourage people from starting their own business and customers choosing between competing offerings, it also limits the number of people who accrue the profits from these sectors. It has been argued that precisely this suffocating cronyism both exacerbated the economic situation and fueled the anger of the uprisings.[66]

Inequality of wealth in MENA has increased during the last decade.[67] This, however, is a global trend in which MENA does not score particularly high.[68] According to the same data, uprisings happened in countries with lower inequality (e.g., Tunisia, Egypt) while the most unequal countries remained stable (Jordan, Lebanon).[69] This has been questioned by the authors of a recent ESCWA study: Looking at disposable income and collecting their own data, the researchers of the UN institution were surprised by the pace at which inequality had grown over the last decade especially in Egypt and Tunisia.[70]

When inequality grows at an accelerating pace, corruption and blocked social mobility come to mind.[71] Given the youth bulged mentioned earlier, as well as the increased share of university graduates throughout the region, millions of young people enter the job market every year with the aim of enhancing their social and material status. Traditionally, this was taken care of by a

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[63] Adnan Mazarei and Tokhir Mirzoev, "Four Years after the Spring," *Finance & Development* 52, no. 2 (2015): 57.

[64] Backed by the Muslim Brotherhood.

[65] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 307.

[66] Schiffbauer, Marc et al., "Jobs or Privileges."

[67] Andrea Ansani and Vittorio Daniele, "About a Revolution: The Economic Motivations of the Arab Spring," *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 2, no. 3 (2012): 17, doi:10.1142/S2010269012500135.

[68] The Economist, "For Richer, for Poorer," *The Economist*, October 11, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21564414.

[69] Elena Ianchovichina, "Redistribution and Growth: The MENA Perspective," Text, *The World Bank: Future Development*, (March 17, 2014), http://blogs.worldbank.org/futuredevelopment/redistribution-and-growth-mena-perspective.

[70] ESCWA, "Arab Middle Class," 63–66.

[71] Asya El-Meehy, "Relative Deprivation and Politics of Arab Uprisings" (Beirut: American University Beirut (AUB), May 2014), 12,
https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/programs/social_justice/Documents/papers/20140507ifi_SocialJustice_AsyaElMeehy.pdf.

position in the public sector.[72] To date, Arab youth in many countries still aspire working in this rather unproductive field incentivized by "greater job security, higher wages, and more generous benefits."[73]

The overstaffed bureaucracies are not only unable to cope with the demand for new jobs. The weak private sector leaves few choices for graduates, especially highly qualified ones. As a result, a considerable share of young people abandon their societies. Brain drain, the loss of well educated professionals, exacerbates the poor economic performance of the region.[74] This process accelerates the decline of the regional middle class.[75] Yet a quick glance at the unemployment figures for MENA explains the main reason for this flight of talent: Unemployment for people with primary or secondary education might stand at 20 percent, however for those who got tertiary education it reaches an alarming rate of 40 percent. Education, in much of the Arab world, correlates with a higher risk of unemployment.[76]

The AHDR report 2003 referred to brain drain as a form of "reverse development aid" that puts Arab countries at a double loss: Governments invest into the education of their citizens only to lose their potential contribution to society.[77] This trend happens at a "large-scale and is steadily accelerating"[78] across the region, with little signs for a reversal. Shortly after the Arab uprisings, an expert of the Arab League warned that as many as 70 percent of young Arabs dreamed of leaving the region out of frustration and disillusionment.[79]

In fact, a staggering 80 per cent of Arab post-graduate students pursue their studies abroad and only every second of them ever returns to his country. The Arab world loses 450,000 highly qualified students every year to the West, costing North Africa alone more than two billion dollar annually.[80] This is not only driven by the problems discussed so far, but a very specific form of social injustice: *Wāsṭa*.[81]

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[72] Roberta Gatti et al., "Jobs for Shared Prosperity: Time for Action in the Middle East and North Africa" (World Bank Publications, 2013), 10, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/13284.

[73] Yasser Abdih, "Closing the Jobs Gap: High Youth Unemployment Contributes to Widespread Unrest in the Middle East," *Finance & Development*, International Monetary Fund, 48, no. 2 (June 2011): 36–39.

[74] Farzaneh Roudi, "Youth Population and Employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Opportunity or Challenge?," *Population Reference Bureau*, 2011, http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/egm-adolescents/p06_roudi.pdf.

[75] El-Meehy, "Relative Deprivation and Politics of Arab Uprisings," 12.

[76] Stéphanie Thomson, "Does a Degree Guarantee a Good Job?," *Agenda - The World Economic Forum*, October 15, 2015, https://agenda.weforum.org/2015/10/does-a-degree-guarantee-a-good-job/.

[77] Nader Fergany et al., *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, 2003), 10, www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2003e.pdf.

[78] Ibid., 144.

[79] Habib Toumi, "Arab League Seeks Solutions as 70 per Cent of Arab Youth Want to Emigrate," *Gulf News*, November 15, 2011, http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/arab-league-seeks-solutions-as-70-per-cent-of-arab-youth-want-to-emigrate-1.931043.

[80] Wagdy Sawahel, "Half of Mobile Arab Doctoral Students Remain Abroad - University World News," *University World News*, May 25, 2013, http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130524161517746.

[81] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 22.

Wāsṭa can be translated as *connection*. The Arab term denotes "the intervention of a patron in favor of a client in attempt to obtain privileges or resources from a third party."[82] This intervention, which is "very widespread in the Middle Eastern region",[83] is used most often to gain university admission, a job position or a promotion in the career.[84] The difference between the Western concept of networking and *wāsṭa* is the power of the latter to make qualifications irrelevant: Traditional networking might secure a *job interview* while *wāsṭa* secures the *position*. A Lebanese student of finance summarized his unwillingness to stay in his country by explaining that even if he managed to get a position it still "means once you are there you have to work under layers, generations, of people who are there not because they deserve it but because of *wāsṭa*."[85]

The existing studies on *wāsṭa* agree that, on the one hand, it forms a widely spread phenomenon used especially in the world of work while, on the other hand, moderate to strong majorities wish to see it eradicated. Since people agree[86] on *wāsṭa* being vital for obtaining lucrative jobs, its usage is not going to diminish any time soon.[87] The three outcomes are discouraging: Relations are emphasized over qualifications, companies and institutions that allow for *wāsṭa* hire potentially less qualified people, while the latter emigrate or put less emphasize on their performance but on befriending influential people. This system not only reinforces social injustice and profoundly hampers social mobility. It lowers the productivity of companies, something they can only afford because they are shielded against competition.

People participating in the Arab spring were more likely to plan their migration.[88] The more educated people abandon their countries, the fewer people will drive positive change. The flight of talent will accelerate the dissolution of the middle class which lowers the likelihood of the emergence of a civil society that could demand rule of law, rights and transparency.

2.1.4 Summary

The uprisings of the Arab spring were directed against economic standstill, political oppression, and societal injustice. The three issues are multi-faceted yet interlinked. Together, they paint a very bleak picture of the current situation – they narrate the story of a region that seems to be

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[82] Ahmed A. Mohamed and Mohamad S. Mohamad, "The Effect of Wasta on Perceived Competence and Morality in Egypt," *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 18, no. 4 (2011): 412.

[83] Hayfaa Tlaiss and Saleema Kauser, "The Importance of Wasta in the Career Success of Middle Eastern Managers," *Journal of European Industrial Training* 35, no. 5 (2011): 471.

[84] Ibid., 470.

[85] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 22.

[86] Khetam Malkawi, "Jordanians See Wasta as Essential to Obtain Gov't Jobs: Survey," *Jordan Times*, April 20, 2015, http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanians-see-wasta-essential-obtain-gov%E2%80%99t-jobs-%E2%80%94-survey.

[87] Mohamed and Mohamad, "The Effect of Wasta."

[88] Jamal and Robbins, "Social Justice," 11–12.

lost.

Economically, four key challenges have been identified: Poverty, unemployment – exacerbated by the youth bulge, ill-designed subsidies and "unearned revenues" as well as economical fragmentation. The political domain is characterized by oppression, centralization, a failed privatization project that furthered the interests of oligarchs and political fragmentation. Finally, the societal grievances evolve around increasing inequality, a lack of opportunities especially for young graduates, resulting in an accelerating brain drain and persisting cronyism, known as *wāsṭa*.

While unemployment, corruption and lacks of civil rights are issues found in many regions around the world, the Middle East stands out as the *least* free region with the *highest* youth unemployment and the *highest* share of government spending of the GDP. The uprisings of the Arab spring were triggered by a modest citizen who was prevented from owning his small business. The protestors called for the fundamentals of a good life: Bread, freedom and social justice.[89] The slogan captures demands that cannot be achieved separately. As their protests failed,[90] two things come to mind: How did the depressing present come about? And what is the way out?

The following two sections attempt to discuss each question.

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[89] Ansani and Daniele, "About a Revolution," 23.
[90] Maybe with the exception of Tunisia, at least in the political domain. This remains to be seen.

2.2   The Past: Stagnation

"A bad system will beat a good person every time."
W. Edwards Deming, Professor and management consultant (1900-1993)[91]

The dire present situation of the Middle East raises the pressing question of how all of this came about. As the Economist asked back in 2002: "What went wrong with the Arab world? Why is it so stuck behind the times?"[92] Only convincing answers that identify root causes of the awful quagmire might help identifying necessary steps forward.

One popular assumption holds Arab culture and society responsible. Another widespread narrative blames colonialism and foreign interference. Underlying both argumentations is an urge to blame either internal or external forces. While each approach provides interesting insights, they fail to offer a comprehensive answer: If Arab culture, religion, and society was responsible then why was this region able to prosper in the past? Reversely, were it for the colonialist legacy why were other regions able to pursue successful development projects recently while the situation in the Middle East worsened? Because of their respective shortcomings, an institutional approach will be presented that allows for broader considerations.

2.2.1   Development theory: Culture and religion

"Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people
until they change what is in themselves."
The Holy Qur'ān, Surat ar-Ra'd [13:11][93]

Modern development theory assumes that human societies move towards modernization by means of urbanization, economic growth and nation building.[94] In the vein of decolonization however it became apparent that development has a cultural dimension and that modernization does not necessarily imply Westernization.[95] Because modernity arose from the West, however, it seemed convincing for many observers to link development to certain cultural traits – that is, if a society fails to develop and adopt modernity than its failure to embrace values that are conducive to progress are to blame.

The most prominent among these scholars was Max Weber who, in his famous study on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, argued for a cause-effect relationship between

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[91] John Hunter, "A Bad System Will Beat a Good Person Every Time," *The W. Edwards Deming Institute Blog*, February 26, 2015, http://blog.deming.org/2015/02/a-bad-system-will-beat-a-good-person-every-time/.
[92] The Economist, "Arab Development: Self-Doomed to Failure."
[93] "Verse (13:11)," *The Quranic Arabic Corpus*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=13&verse=11.
[94] Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Trends in Development Theory," in *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions*, Second, The Theory, Culture & Society Book Series (Los Angeles : London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010), 6, https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/development-theory/book231028.
[95] Ibid., 16.

ethics, values and progress or development.[96] His was a critique of Karl Marx who, a few decades earlier, had argued for the opposite: That material conditions – development and prosperity – shapes culture and impacts the awareness of social classes.[97]

The argumentation of Weber is still relevant today. The previous discussion of *wāsṭa* seems to support his thesis: If a society exhibits patterns that negatively impact the prospects for the vast majority of its members, then this society will fail to achieve prosperity. This theory assumes that culture is slowly changing if not static, and it presumes that people disagree on what is desirable: Underdeveloped countries have cultures that simply do not embrace progress. Looking at the Middle East, the answer to what went wrong thus would be that "Arabs have often been the biggest enemies to themselves."[98] The famous modern advocate of this notion is Samuel Huntington who, in his often-cited thesis on the clash of civilizations argues that people can hold two nationalities but can never be part of two civilizations – because they build on opposing values.

Westerners, according to Huntington, love to think of "human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets" and related concepts as *universal aspirations* while precisely the underlying notion of *universalism* is a Western idea. According to him, above-cited values "often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures."[99] The unaccountability of Arab governments and state controlled economies, from this perspective, are not a failure of the ruling elites but the result of cultural values that produced them. More recently, another study partially reinforced this theory by investigating the relationship between economic success and religions. The authors conclude that "on average, Christian religions are more positively associated with attitudes that are conducive to economic growth, while Islam is negatively associated."[100]

These studies, however, come with severe limitations. Most importantly, they are capturing static realities while civilizations rise and fall. In addition, they imply that very different Muslim and Christian countries are more similar among each other than compared among themselves. Are "Christian" Germany, Russia and Brazil really more similar than the "Islamic" United Arab

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[96] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

[97] Linghui Tang and Peter E. Koveos, "A Framework to Update Hofstede's Cultural Value Indices: Economic Dynamics and Institutional Stability," *Journal of International Business Studies* 39, no. 6 (2008): 1048, doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400399.

[98] Heba Elsayed, "Book Review: What's Really Wrong with the Middle East by Brian Whitaker," *The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)*, October 23, 2013, http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2013/10/23/book-review-whats-really-wrong-with-the-middle-east-by-brian-whitaker/.

[99] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 40.

[100] Luigi Guiso, Paola Sapienza, and Luigi Zingales, "People's Opium? Religion and Economic Attitudes," *Journal of Monetary Economics* 50, no. 1 (2003): 225–82.

Emirates, Somalia and Indonesia?

Huntington`s vague notion of an "Islamic culture" has been criticized constantly, and probably rightfully so.[101] Less generalizing, organizational anthropology professor Geert Hofstede developed a questionnaire that allows to measure certain cultural traits across nations. The researcher defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another."[102] During his extensive studies, several dimensions of national culture have been identified. Of special interest is the concept of *power distance* and the dichotomy of *individualism and collectivism*.

Low power distance societies – found especially in Scandinavian countries – treat parents and children as equals, perceive hierarchies in organizations as nothing but a convenient structure, and describe the ideal boss as a resourceful democrat. In most Asian countries, especially in China, children are taught to be obedient. Hierarchies reflect existential inequalities and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. These *high power distance* societies consist of members whose process of socialization starting from early childhood and continuing at school instill expectations and perceptions that favor authority and accept inequality.

On another dimension, the degree to which members of a culture identify as an independent individual or a member of a larger group has been measured. In the field of work, individualism comes with a task-oriented approach at the expense of relationships, while collectivist cultures do not separate between private life and job life. As a consequence, relationships are given priority over tasks.[103] In Arab culture, the conclusion for some has been that *high power distance* and *collectivism* reinforce key features that lead to a lack of accountability, an economy dominated by the state, and *wāsṭa*.[104]

According to Huntington, culture changes slowly if ever. Values are "a product of centuries. They will not soon disappear. They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes."[105] This assumption, however, leaves unaccounted for the impact of the tremendous improvements of the living standards for billions of people living in former developing countries. As their standard of living rose, scholars using Hofstede's measurements were able to show how cultural values indeed did change. For example, *power*

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[101] *E.g.*, Mahmoud Kashefi, "The 'Arab Spring' and Its Theoretical Significance: Samuel Huntington's Theory, 'The Clash of Civilizations,' Revisited," *Societies Without Borders* 8, no. 2 (2013): 178–204.

[102] Geert Hofstede, "The Business of International Business Is Culture," *International Business Review* 3, no. 1 (1994): 1.

[103] John W. Whiteoak, Norman G. Crawford, and Richard H. Mapstone, "Impact of Gender and Generational Differences in Work Values and Attitudes in an Arab Culture," *Thunderbird International Business Review* 48, no. 1 (2006): 79.

[104] Andrea Hall and Jan Herrington, "The Development of Social Presence in Online Arabic Learning Communities," *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 26, no. 7 (2010): 1016.

[105] Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," 25.

distance increases and later decreases again as countries move closer towards the cohort of high-developed nations.[106]

The convincing explanation is that transition economies at the outset experience urbanization coupled with the emergence of a national elite. Only later an emerging middle class fills the gap between the powerful and impoverished. This, on a cultural level, decreases *power distance* while simultaneously increasing individualism: As the population becomes better educated, moves into apartments in cities with its members becoming less dependent on the support of traditional, large family networks, individualism becomes the prevailing lifestyle.[107] This process is accelerated by "government policy, entrepreneurial activities, and technological change"[108] that drive development and decrease inequality.

These observations have several implications. On the one hand they provide an additional explanation for the Arab spring: As education and individualism increases while high power distance declines, demands for political participation and throughout modernization increase. On the other hand, if culture is such a powerful force then how can the disappointing outcome of the uprising be explained? Moreover, do these general observations hold true for Arab societies?

A recent study investigating changes in work ethics and norms in the United Arab Emirates points to the persisting collectivism in the Middle East, known as the "culture of face" which urges members to "conform to societal norms and beliefs."[109] The findings of the study are intriguing: While individualism was higher among younger respondents, the belief in the utility of *wāsṭa* – the leverage of contacts to obtain job positions or university admission – was higher, too.[110] A possible explanation is offered by another study from Egypt that found the belief in the usefulness of *wāsṭa* being higher among *less* affluent students: The scarcity or lack of access to this tool makes respondents rating its value higher, thus not indicating an increased but a decreased availability.[111]

Developmental theory under the consideration of culture seems to indicate a generational shift. In this vein, the findings of the Arab Youth Survey should be considered. The annual pan-Arab study involves thousands of respondents from all Arab countries. In 2011, a total of 17 percent of surveyed youths agreed with the statement that "traditional values are outdated and belong

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[106] Pamela L. Cox, Barry A. Friedman, and Thomas Tribunella, "Relationships among Cultural Dimensions, National Gross Domestic Product, and Environmental Sustainability," *Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 12, no. 6 (2011): 47.
[107] Tang and Koveos, "A Framework to Update Hofstede's Cultural Value Indices," 1050.
[108] Cox, Friedman, and Tribunella, "Relationships among Cultural Dimensions," 47.
[109] Whiteoak, Crawford, and Mapstone, "Impact in Work Values," 85–86.
[110] Ibid., 86.
[111] Mohamed and Mohamad, "The Effect of Wasta," 421.

in the past; I am keen to embrace modern values and beliefs." In 2014, this figure had risen up to 46 percent.[112] Explaining this substantial shift, the authors of the study cite "social media consumption, smart phone penetration and exposure to new ideas and beliefs through international media and travel."[113] Again, a change in culture is being attributed to changed material circumstances – most notably, technology and globalization.

Probably the most differentiated and detailed study on culture has been presented by the World Values Surveys. Measuring emancipative and secular values over time, this large-scale study clearly indicates that "values are *not* static; they co-evolve with the developments that have given shape to culture zones."[114] Looking into the path of the "Islamic East", however, it becomes apparent that this cultural zone, defined as "the Middle East and Northern Africa, plus Iran and Turkey,"[115] is the *least* secular and emancipative out of ten civilizations identified by the authors.[116]

Yet all cultures, including the Islamic East, are continuously moving into one direction: That of "human empowerment", meaning that "ordinary people are in control."[117] This builds on emancipative values that incorporate a mindset that puts "an emphasis on freedom of choice and equality of opportunities."[118] The forceful argumentation presented by Welzel concludes that "human empowerment begins to globalize. This process de-Westernizes the world as the West's monopoly over human empowerment erodes."[119] This is significant, because the Western culture that brought about modernity and prosperity for its own citizens regularly denied it to the majority of humanity. Colonialism build on "the humiliation, exploitation, and even the extinction of other cultures."[120] However, as education, technology and globalization advance on an increasing pace, this era has come to an end. As soon as the possibility exists, all societies follow their urge to direct their efforts "toward more rather than less empowerment."[121] Cultures are not static, and the direction that cultural change takes is never directed against the interests of its adherents.

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[112] ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, "Arab Youth Survey 2014" (ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey, 2014), 10, www.burson-marsteller.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/AYS-Whitepaper-en.pdf.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Christian Welzel, *Freedom Rising: Human Empowerment and the Quest for Emancipation*, World Values Surveys Books (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 90.
[115] Ibid., 28.
[116] Ibid., 91.
[117] Ibid., xxv.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., 375.
[120] Ibid., 25.
[121] Ibid., 16.

2.2.2 Dependency theory: Colonialism and Salafism

"Thank God for ISIS [...].
We are going to be in the Middle East forever."
Lieutenant General William G. Boykin, November 2014[122]

If humans ultimately yearn for empowerment and if education and technology is vital for its attainment, than why is the Middle East the *least* advanced region in terms of emancipative and secular values? The Arab world is endowed with tremendous natural resources, it spends above world average on education[123] and does not particularly lag behind in the adaptation of new technology.

While certain factions would like to blame Islam it is apparent that Welzels definition of the "Islamic East" explicitly excludes vast parts of the Islamic world in his definition. Instead, dependency theory might be helpful to explain this underdevelopment. Theorists of this school hold that developing countries are kept under foreign domination even if formal colonialism ended.[124] In fact, it would be ignorant not to consider the features that make the Middle East stand out from other formerly colonized regions: Geopolitics, mainly driven by the Wests dependency on oil and commitment towards the Zionist project.[125]

The former lead to a particular emphasis on cementing the status quo – that is, massively supporting aligned dictatorships instead of promoting democracy or limiting interference in the affairs of the region – while the latter ensured that any emancipatory Arab project would be crushed as "human empowerment" in the case of Greater Syria implies the return of the Palestinian refugees and the transformation of the last, albeit special, "settler state"[126] into a democracy for all citizens.

For a short period at the beginning of the 20th century it seemed as if the Arab world would reemerge as a political entity. The Ottoman Empire that had ruled this region for centuries was tumbling and aspirations for a unified Arab kingdom enjoyed wide support. A nation encompassing Greater Syria[127] and Iraq, for example, would form an equal to Turkey and Iran in terms of population and country size. With access to both the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea, this nation – envisaged by thinkers such as Antoun Saadeh – could have

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[122] Frontpagemag.com, "Obama's Assault on the Military," *Frontpage Magazine*, November 27, 2014, http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/246147/obamas-assault-military-frontpagemagcom; *American Conservative: Thank God for ISIS.*, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cTTr9TufKs.
[123] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 124.
[124] Samir Amin, "Accumulation and Development: A Theoretical Model," *Review of African Political Economy* 1, no. 1 (1974): 9–26.
[125] Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (London and New York: Oneworld Publications, 2007).
[126] Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State*, Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).
[127] Todays Hatay province in Turkey, todays Israel and the occupied Golan, Gaza, the West bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

turned into a prosperous global center of trade.[128] This is even more likely because of its mixed Muslim, Christian and Jewish population back at that time. The regions diversity made secular and progressive visions attractive to many minorities that, together, formed a majority.

The end of World War I, however, saw Arabia divided and conquered by Great Britain and France as previously negotiated behind closed doors in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Even more, the British empire pledged to work towards the establishment of a "homeland for the Jewish people" in Greater Syria as announced in the Balfour Declaration. The subsequent anticolonial uprisings in Iraq, Syria and Palestine were crushed by force, and the borders drawn on a piece of paper at the beginning of 20th century turned into checkpoints, barbed wire and a persisting reality.

For many Arab countries it not before the end of World War II that they gained their formal independence: The Republic of Lebanon in 1943, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1946, the Kingdom of Libya in 1951, the Kingdom of Morocco and Tunisia in 1956, the Republic of Iraq in 1958, the Somali Republic in 1960, Algeria in 1962, and the United Arab Emirates in 1971.

The colonial experience that galvanized in the loss of Palestine 1948 led to series of attempts to overcome the strongly felt defeat and humiliation. Monarchies imposed by the colonial powers were overthrown by pan-Arab revolutionaries in Egypt (1952), Iraq (1958) and Libya (1969). Gamal Abdel Nasser, the nationalist president of Egypt that embodied the aspiration of Arab unity and independence more than anyone else, propagated a vision of a social justice, a strong army and a secular, modern society that would unite a people that shared a common language, history and aspiration. Yet his rule, as all subsequent nationalist experiments, was "designed to guide the popular will, not to respond to it."[129]

The secular, nationalist and, at least rhetorically, pan-Arab movements that came to govern the newly formed states advanced a social contract that can be found in many countries struggling to overcome colonial rule. As the case in Nasser's Egypt, the government provided education, health care and jobs thus elevating millions out of poverty. This process was accompanied by land reforms and the promise of the liberation of Palestine. In return, the citizens were to be loyal to this state. In the context of the cold war, the violent experience with colonialism and worldwide staged coups against anticolonialist governments,[130] any opposition was considered

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[128] Robert Ayan, "Greater Syria: The Realization of an Ambition," *Syriawide*, accessed September 29, 2015, http://www.syriawide.com/eighteen.html.

[129] Cleveland William and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Fourth (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2009), 308.

[130] "Covert United States Foreign Regime Change Actions," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, October 20, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Covert_United_States_foreign_regime_change_actions&oldid=686675454.

to equal treason. Colonialism in the 1950s was no abstract concept: The Algerian people lost over one million people in their fight for independence.[131] But as power became vested in a small elite guiding the masses, the Arab question was severed from the issue of democracy.[132] Liberty meant liberty from outsiders, not the internal freedom to oppose the government. Under such circumstances, no civil society could emerge that would held governors accountable.

Even more important, the division of the Middle East into relatively small states had profound implications as the cold war continued. As individual governments took sides with external powers – despite Nasser's attempt to forward the concept of non-alignment – their dependency on opposing super powers grew while prospects for any form of Arab unity decreased. And while the anti-colonialist republics failed to establish a democratic society, the pro-Western monarchies leveraged religion against widespread secular, often socialist ideas. The failures of the secular modernization project – exemplified most notably by the disastrous six day war of 1967 – gave rise to Islamist forces. The center that supported them financially, logistically and, most important, ideologically, was Saudi Arabia.[133]

Starting with the meeting of King Ibn Saud and President Franklin D. Roosevelt on board the USS Quincy in 1945, an unbreakable alliance began to take shape that not only successfully countered the nationalist project of Nasser but eventually facilitated the spread of political Islam.[134] The importance of this aspect has been magnified lately by the fast-spreading phenomenon of ISIS. In Eastern Europe, the fall of socialist regimes came with a clear alternative. In the post-Arab spring era a real alternative does not exist. The fake alternative consists of religious forces – the Muslim brotherhood, the Salafists and ISIS. Its danger for the future of the region lies in its ability to at least partially successfully portray itself as a real opposition and clear alternative, bringing about liberation from foreign and domestic oppression. Even in cases when its actors might not have been tools manipulated by enemies of Arab progress and empowerment they further sectarianism, focus on cultural issues irrelevant to economic development and fear critical and free thinking, the precedent of successful societies.

It has thus been argued that the shift from widespread secular ideas towards fundamentalism

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[131] "Algerian War," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, October 19, 2015,
https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Algerian_War&oldid=686558887.
[132] Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1993), 11.
[133] Ibid., 170.
[134] David A. Charters, "Something Old, Something New…? Al Qaeda, Jihadism, and Fascism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 1 (2007): 69.

was neither a coincidence nor a form of protest and anti-imperialism.[135] Political Islam does neither serve human empowerment nor does it pose a viable option for Arabic independency. Quite contrarily, its backwardness polarizes societies while its violent nihilism accelerates the destruction of the region, paving the way for further foreign interventions.

The most obvious link between the colonial powers and Islamic extremism is Saudi Arabia, the very same country that welcomed the Tunisian dictator when he fled the country he had robbed of its wealth. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wrote in 2009 that "donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide."[136] More recently, a study found that the lion share of tweets supporting ISIS come from Saudi Arabia.[137] While donors and social media activists do not imply governmental endorsement, it is undeniable that in the Middle East the historic key ally of the West is a regime ruling in "partnership with a highly conservative religious establishment espousing a fundamentalist theology known as Wahhabism."[138]

This could be dismissed as real politics, wouldn't the administration of the kingdom aggressively promote its intolerant religious ideology[139] across the globe. The Soviet Union, for instance, is estimated to having spent $7 billion during seven decades on spreading communism. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, is calculated to having financed its intolerant version of Islam with over $100 billion during the past three decades alone.[140] Needless to say that this had a huge impact especially on poor and underdeveloped countries with a high Muslim population share.[141]

This has severe implications for the Arab tragedy. First, billions of dollars that could have provided millions of people with education and opportunities were used to brainwash them with hatred. Invested in science and innovation, amazing inventions and companies could have originated from the Middle East – at least, poverty would have been alleviated and the people

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[135] *See, for example*: Samir Amin, "Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism," *Monthly Review* 59, no. 7 (2007): 1–19.

[136] Wikileaks, "US Embassy Cables: Hillary Clinton Says Saudi Arabia 'a Critical Source of Terrorist Funding,'" *The Guardian*, December 5, 2010, sec. World news, http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/242073.

[137] J. M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census: Defining and Describing the Population of ISIS Supporters on Twitter" (Brookings Institute, 2015), www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf.

[138] David Ottaway, "The U.S. and Saudi Arabia Since the 1930s," *Foreign Policy Research Institute* 14, no. 21 (2009): 1.

[139] Jonathan Schanzer and Steven Miller, "Facebook Fatwa: Saudi Clerics, Wahhabi Islam, and Social Media" (Washington DC: FDD Press, 2012), www.defenddemocracy.org/content/uploads/documents/facebook_fatwa_low_res_2.pdf.

[140] Yousaf Butt, "How Saudi Wahhabism Is the Fountainhead of Islamist Terrorism," *The Huffington Post*, January 20, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-yousaf-butt-/saudi-wahhabism-islam-terrorism_b_6501916.html.

[141] Akhilesh Pillalamarri, "The Radicalization of South Asian Islam: Saudi Money and the Spread of Wahhabism," *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, December 20, 2014, http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2014/12/20/the-radicalization-of-south-asian-islam-saudi-money-and-the-spread-of-wahhabism/.

of this region would have enjoyed prosperity and progress. Instead, violent and intolerant teachings were financed via schools, television channels and preachers. This comes in addition to enormous weapon purchases, one of the most recent deals being worth $60 billion.[142] While the world spends an average of less than 2.3 percent of GDP on weapons, Saudi Arabia assigned nearly 11 percent in 2014 to weaponry.[143] Together, this constitutes a huge redirection – if not waste – of wealth for the Arab people that can neither be offset by sound economic reforms nor explained by culture.[144]

Second, terrorist groups that now threaten virtually every Arab country have been deliberately and extensively supported during the 1980s by the United States and Saudi Arabia.[145] When one of the key architects of what later became the Taliban and al-Qaida was interviewed in the late 1990s, Zbigniew Brzezinski proudly asserted that the "secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap", asking: "What is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire?"[146]

It could be argued that this opinion[147] was uttered before 9/11, wasn't it for an article by the editorial board of the New York Times in 2014 that cynically commented on the renewed implementation[148] of the "excellent idea" in Syria: "There is a danger that American aid could backfire as it did in the 1980s […]. But the risk may be worth it."[149] According to Seymour Hersh, the "redirection" of Salafi terrorism against Arab people has been a US policy already since 2005.[150] Supporting his analysis, a disclosed DIA intelligence report on Syria describes the territory that later fall to ISIS concluding that a "Salafist Emirate" would likely emerge within its boundaries, asserting that "this is exactly what the supporting powers to the [Syrian]

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[142] Fahad Shaheed, "U.S. Announces $60 Billion Arms Sale for Saudi Arabia," *Reuters*, October 20, 2010, http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/10/20/us-usa-saudi-arms-idUSTRE69J4ML20101020.

[143] Sam Perlo-Freeman et al., "SIPRI Fact Sheet: Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2014" (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), April 2015), books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1504.pdf.

[144] The opportunity cost for the money assigned to the military budget is the first aspect, followed by the crackdown on the democracy movement in Bahrain, the war crimes against Yemen including the destruction of Sanaa's historical capital.

[145] Andrew Marshall, "Terror 'Blowback' Burns CIA," *The Independent*, November 1, 1998, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/terror-blowback-burns-cia-1182087.html.
For extensive references, see also: "Operation Cyclone," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, September 4, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Operation_Cyclone&oldid=679392095.

[146] David N. Gibbs, "Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion in Retrospect," *International Politics* 37, no. 2 (2000): 242.

[147] Which reflected the official US policy, *see*: J. Michael Springmann, *Visas for Al-Qaeda: CIA Handouts That Rocked The World*, First (Washington DC: Daena Publications, 2015).

[148] Patrick Cockburn, "Al-Qa'ida, the Second Act: Is Saudi Arabia Regretting Its Support for Terrorism?," *The Independent*, March 17, 2014, https://web.archive.org/web/20150716214048/http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/alqaida-the-second-act-is-saudi-arabia-regretting-its-support-for-terrorism-9198213.html.

[149] The Editorial Board, "Treading Water on Syria," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/13/opinion/treading-water-on-syria.html?_r=0.

[150] Seymour Hersh, "The Redirection: Is the Administration's New Policy Benefitting Our Enemies in the War on Terrorism?," *The New Yorker* 83, no. 2 (2007): 54–65.

opposition want."[151]

In this, dependency theory provides a powerful supplement to the cultural perspective taken by development theory: If a cultural zone happens to lie at the center of geopolitical wars its inherent move towards development can be severely be impacted. The diversion of wealth coupled with the spread of fascist ideologies among the wretched of the earth makes it much more difficult for values conducive for development to unfold.

There are only two problems with this focus on foreign interference. Long before the region became dominated by the West it had been ruled already for centuries by non-Arabs. Moreover, every single conspiracy that proofed being successful builds on the inability of its victims to anticipate and counter it. As nations pursue their – illegitimate or legitimate – interests, it might be convenient to blame them, but this popular attitude of blaming foreigners reinforces a state of weakness that is more imagined than real.

2.2.3 Institutions: Law and society

> "Businesses owned by responsible and organized merchants
> shall eventually surpass those owned by wealthy rulers."
> *Ibn Khaldun, historian and sociologist (1332-1406)*[152]

Considering institutions means considering "the fundamental cause of economic growth and development differences across countries."[153] This approach does neither ignore culture nor politics since both contribute to the design and performance of institutions. Yet it exceeds their limitations by considering the "the rules of the game"[154] in a society. Rules set constrains and provide incentives for specific human behavior, arguably the decisive force behind the fate of any nation.

Hence, institutions are "systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions."[155] Development depends on rules that further social interactions which improve society at large. This type of behavior is incentivized by inclusive institutions – most importantly, market access, political representation and civil rights.[156] When much of the world

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[151] Ahmed Nafeez, "Pentagon Report Predicted West's Support for Islamist Rebels Would Create ISIS," *Medium: Insurge Intelligence*, May 22, 2015, https://medium.com/insurge-intelligence/secret-pentagon-report-reveals-west-saw-isis-as-strategic-asset-b99ad7a29092; Ahmed Nafeez, "How the West Created the Islamic State: With a Little Help from Our Friends," *Medium: Insurge Intelligence*, September 11, 2014, https://medium.com/insurge-intelligence/how-the-west-created-the-islamic-state-dbfa6f83bc1f.

[152] Idrees M. Kahloon, "Citizen Keynes: Is Economics an Immoral Science?," *The Harvard Crimson*, October 22, 2013, http://www.thecrimson.com/column/body-politic/article/2013/10/22/citizen-keynes/.

[153] Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, "The Role of Institutions in Growth and Development," *Commission on Growth and Development*, 2008, 1, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTPREMNET/Resources/489960-1338997241035/Growth_Commission_Working_Paper_10_Role_Institutions_Growth_Development.pdf.

[154] Ibid., 2.

[155] Geoffrey M. Hodgson, "What Are Institutions?," *Journal of Economic Issues* 40, no. 1 (March 2006): 2.

[156] Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91, no. 5 (2001): 1369–1401, doi:10.1257/aer.91.5.1369.

was colonized by Europe, settlers implemented *inclusive institutions* in countries where they settled in large numbers while building *exclusive institutions* in places where the focus was on mere resource extraction.[157] In the formally post-colonial Arab world, it is striking to which degree the "masses are powerless vis-à-vis their institutions – the state, family, school, religious establishments, and places of work."[158]

Citizens demand and protect their rights by organizing themselves. Civil society is a term that has been coined during the times of the Scottish Enlightenment, describing the "activities of private businesses, an independent force that existed between the government and the family." Today, the Arab world has "has strong families and strong governments, but everything in between is underdeveloped."[159] This indicates that many problems which lead to the Arab uprisings can be traced to *exclusive institutions*, while the failure of the uprisings lies in the weakness of civil society. Eric Chaney and Timur Kuran, Professors at Harvard and Duke respectively, recently contributed to this aspect from the institutional perspective. Their insights point to the historical legacy of early-conquered countries and the subsequently developed Islamic law as strong indicators for centralized, exclusive and inflexible institutions – claims that deserve a more in-depth discussion, especially that the subsequent discussion of technology and entrepreneurship builds on the assumption that it is now that these century-old institutions can, and ultimately will, be replaced.

Chaney systematically ruled out many of the most popular theses that blame the "resource curse" (oil and gas), the hot and dry climate, Arab culture or Islam in general. Instead, he identifies "the legacy of the region's historical institutional framework"[160] as key variable of the persisting democracy deficit. This historical framework has relatively clear borders that overlap neither with those of the Arab nor the Islamic world. Highlighting countries that run a high democracy deficit the author demonstrates that neighboring, non-Arab countries (e.g. Iran, Uzbekistan, Chad) share the Arab democracy deficit while several Islamic countries (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia, Bosnia) don't.

The borders of the high democracy-deficit countries correspond surprisingly well to the territory conquered within the first century of Islam. Accordingly, Chaney argues that certain countries – among them the members of the Arab League – were exposed for a long time to a very specific institutional framework that was developed in the vein of the Arab conquests.[161]

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[157] Ibid.
[158] Barakat, *The Arab World*, 11.
[159] Fareed Zakaria, "A Region at War with Its History," *Time*, April 16, 2012, http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2111248,00.html.
[160] Eric Chaney, George A. Akerlof, and Lisa Blaydes, "Democratic Change in the Arab World, Past and Present," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2012, 363.
[161] Ibid., 365.

The early-conquered countries were strongly centralized and made local elites and the religious establishment dependent on the state. The sovereign ensured his independency from the local population by relying on an army often predominantly made up of slaves. This pattern remained unchanged for centuries and can be observed until the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. The experience was different only in *late-conquered* Balkan countries or *non-conquered* Southeast Asia, both home to Islamic countries where a local elite remained in power.

By contrast, Western Europe witnessed a decentralization of power following the downfall of the Roman Empire. This allowed for competition if not conflict among "the clergy, the aristocracy, and the sovereign."[162] Civil society emerged because political power was not entirely vested in one group, allowing for "less powerful groups to leverage one powerful group against another."[163] More specifically, the equilibrium of those societies was a latent conflict between different players which made compromise necessary.

In our earlier discussion of the economic demands of the Arab uprisings we pointed to the high government's share of GDP. Comparing this share's average across *Muslim countries* to *early-conquered* countries, Chaney found the latter being seven percent above average. This not only supports his thesis but comes with a weak private sector, the backbone of civil society.[164] Similarly, the author found the legal system and the existence of trade unions to be significantly weaker in the early-conquest territories compared to other countries with a Muslim majority.[165] He thus arrived at the conclusion that some dysfunctional patterns could be explained best by historical developments that slowed the development of regions concerned. And the polity score, derived from the Freedom House index and updated annually since the sixties, is an additional way that supports this thesis – thus relativizing the arguments forwarded by supporters of the dependency theory who might have over-emphasized the impact of colonialism. With *one* denoting a strong democratic environment on all domains, a strong trend of former (Muslim and Non-Muslim) colonies can be identified: Starting at 0.4 after their independence in the 1960s, they are approaching a score of 0.7 today. This means that de-colonization spurred democratic development in many parts of the world. The exception, again, are the *early-conquered* countries which scored significantly lower back then (0.2) and haven`t made significant progress ever since (0.3 today).

One innovation of Chaney`s approach lies in his flexibility regarding the subject of the discussion: The frequent reference to the "Arab world" sets a geographical scope that overlooks

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[162] Ibid., 383.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., 386.
[165] Ibid., 388.

neighboring countries, assuming that this region mainly identified by a common written language forms a good unit of investigation. His unusual explanation looks back over one thousand years to explain current democracy deficits. It is acknowledged by the author that his focus on a few elements of Arab history is rather narrow and does not allow for future predictions, yet his close look at the political institutions and their distinct features should be considered as a valuable contribution.

Political institutions change slowly because the holders of power will try to preserve the structure that enabled them to govern. They will also leverage their power to acquire more power.[166] The revolution led by merchants and their civil societies was triggered by increased economic activity of citizens that had not used their full potential during the middle ages. For a long time, the economic institutions of European monarchies build on expropriation, arbitrary taxation and feudalism. Technological innovation and the new wave of trade during the 18th and 19th century changed the de-facto distribution of power towards the benefit of citizens who demanded property rights (in Great Britain) or overthrew the monarchy (in France). Kings resisted the new laws, which curtailed their powers, yet the forces of change were irreversible making it impossible for the old institutions to persist.[167]

Why did the once thriving commercial hubs of the Arab world not nurture a class of merchants capable of restricting the power of their rulers? Chaney investigates the legal framework and economic institutions in the Middle East with a particular emphasis on the Ottoman Empire whose "sudden" decline he links to the "long divergence" between the region and Europe. Around one thousand years ago, he argues, the Arab world was on pair with its European counterpart in terms on wealth and standards of living. Since then, the gap has widened until it stagnated around one hundred years ago, putting the income of an average worker in the Arab world one third below that of his counterpart in Europe.[168] The author concludes: "The Middle East fell behind the West because it was late in adopting key institutions of the modern economy."[169]

In Europe, businesses became larger, leveraged new technology and pursued innovative long-term strategies. This was possible due to banks and stock exchanges that pooled resources of thousands of individuals. The beneficiaries were enterprises that formed legal entities separate from their owners. By contrast, the private sector of the Middle East consisted at large of small

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[166] Acemoglu and Robinson, "The Role of Institutions," 6–7.
[167] Ibid., 8–9.
[168] Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 3.
[169] Ibid., 5.

businesses that formed temporary alliances.[170] Because the owner was identical with the company it either ceased to exist when he passed away or it became split up among his sons – and most successful businessmen had no lack of them.

Hence it was new contractual forms and innovative financial institutions that enabled efficiency and allowed to scale companies in Europe. Standards of living began to decline in the Middle East relative to Europe. This naturally lead to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and political domination by the successful economies in the long run.[171] Very often, the 19th century is considered being the turning point in which the Islamic world disintegrated, becoming depended and, in many cases, subject to colonial rule. The failure to grasp the underlying causes of this process provides misleading answers to the question of what went wrong.

Interestingly, not all groups in the Ottoman Empire suffered equally. Under the caliphate, religious minorities were given the freedom to follow their own legislation. Being exempt from "Islam's traditional institutional complex,"[172] it is intriguing to see how flexible the – culturally and geographically not so different situated – Jewish and Christian communities thrived as they showed considerable openness towards the adaptation of European innovations. At the end of the 19th century, nearly all corporations were owned by foreigners or non-Muslim minorities, most notably the Greeks and Armenians in today's Turkey and Arab Jews and Christians throughout the Levant.[173]

The potential contribution of these influential minorities to the regions economic development have been lost during the many tragic events of the 20th century. The Armenian, the Greek and the Aramean Genocides, the mass migration of Arab Christians to Europe and Northern America, the migration of virtually all Arab Jewish communities to Israel and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism all exacerbated the prospects of an emerging innovative private sector that could have contributed to the competitiveness of the countries that became weak because of internal dysfunctions first and only second because of the rising power of Europe. Ironically it is the increasing frustration that again fuels Islamic extremism.

Initially the commercial law of Islam did not hold any disadvantages compared to other law systems. In agreement with Chaney, Kuran notes how centralization stifled pressures for legislative changes. While Europe witnessed the emergence of a civil society "capable of standing up against the state", the innovation of the *waqf* law (private endowments) efficiently tied this non-governmental institution to the state.[174] Islam, who's Prophet was a merchant,

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[170] Ibid., 97–116.
[171] Ibid., 5.
[172] Ibid., 296.
[173] Ibid., 169–170.
[174] Timur Kuran, "The Economic Roots of Political Underdevelopment in the Middle East: A Historical Perspective,"

encourages trade and commerce. Two features, however, lead to a set of discouraging institutions that became the traditional Islamic law. First, Islam set out a range of economic rules that might have fit well in their time but do no longer work under totally new circumstances. They may even show effects opposite to the intended outcomes. Second, because of the centralization as discussed by Chaney, a ruling elite emerged that not only changed these very laws according to their interests – they managed to obtain religious legitimization for their legislation.[175]

In the long-run, institutions that have been appropriate at one point in time were shielded against change. The *waqf* is a case in point. The religiously endorsed institution was an income-generating property, often real estate, that delivered specific services. Exempted from taxation and the arbitrariness of rulers, vast resources were invested into this asset type. However, the institution was usually established by one individual only. And the law also stipulated that once the *waqf* was set up even its founder was unable to change its irrevocable founding document. Even after his death, no reallocations or modifications were possible. All these features put the *waqf* at an disadvantage vis-à-vis more flexible European corporations. European trade associations, representing large groups of businessmen, negotiated with the centralized government of a given Arab country. Yet traders from the Middle East failed to establish similar organizations to advance their interests in Europe.

Critics point to the fact that Kuran focused too much on a legal system which was implemented for centuries by Mamelukes and the Ottomans – rulers that "treated their subjects as cash cows" with little interest in their development.[176] They point to the way Islamic law has been interpreted in a more flexible manner outside of the Arab world – a fact that Kuran acknowledges – and that legal systems elsewhere were no less underdeveloped compared to the Middle East when facing the rise of European corporations. Still, the combination of Chaney's and Kuran's argument points to several idiosyncrasies of the region, offering valuable explanations for the root causes of the current tragedies.

2.2.4 Summary

Drawing on development, dependency and institutional theory it has been demonstrated that several explanations for the "great divergence" exist, most of whom overemphasize select causes. Culture, colonialism, as well as the institutional system should be considered for a

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Journal of Economics and Political Economy 78, no. 4 (2012): 1091–1092.
Kuran 2012:1091-1092.
[175] Kuran, *The Long Divergence*, 6–11.
[176] John Cassidy, "Prophet Motive: The Economies of the Arab World Lag behind the West. Is Islam to Blame?," *The New Yorker*, February 28, 2011, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/02/28/prophet-motive-john-cassidy.

comprehensive analysis. What becomes clear is that the Arab spring was not only a rebellion against the current state but historic legacies. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that "the problems of the region are the product of a unique combination of internal and external factors."[177]

Culture might be an obstacle to development, yet ultimately all human societies move towards empowerment. Colonialism and client regimes hold strategically important regions back, yet outside of the Arab world many former colonies were able to overcome the foreign domination. In the Arab world, the process has been sometimes hijacked by totalitarian "religious" movements that do not serve its liberation. But more important, the political and economic institutions have old and surprisingly persisting dysfunctionalities. In Europe, those were successfully challenged by revolutions. For the Arab world to unlock its potential, this revolution has yet to take place.

Considering the attempt of an Arab revolution, the question arises of how close the people of this region are to successfully overcoming the long stagnation. Driven by young, educated people and abundant technology, access to information and a strong desire for change, where is the region headed? The demand for the rule of law, participatory rights and transparency implies that institutions need to be changed with the effect of strengthening economies, making societies more free and just.

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[177] Avi Shlaim, "What's Really Wrong with the Middle East," *The Guardian*, November 28, 2009, sec. Books, http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/nov/28/middle-east-book-review.

2.3   The Future: Entrepreneurship

"Everything we were doing in startups,
like the uprisings, was about fighting the status quo."
Habib Haddad, CEO of Wamda, entrepreneur, mentor, investor[178]

Entrepreneurship goes back to the thirteenth-century *entreprendre* which, in French, means "to do something" or "to undertake." At least since the sixteenth century it has been used as a noun to describe "someone who undertakes a business venture." Since entrepreneurs discover "new ways of combining resources" they are "agent[s] of change."[179]

In the age of the internet, startups often leverage new technologies to solve old problems, to meet existing demands or to create new markets. Technology and software has dramatically lowered the cost for people to access information, start a business and teach themselves skills needed in their domain. The Arab youth has been keen to adopt new technology, and since they form the majorities in their countries, their shifting aspirations and values will deeply influence the course of their societies over the coming decades. More specific, the combination of increasing numbers of university graduates and staggering unemployment has led to a wave of entrepreneurship in Dubai, Beirut, Amman, Cairo and Tunis.

2.3.1   Internet and technology

"Within the decade two-thirds of humanity will have the equivalent of a super computer
– the computing power that put a man on the moon – in their pockets."
Christopher Schroeder, entrepreneur and investor[180]

Much has been said about the role of Facebook and Twitter in both facilitating and fueling the Arab uprisings.[181] In 2000, Egypt, the most populous country in the Arab world, had less than 0.5 million internet users. In 2014, the number had grown to over 46 million, more than half of the population.[182] In fact, Arabic is ranked fourth among the most widely used languages online with over 135 million users.[183] As of 2015, around 60 million Arab users are on Facebook. [184] The Arabic version of Wikipedia is ranked 13th out of 140 languages in terms of popularity, and it is growing faster than any other language.[185]

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[178] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 109.
[179] Russell S. Sobel, "Entrepreneurship," *Library of Economics and Liberty*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Entrepreneurship.html.
[180] Christopher M. Schroeder, "This, Also, Is the Middle East," *The Huffington Post*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-m-schroeder/this-also-is-the-middle-e_b_6057194.html.
[181] Philip N. Howard et al., "Opening Closed Regimes: What Was the Role of Social Media during the Arab Spring?," 2011, doi:10.2139/ssrn.2595096.
[182] "Africa Internet Users, Facebook and Population Statistics," *Internet World Stats*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm.
[183] "Top Ten Internet Languages," *World Internet Statistics*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm.
[184] Uri Savir, "The Middle East's Internet Revolution," *Al-Monitor*, July 5, 2015, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/07/israel-middle-east-internet-revolution-democracy-youth.html.
[185] Mark Graham and Bernie Hogan, "Uneven Openness: Barriers to Mena Representation on Wikipedia," *Graham, M.,*

The internet and information technology has changed the world profoundly – and continues to do so at an increasing pace.[186] Encyclopedias used to be very expensive and some of their articles became outdated within a couple of years. Wikipedia, a free, user-generated encyclopedia offers knowledge to everyone in dozens of languages, including the sources of the information provided. Not long ago, staying in contact on a regular basis with friends from distant countries was time consuming and expensive. Facebook, the most popular social network, allows users to share content and private messages with connections globally, instantly, for free. Other websites offer online courses on a wide range of subjects, while services such as eBay allow users to sell items they no longer need to people living in their area at a price negotiated between seller and buyer. The variety of services and applications has no limits – and they are increasingly becoming accessible to majorities in all countries around the world.

The triumph of technology has first been predicted in 1965 when the engineer Moore published an article arguing that microprocessors double their computing power on an annual basis. He expected this trend to continue for the next ten years. In fact, it continues until today – making ultrafast computing devices, their latest version being smartphones, affordable to the majority of humanity that historically lacked access to information and ways to express themselves in public.[187]

An important feature of the internet is the absence of all kinds of borders. To be a user of Wikipedia or Facebook requires no passport, no payment and no permission by any ministry or commission. No queues, no office hours, no application form, no bribes. Even countries that decide to censor certain websites cannot prevent citizens to use Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) that circumvent these blockades easily. The relative anonymity provided by these tools allow users to discuss societal taboos or voice opinions that could never be stated in public before. To name but one example, non-religiosity is not uncommon – openly stating that one is an atheist, however, is a criminal offense in many Arab countries.

This lead to a state of social hypocrisy that evolves less around freedom of conscience than around freedom of speech.[188] Since the rise of the internet, countless critical minds managed to discuss their doubts, express their true beliefs and address issues they were banned from

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and Hogan, B, 2014, 9, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2430912.

[186] Farha Amir, "Technology Is Taking over the World (and the Middle East)," *Wamda*, August 23, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/2015/08/technology-is-taking-over-the-world-and-the-middle-east.

[187] Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee, *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies* (New York and London: WW Norton & Company, 2014), 45–46.

[188] Ahmed Benchemsi, "Invisible Atheists: The Spread of Disbelief in the Arab World," *The New Republic*, April 23, 2015, http://www.newrepublic.com/article/121559/rise-arab-atheists.

raising in their families and schools.[189] In a next step, social media encouraged like-minded people to launch campaigns that gained much attention and stirred up discussions. In Egypt, for example, a recent campaign called on women to shed the Gulf-imported conservative clothing and return to the colorful Egyptian dresses that were widespread during the 1960s and 70s.[190]

The internet is open, free, decentralized, and bottom-up instead of top-down. Borders of small fractured nation states do not exist; people that speak a common language can easily interact. Suddenly, the unifying force of the Arab language becomes a source of strength again. The anonymity offered online allows for the free expression of opinions. The virtual space is neither subjugated to the conformity required by a traditional, collectivist society nor the traditional, authoritarian hierarchies (elderly vs. the youth, men vs. women, parents vs. children). The entrance barrier is low: Literacy, a device and a hotspot to connect.

All these observations cannot deny the fact that the internet is only what the sum of its users create and consume. The content does not need to be progressive, reliable or constructive. The internet is vital to today's organized crime, including the recruiting and coordination of ISIS murderers and the spread of their fascist ideology and gruesome propaganda. It is abused as a channel by highly controversial Saudi preachers some of whom rank among the most popular Arab twitter accounts.[191] The war for hearts and minds in conflicts often involves unreliable information including pictures[192] and videos[193] that were taken out of context or fabricated right away. Countries including as Israel[194] and Russia[195] have task forces that act as if they were citizens of targeted countries voicing specific opinions and reframing events to manipulate public opinion. Especially among teenagers, fabricated stories use to go viral.[196] Of similar concern could be the lack of awareness among many users of social media regarding the amount of data collected on their private lives.

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[189] Juan Cole, *The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation Is Changing the Middle East*, 2nd Printing edition (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 28–34.

[190] Hala Ali, "Egyptian Women Urged to 'Put on Your Dress,'" *Al-Monitor*, September 18, 2015, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/09/egypt-put-on-your-dress-campaign-sexual-harassment.html.

[191] Khaled El Ahmad, "The 100 Most Influential Arabs on Twitter," *Wamda*, January 24, 2012, http://www.wamda.com/2012/01/the-100-most-influential-arabs-on-twitter.

[192] Hannah Furness, "BBC News Uses 'Iraq Photo to Illustrate Syrian Massacre,'" May 27, 2012, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/bbc/9293620/BBC-News-uses-Iraq-photo-to-illustrate-Syrian-massacre.html.

[193] Robert Mackey, "Norwegian Filmmakers Apologize for Fake Syria Video," *The New York Times*, November 18, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/world/europe/norwegian-filmmakers-apologize-for-fake-syria-video.html.

[194] Rona Kuperboim, "Thought-Police Is Here," *Ynet News*, October 7, 2009, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/1,7340,L-3744516,00.html.

[195] Shaun Walker, "Salutin' Putin: Inside a Russian Troll House," *The Guardian*, April 2, 2015, sec. World news, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house.

[196] Alexei Oreskovic, "Facebook Clamps down on Fake News Stories," *Reuters*, January 20, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/20/facebook-hoaxes-idUSL1N0UZ1S520150120.

If it is assumed that the majority of internet users seek to enhance their well-being, further their empowerment and pursue legitimate goals, the downside of the internet becomes negligible.[197] In fact, while the adaptation rate continues to rise, more and more dimensions of the internet revolution become clear. One way is to reconnect or strengthen relations with the large Arab diaspora. Another is to build alternative media that challenges state controlled outlets. On an economic level, digitization had an over proportional impact on Arab economies compared to other regions in the world. A study by the consultant agency strategy& estimates that already up to 400,000 jobs were created by digitization in MENA, increasing the GDP of the region by over $16 billion.[198] Yet while the report advices governments to further enhance the internet infrastructure in their countries, Arab governments seem to be unsure as to whether this fast growing phenomenon forms a threat or an opportunity.

While the government of the United Arab Emirates developed an ambitious roadmap to becoming an innovation, knowledge-driven economy,[199] the internet is closely monitored, Skype blocked and the use of VPNs a crime.[200] In Egypt, a prominent lawyer demanded Facebook and Twitter to be blocked since they spread rumors, help facilitating terrorist attacks and disseminate extremist propaganda.[201]

But governments around the world discuss which parts of the internet should be blocked, monitored or regulated. As their tools become more sophisticated, so become the possibilities to circumvent and expose them. Facebook, for example, recently rolled out a new feature that notifies users in Egypt in case the government had hacked into their accounts.[202]

Hence the only thing that really changes seems to be the increasing reach and speed of the technology. In 2004 no smartphone existed. In 2014, even small coffee shops in small Moroccan towns offered its customers free Wi-Fi. In a few years, low-budget smartphones will make the devices affordable for billions of people that have little spending power – and they will join the largest ever created human network that offers knowledge for free and increasingly changes the way we live. Steve Blank argues that we are in a transition phase that is similar to that of the industrial revolution: "[…] every aspect of society gets reinvented, government, business,

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[197] For a detailed discussion of the way the internet is used, see the next section on the digital generation.

[198] Friedrich, Roman et al., "Digitization for Economic Growth and Job Creation: Regional and Industry Perspectives" (Strategy&, April 10, 2013), 7, http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/global/home/what-we-think/reports-white-papers/article-display/digitization-economic-growth-job-creation. http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Digitization-for-economic-growth-and-job-creation.pdf

[199] United Arab Emirates, "Home," *UAE Vision 2021*, 2015, http://www.vision2021.ae/en.

[200] "Telecommunications in the United Arab Emirates," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, September 9, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Telecommunications_in_the_United_Arab_Emirates&oldid=680147310.

[201] Hala Ali, "Egypt's Battle against Facebook Continues," *Al-Monitor*, September 7, 2015, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/09/egypt-lawsuit-block-facebook-spread-terrorism.html.

[202] Egyptian Streets, "Facebook Defies Government Crackdown on Egypt's Online Activity," *Egyptian Streets*, October 19, 2015, http://egyptianstreets.com/2015/10/19/facebook-defies-government-crackdown-on-egypts-online-activity/.

finance, education, medicine, energy, technology, art, and science all get upgraded."[203]

To be sure, there is an opposing view that warns humanity awaits a "great stagnation" because all great inventions that fundamentally changed the way we live were made in the late 19th century. Trains and airplanes, medicine and electricity changed the speed at which people travel, raised life expectancy and nearly eliminated child mortality, lead to urbanization with all its implications on family structures and leisure time: The internet did neither prolong lives nor did it change the pace at which people travel.[204] This view however argues basically from a Western perspective, largely ignoring the liberating impact of ubiquitous access to technology on the global South. As Omidyar put it: "In countries where traditional media is a tool of control, these new and truly social channels have the power to radically alter our world."[205]

Going even further, Brynjolfsson and McAfee argue that the revolution of the information age is just beginning to unfold. As the invention of the steam engine took it's time to truly bring about the industrial revolution on a large scale, so too will the implications of the digital revolution become clearer in the future. Interestingly though they warn about the variety of jobs than will be lost in the process: Self driving cars, programs that not only translate but write essays and robots will provide customers with low prices and better services – yet it is difficult to imagine which kind of jobs will be created in the course of the "second machine age", making adequate education and new skills vital for the young generation inside and outside of the Arab world.[206] As the young Arab generation gains access to technology and the "bottom-up" structure it implies, the potential of the global internet revolution is of particular significance to a region that is among the least free of the world.[207]

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[203] Steve Blank, "Startup Revolution Series. In: Compass Global Startup Ecosystem 2015," The Startup Ecosystem Report Series (Compass, July 26, 2015), 6,
www.innovationquarter.nl/sites/default/files/Compass_Global_Startup_Ecosystem_Ranking_2015_v1.2.pdf.

[204] Martin Wolf, "Same as It Ever Was: Why the Techno-Optimists Are Wrong," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 4 (2015): 15–22.

[205] Pierre Omidyar, "Social Media: Enemy of the State or Power to the People?," *The Huffington Post*, February 27, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pierre-omidyar/social-media-enemy-of-the_b_4867421.html.

[206] Steven Pearlstein, "Review: 'The Second Machine Age,' by Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee," *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/review-the-second-machine-age-by-erik-brynjolfsson-and-andrew-mcafee/2014/01/17/ace0611a-718c-11e3-8b3f-b1666705ca3b_story.html.

[207] Karim Sabbagh et al., "Understanding the Arab Digital Generation" (Strategy&, 2012), 8, www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Understanding-the-Arab-Digital-Generation.pdf.

2.3.2 The digital generation

> "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood
> and don't assign them tasks and work,
> but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."
> *Antoine de Saint-Exupery, French writer (1900 – 1944)*[208]

The world changed substantially during the last five decades. Fertility continues to fall from a global average of 5 to 2.5 babies born per woman. Humans live longer lives than ever before. The increase of life expectancy – from an average of 60 to 70 years – might seem dismissible, but the divide between the developed world (where it already exceeded 70 years after the Second World War) and the global South (where it stood below 50 years) nearly disappeared. Similarly, extreme poverty decreased dramatically from two to one billion people living on less than $1.25 despite the population boom.[209]

In the Arab world, the millennial generation or generation Y – born between 1977 and 2000 – might have faced particular challenges, but they are no exception from these encouraging trends.[210] They have high literacy rates, live longer, marry later, have less children, are more likely to live in cities and increasingly spent at least some time abroad.[211] But their most important feature might be the fact that they are wired. The vast majority is regularly online.[212] The implications of the internet discussed above had their largest impact on the millennial generation, shaping their aspirations, values and perceived opportunities.

The culture and mindset that is inherent to the internet is one of participation, not submission. Heimans and Timms only recently argued that a "new power" is about to replace the traditional concept of power, one that builds on sharing and shaping. The clash between the old and the new power manifests itself by increased political protests around the world, driven by a crisis of representation. Citing Wikipedia as an example, the authors note how its content is "co-produced" and "co-owned" by the masses.[213] For rather egalitarian countries this might be evolution; in countries were even universities don't teach debating skills let alone encourage critical discussions, this changes the rules of the game – confined to the internet at first, but potentially seeping into institutions that increasingly seem at odds with the culture and mindset of the new power. To be sure, this development builds not necessarily on the qualitative, but in any case on the "quantitative expansion of education [that] has led to a silent

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[208] Antoine de Saint Exupery, "Antoine de Saint Exupery Quotes," *Art Quotes*, accessed October 24, 2015, http://www.art-quotes.com/auth_search.php?authid=2764.

[209] Hans Rosling, "Five Ways the World Is Doing Better than You Think," *BBC News*, November 6, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24835822.

[210] Cole, *The New Arabs*, 16.

[211] Ibid., 20–24.

[212] Ibid., 25–30.

[213] Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms, "Understanding 'New Power,'" *Harvard Business Review* 92, no. 12 (2014): 48–56.

revolution of sorts. It is a revolution of aspirations."[214] As Fukuyama pointed out, numerous cross-national studies found a strong relationship between "higher education levels" and people assigning "a higher value to democracy, individual freedom and tolerance for alternative lifestyles."[215]

The digital generation might be a "generation in waiting,"[216] a wait for jobs, marriage, an end of the armed conflicts and greater opportunities. But as its members spent time online and exchange ideas, they tap into resources that offer them ways to become creative and take things into their hands. Maybe even unconsciously they are removing some of the factors that have hold their societies back. This starts with the media consumed online – movies, books and news available for free and uncensored – and goes as far as the establishment of small businesses. Not only because plenty of opportunities exist online, but also because an aspiring entrepreneur can teach himself many skills – again often for free, and online. Traditionally, tech-startups were synonymous with the Silicon Valley in the United States. Today, they are "a global phenomenon, with startup ecosystems similar to Silicon Valley rapidly emerging all around the world."[217]

The ultimate force behind entrepreneurship are humans that, for a variety of reasons, are keen to launch their own business. According to the Arab Youth Survey of 2014, "more Arab youth are likely to start a business than in previous generations." Although the public sector remains attractive, an "increasing number of young Arabs would like to work in the private sector."[218] Another study commissioned by Ooredoo polled over 3,500 representatives of the digital generation across MENA asking whether the participants would like to run their own company. This question was affirmed by 89 percent, although only six percent indicated they already were working for their own company.[219]

The latest edition of the Arab Youth Survey confirms this trend: "Nearly two in five (39 per cent) young Arabs are looking to start a business within the next five years, with technology and retail being the most popular sectors."[220] While an important driver (for more than 80 percent) is the high concern over unemployment, the huge interest in technology and entrepreneurship comes

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[214] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 296.

[215] Francis Fukuyama, "The Middle-Class Revolution," *Wall Street Journal*, June 28, 2013, sec. Life and Style, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323873904578571472700348086.

[216] Navtej Dhillon, *Generation in Waiting* (Brookings Institution Press, 2009), http://www.brookings.edu/research/books/2009/agenerationinwaiting.

[217] Blank, "Startup Revolution Series. In: Compass Global Startup Ecosystem 2015," 21.

[218] ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, "AYS 2014."

[219] Ooredoo, "New Horizons: Young, Arab and Connected," 2014, 16, http://www.ooredoo.com/uploads/misc/Ooredoo-New-Hotizons-Research-Report-English.pdf.

[220] ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, "Arab Youth Survey 2015" (ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey, 2015), www.arabyouthsurvey.com/media/document/2015-AYS-White-Paper-EN.pdf.

with shifting aspirations as well. For example, nearly six in ten respondents of the Ooredoo survey indicated that overcoming existing legal barriers was an important obstacle.[221] It is precisely this confrontation between incumbents trying to shield their privileges and a rising force that over time became more organized and powerful which gave birth to the European civil society as discussed earlier.[222]

According to the Ooredoo survey, nine in ten said that internet and technology encouraged them to be more entrepreneurial, eight in ten agreed with the statement "the Internet allows me to continue my education beyond what is possible in my country"[223] and nearly every second indicated that "the Internet has helped open up new opportunities to earn a living."[224] The last finding corresponds to a report released by strategy& according to which almost every second young Arab wants to start his own business.[225] Together, this constitutes a huge shift from a mentality where the state was the sole provider of education and, to many, the life-long employer. Effectively, the internet empowers individuals to take their lives, at least partially, into their own hands. Together, citizens can ultimately come up with initiatives that address their concerns as opposed to waiting and begging for the solutions of their incapable administrations.

Schroeder summarized his observations of the rising entrepreneurship culture in similar terms: "An entire generation is being raised knowing the bankruptcy of the regimes on top, and knowing much better how the rest of the world is interacting and doing things powerfully because they've got access to technology."[226] This generational shift has yet to be investigated in more detail,[227] however, initial studies indicate that indeed some significant differences between the values and perceptions of the older and the digital generation exist. While a study based on the first wave of the Arab Barometer provides some interesting insights, it is quite limited since it builds on the data gathered four to five years prior to the Arab spring.[228] For example, the authors found the young generation to be less religious[229] but more supportive of

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[221] Ooredoo, "New Horizons," 17.
[222] See: 2.2.3: Institutional Theory.
[223] Ooredoo, "New Horizons," 42.
[224] Ibid., 35.
[225] Sabbagh et al., "Understanding the Arab Digital Generation," 6.
[226] Christopher M. Schroeder, "Witnessing the Middle East's 'Entrepreneurial Revolution,'" *Knowledge@Wharton*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/christopher-schroeder-arab-uprisings-spurred-entrepreneurship/.
[227] A rare study found more differences between GCC countries, the Levant and North Africa than among three different generations. It focused more on socioeconomic issues than values and aspirations, though. Compare:
Richard Shediac et al., "Generation A: Differences and Similarities across the Arab Generations" (Strategy&, 2013), www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Generation-A.pdf.
[228] Michael Hoffman and Amaney Jamal, "The Youth and the Arab Spring: Cohort Differences and Similarities," *Middle East Law and Governance* 4, no. 1 (2012): 178.
[229] Ibid., 173.

"Islamic law" than the older generation.[230]

The appeal of political Islam, however, has convincingly been described as a result of both the absence of freedom and "ideologically bankrupt regimes."[231] Since it is less grounded in religiosity – which seems to be decreasing "in both belief and practice"[232] – but in the lack of civil society, freedoms and the billions of petrodollars spent to advertise Wahhabism, it should probably be viewed less as an indicator of deeply hold beliefs of a majority but rather as an expression of protest and opposition.[233]

While this phenomenon requires more attention it should be reiterated that the Arab Youth Survey found a consistent rise of the share that agreed that "traditional values are outdated and belong in the past; I am keen to embrace modern values[234] and beliefs." The statement was supported by almost every second respondent in 2014.[235] This confirms the findings of an earlier study on the "Arab Digital Generation." Here, over 40 percent indicated that they would make their own decision regardless of other people's consent.[236] This goes in hand with discrepancies between aspirations and realities that go well beyond education, jobs and the right to vote. For example, while more than six out of ten believed they should be able to say whatever they wanted as long as they did not harm anybody, less than four in ten[237] thought they were able to do so.[238] When the Ooredoo survey asked who, in the opinion of the digital generation, stood against equal business opportunities for men and women, both male and female respondents ranked the "old generation" first.[239]

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[230] Ibid., 175.
[231] Charles Harb, "Arab Youth Values and Identities: Impact of the Arab Uprisings," *Mediterranean Yearbook 2014*, 2014, 76.
[232] Hoffman and Jamal, "The Youth and the Spring," 175.
[233] If this turns out to be wrong, it contradicts numerous studies about the correlation of increased education and increased tolerance, compare: Fukuyama, "The Middle-Class Revolution."
[234] A shortcoming oft he study is a clarification of what those "modern values" actually mean. Islamism and their rejection of Sufism and traditional Islam has rightfully been described as a modern phenomenon as well. However it is assumed that the majority of Salafists don't consider themsevels embracing something described as "modern values."
[235] ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, "AYS 2014," 10.
[236] Sabbagh et al., "Understanding the Arab Digital Generation," 24.
[237] In GCC countries, less than three in ten thought so.
[238] Sabbagh et al., "Understanding the Arab Digital Generation," 23.
[239] Ooredoo, "New Horizons," 50.

2.3.3 Startups and Entrepreneurship

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."
Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple (1955-2011)[240]

According to Eric Ries, a startup is "a human institution designed to deliver a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty."[241] Steve Blank in his definition describes a startup as "an organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model."[242] In our discussion, we will talk mainly about tech-enabled startups that leverage the internet.

Founders, or entrepreneurs, have been called "the 21st century's superheroes" because their products "make our lives easier and better, create jobs, and inspire us to follow our dreams."[243] Yet the majority of startups fail – numbers are said to be as high as 90 percent.[244] Those that succeed, however, often grow tremendously within a few years. The founder takes a high risk in the beginning, yet in case he succeeds he is likely to make a fortune. Many successful entrepreneurs started several companies that failed before they made it.

Failure is often frowned upon in conservative societies. The implications of a failure can be severe for young university graduates that need to start earning money to move out of their parents' house. Very often they want to start their own family which requires them to earn a salary and start saving. The likelihood of a startups failures can be reduced, though, by having those who succeeded as a mentor or by leveraging support organizations that help startups to review and identify the components of their business model.

From a Middle Eastern perspective, four factors make the risk of entrepreneurship seem more worth taking it. *First*, the entrance cost is very low. Because of the internet and the "democratization of coding", it has never been cheaper to launch a business.[245] The internet, in this regard, is an equalizer that eliminates the need for *wāsṭa*, at least in the early stage of a tech-enabled company. *Second*, startups thrive when economies hit bottom. Large companies lay off workers, graduates are forced to consider various options for their future, scarce resources incentivize people to rethink the way they are used. Startups react fast to sudden changes and cope much better with chaos than established, bureaucratic organizations. *Third*,

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[240] Steve Jobs, "Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement Address," *The Huffington Post*, May 10, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/05/steve-jobs-stanford-commencement-address_n_997301.html.

[241] Eric Ries, "Lessons Learned: What Is a Startup?," *Startup Lessons Learned*, accessed September 25, 2015, http://www.startuplessonslearned.com/2010/06/what-is-startup.html.

[242] Steve Blank, "What's A Startup? First Principles.," *Steve Blank*, January 25, 2010, http://steveblank.com/2010/01/25/whats-a-startup-first-principles/.

[243] Khatera Sahibzada and Rob Bueschen, "6 Traits Successful Entrepreneurs All Share," *Fast Company*, July 23, 2015, http://www.fastcompany.com/3048755/lessons-learned/6-traits-successful-entrepreneurs-all-share.

[244] Neil Patel, "90% Of Startups Fail: Here's What You Need To Know About The 10%," *Forbes*, January 16, 2015, http://www.forbes.com/sites/neilpatel/2015/01/16/90-of-startups-will-fail-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-10/.

[245] Kitty Dann, "Entrepreneur Will King: 'It's Never Been Easier to Start a Business'," *The Guardian*, June 12, 2015, sec. Guardian Small Business Network, http://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2015/jun/12/startup-entrepreneur-will-king-small-business-showcase-awards.

startups help diversifying economies – be it oil-rich gulf countries or resource scarce Jordan, governments that think about the future of their economies will arrive at the conclusion that education, a diversified economy and knowledge-intensive industries are the best answer to present and future challenges. They will begin to support entrepreneurship in their countries. In fact, some already have started to do so. *Fourth*, many corporations – and, in that case, some fast-growing startups – fail to understand the Arab market or focus on other regions. This allows to copy existing and proven business models to the Arab world. Startups don't need to be about the next Google or Facebook.

Against the background of the previous discussion of the Arab world and the uprisings, startups can be perceived as a continuation of the Arab spring as they further its objectives of bread, freedom and justice in several ways. On a personal level, entrepreneurship creates a third option between migration and the public sector, between unemployment and *wāsṭa*, between the promises of corrupt governments and backward "opposition" movements that too often turned to violence in order to hide their incapability to create. On a societal level, entrepreneurship goes well beyond the traditional means of civil society – political movements, NGOs or protests.[246] It translates the decentralism of the internet and its bottom-up culture into the material world. Entrepreneurship has much to do with envisioning things, adapting to change and taking responsibility. By addressing challenges, people learn about their abilities and their limitations when it comes to solving problems. Moreover, the continuous learning required from a successful entrepreneur shapes new identities and narratives that are quite contrary to those which recently fueled sectarianism and extremism.

Businesses are never established in a vacuum, though. Like ecological ecosystems, a business ecosystem according to Moore is an evolving network of players that impact the business and its success.[247] For startups to thrive a supportive ecosystem needs to be in place that provides the entrepreneurs with investments, mentors, favorable legislation and support institutions such as accelerators, incubators and co-working spaces.

Tech-startups today are found around the globe. At least in the United States it has been shown that it is them who create most jobs, with large corporations on average rather destroying them.[248] In MENA, between 50 and 80 percent of all jobs are created by fast-growing small and medium sized businesses.[249] The extent to which entrepreneurship succeeds in solving

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[246] Maryam Jamshidi, *The Future of the Arab Spring: Civic Entrepreneurship in Politics, Art, and Technology Startups* (Elsevier, 2013), 103.

[247] James F. Moore, "Predators and Prey: A New Ecology of Competition," *Harvard Business Review* 71, no. 3 (1993): 75–83.

[248] Kane, "The Importance of Startups in Job Creation and Job Destruction."

[249] Dimitris Tsitsiragos, "Innovation, Entrepreneurs Vital For Regional Economic Growth," *Al-Monitor*, September 11, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/economic-growth-middle-east-north-africa-ifc.html.

challenges ultimately depends on many things: The right policies by governments, the end of the current wars, an active role played by the private sector. Once startups want to become fast-growing enterprises, they are once again confronted with bureaucracy, the regional fragmentation and the investment preferences of the old generation.

However, some early findings suggest that things are moving in the right direction. Sources of investment for entrepreneurs rose 2.5-fold between 2008 and 2013.[250] In addition, entrepreneurs find new ways to tap into investment sources beyond traditional banks and venture funds. Crowdfunding is an increasingly popular concept. Not only does its equity-based concept align with the idea of Islamic finance, it somehow democratizes allocations of resources. People with "a business, charitable, or creative project" outline their idea to the public and indicate the amount needed for its realization.[251] Often it is sufficient that a few hundred or thousand readers commit small investments to meet the target. In turn, the investors receive agreed upon benefits. Zoomaal, one the first Arabic crowdfunding platform, has helped not only entrepreneurs but artists and civil society to raise money in an uncomplicated and unbureaucratic manner to record music albums, organize film festivals or support school projects for refugee children.[252]

Startups are becoming more professional, too. 60 percent of startups surveyed in 2014 had a mentor that provides advice and access to his professional network, leading to increased investment and improved strategic planning for the enterprises.[253] Governments understand the need for reforms as well. According to data of the World Bank, MENA countries carried out 200 business reforms since 2008 out of which nearly 90 percent made doing business more easy. One out of five positive reforms made starting a business easier – a step that needs to be followed by reforms enabling scaling and growth, but nonetheless a move into the right direction.[254]

In the first 6 months of 2015, more startups were launched than during the whole year of 2013.[255] The less hurdles aspiring entrepreneurs face the greater their chances of becoming passionate about realizing their ideas. As the entrepreneurship community grows throughout

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[250] WRL, "MENA's Startup Funding Activity" (Wamda Research Lab (WRL), 2014), 1, https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wrl-reports/english/infograph/funding-landscape.pdf.

[251] Jason Best and Aamir Rehman, "Why Crowdfunding Appeals to the Middle East," *McKinsey on Society*, 2014, http://voices.mckinseyonsociety.com/jason-best-aamir-rehman-middle-east-crowdfunding/.

[252] "Zoomaal: All Projects," *Zoomaal: Crowdfunding Platform of the Arab World*, accessed October 27, 2015, https://www.zoomaal.com/browse.

[253] Jamil Wyne, "The Mentor Effect" (Wamda Research Lab (WRL), 2014), 3–5, https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wrl-reports/english/the-mentor-effect.pdf.

[254] Jamil Wyne and Jonas Feller, "Are MENA's SME Business Reforms Doing Enough?," *Wamda*, June 3, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/2015/06/are-menas-business-reforms-doing-enough.

[255] Tahar Zano, "MENA Startup Scene: Through the Lens of Open Data," *Tahar's Blog*, June 30, 2015, http://blog.tzano.net/data/open-data/2015/06/30/mena-startups.html.

the region it will ultimately receive increase its bargaining power vis-à-vis those policy makers that so far have failed to understand the potential role played by startups for the region.

For this community to gain momentum, the ecosystem that allows startups to grow needs to develop further. Accelerators and incubators are important players in this field. They are organizations that select promising startups and provide support in exchange for an equity stake. Usually, this support includes training and advice, investment, access to a business network, co-working spaces and workshops. The number of these institutions is rising significantly especially in the UAE, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.[256]

Support is provided even by international companies. Intel, Microsoft and Google all engage in different forms with startups around the world, including MENA. One of the reasons can be found by the impact of innovative high-growth startups. In the 1930s, the average lifespan for an S&P 500 company[257] was 75 years. Today, it is a mere 15 years – reflecting the accelerating pace of a changes in business, society and technology.[258]

And it is not only the creativity of entrepreneurs and the growing strength of the ecosystem supporting them that drives the startup spring. Demand increases as well. Already today, the Arab world's smartphone penetration stands slightly above world average, standing at 47 percent.[259] By 2017, over half of the Arab world will have internet access at home.[260] This fuels e-commerce, set to nearly double from $7 billion to $13.4 billion in MENA already in 2015.[261] Widespread internet access implies that hundred million people search for content and use services and apps, preferably in Arabic or tailored to their countries, and who could be more suited to provide these offerings than the children of this region?

This is was Samih Toukan did when he launched the first Arabic mail service – difficult at that time but rewarding, as Yahoo bought the rapidly growing company in 2009 for an estimated $170 million.[262] The exit of his startup gained region-wide attention and for the first time pressed governments used to know only their politically-connected companies to take entrepreneurship seriously. Queen Rania of Jordan recently spoke about a "startup spring" that

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[256] Jamil Wyne, "Country Insights" (Wamda Research Lab (WRL), 2015), https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wrl-reports/english/four_country_report.pdf.

[257] A stock market index; listed companies account for roughly 75 percent of the American equity market by capitalization.

[258] John Hagel III and John Seely Brown, "Institutional Innovation: Creating Smarter Organizations to Scale Learning," *Deloitte University Press*, March 12, 2013, http://dupress.com/articles/institutional-innovation/.

[259] Iman Mustafa, "How Big Is Social Media in MENA?," *Wamda*, May 14, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/2015/05/mena-embrace-social-media-online-networks.

[260] WRL, "Digital Arabic Content" (Wamda Research Lab (WRL), 2015), https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wrl-reports/english/infograph/digital_arabic_content_infograph.pdf.

[261] Kareem Chehayeb, "State of Payments 2015: E-Commerce's Influence In MENA Grows," *Entrepreneur*, accessed September 26, 2015, http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/247836.

[262] John Reed, "'Startup Rising' Takes a Look at E-Commerce in the Arab World," *Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 2013, http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-books-20130922-story.html.

followed the "Arab spring", referring to entrepreneurship as a key tool to fight unemployment and providing opportunities to the young generation.[263] In Dubai, over 70 percent of private universities teach entrepreneurship.[264] The country is poised to become one of the leading hubs for innovation globally, based on a strong private sector and entrepreneurship.[265]

In the long-term, these initiatives could lead not only to a slowing brain drain but its reversal. In instances, well-educated citizens of Arab countries decided to come home either inspired by the emerging entrepreneurship community or sensing that it was good business sense to offer their services based out of countries with significant lower salaries. Abualzolof migrated with his family to the United States when he was a child. Today he is the CEO of the Ramallah-based startup Mashvisor.[266] The company offers its services online, targeting the US market while creating local jobs. Hala Fadel, who grew up in Paris, left a well-paid job in London to move back to Beirut where she chairs the MIT Enterprise Forum for the Arab world and invests in startups.[267] Investors are optimistic that the region will see regular exits of startups in the three digit millions starting in 2019.[268]

If, in the long run, the initial efforts made by some governments, companies, universities and an inspiring, growing community of entrepreneurs come together, the Arab world could once again surprise outside observers that were inspired by the spring only to become disillusioned by the ensuing chaos and wars. In late 2014 *Alibaba*, a Chinese e-commerce startup, went public in the United States. It was the largest initial public offering ever. Commenting on the sign of things to come, Fadi Ghandour wrote: "There will come a day when the next Alibabas will emerge from the Arab World, and if players pool their capital, resources and networks to support the rising generation of tech entrepreneurs, that day will come sooner than we dare hope."[269] The future remains unpredictable; but if the region manages to leave behind its daunting presence – itself nothing but legacies of its past – entrepreneurship will have played and continue to play a significant role in it.

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[263] Eline Gordts, "Queen Rania: Have You Heard About The Arab World's 'Startup Spring'?," *The Huffington Post*, June 3, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/06/jordan-rania-_n_6818214.html.

[264] Noor Nazzal, "74% of Dubai Private Schools Teach Entrepreneurship," *Gulf News*, June 9, 2015, http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/education/74-of-dubai-private-schools-teach-entrepreneurship-1.1532477.

[265] United Arab Emirates, "Home."

[266] Christina Ganim, "Ramallah-Based Real Estate Analytics Startup Aims to Serve World," *Wamda*, January 7, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/2015/07/ramallah-based-real-estate-analytics-startup.

[267] Maya Jaggi, "The Rise of Female Entrepreneurs in Lebanon," *Financial Times*, May 6, 2015, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/13fb2d64-efd4-11e4-ab73-00144feab7de.html.

[268] Alexis Baghdadi, "BECO Capital: 2019 Will See Mega-Exits Thanks to MENA VCs," *Arabnet*, October 2, 2015, http://news.arabnet.me/beco-capital-2019-exits-mena-vcs-startups-unicorns/.

[269] Fadi Ghandour, "It's the Right Time to Invest in Middle East's Tech Scene, Here's Why," *LinkedIn Pulse*, October 23, 2014, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141023140902-1326123-it-s-the-right-time-to-invest-in-middle-east-s-tech-scene-here-s-why.

2.3.4 Case Studies

To illustrate the practical impact of entrepreneurship and its potential to solve existing problems, a few startups from four industries – education, energy, banking and health care – will be briefly presented. Access to education has been improved dramatically during the last decades in MENA, but there is a persisting miss-match between skills and demands of the job market.[271] What is more, many people cannot afford the high tuition fees even of public universities.[272] In some countries such as Egypt the problem goes even further with huge illiteracy rates and overcrowded primary schools.

Searching for a solution, Ahmed Alfi built Nafham – an online platform that offers supplementary courses covering the Egyptian, Syrian and Saudi school curricula.[273] The interactive interface offers contains numerous video lectures, allows teachers to supplement their courses and parents to track their children's progress. In addition to the courses developed by the team, teachers and students can propose their own material. The user selects his grade and subjects. The website in turn offers him a growing pool of tailored knowledge – an alternative to costly after-class tutoring which is wide-spread in Egypt and beyond.

Targeting students and professionals, the open online courses platform edraak has recently been launched.[274] The website offers free online courses in both Arabic and English presented by renowned regional and international universities including Harvard, MIT and the American University of Cairo. Users can enroll in subjects ranging from computer science to history, signing up from wherever they are. This is not only an opportunity for those who could not continue their studies after fleeing their war-torn countries but for everyone who intends to enhance his skills, for example to meet specific job requirements.[275] Online learning is thus a powerful tool designed to help people from the first grade to people who already graduated. In some aspects, it can lower the aforementioned skill-miss match on the job market and

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[270] Khalil Gibran, "The Prophet: Death," *Bohra.net*, accessed September 26, 2015, http://www.bohra.net/archive/gibran/gibran27.html.

[271] Juan Manuel Moreno, "Is Being Employable Enough to Get a Job in the Arab World? The Double Transition from Education to Work in MENA," Text, *Voices and Views: World Bank*, (August 29, 2012), http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/being-employable-enough-get-job-arab-world-double-transition-education-work-mena.

[272] Ava Matheis and Maximilian Ellebrecht, "Wie Ammans Luxusträume Jordaniens Gesellschaft Spalten," *Zenith*, May 18, 2015, http://www.zenithonline.de/deutsch/wirtschaft/a/artikel/wie-ammans-luxustraeume-jordaniens-gesellschaft-spalten-004412/.

[273] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 142.

[274] Hazlett Candace, "MOOCs for the Arab World," *edX Blog*, November 13, 2013, http://blog.edx.org/moocs-arab-world/.

[275] Hayden Pirkle, "Arabic MOOC Platform Edraak Launches to Bring Quality Education to the Region," *Wamda*, June 15, 2014, http://www.wamda.com/2014/06/first-arabic-mooc-platform-launches-quality-education.

supplement outdated curricula of some universities of the region.

Energy is another example were creative solutions both create jobs and solve local problems. Egypt had its worst power cuts in summer 2014, leaving a population of over 80 million people for many hours without electricity every day. A small team developed a solar solution that saves energy during day time and allows to run a fan or to recharge electronic devices such as smartphones and laptops once power is cut. As demand picks up, the company will be able to offer even more affordable prices for its product thus making the lives of many easier while supporting renewable energy.[276] KarmSolar in the meantime tries to convince farmers to use solar panels instead of unreliable and expensive, though subsidized fuel supply for their lands. Huge ground water resources could be accessed in the process, increasing the share of arable land in Egypt from 7 to potentially 25 per cent – a move that could relief overcrowded Cairo and decrease Egypt's reliance on food imports.[277]

A related challenge is that of waste, especially hazardous electronic waste. Spear Ink is a company that turns trash into new raw material, thus making profits while protecting the environment. Essam Hashem, founder of Spear Ink, had observed how companies disposed their cartridges on a landfill. Not only was this harming the environment, the waste contained valuable materials that could have been reused. His solution was straight forward: "We collect the old cartridges, remanufacture the ones that are damaged, and we segregate and classify the parts into plastics and metals." [278]

The franchise model looks for people ready to offer the service in their city. They are trained on the machines – developed and produced in Egypt – and become entrepreneurs themselves, acquiring private and corporate customers for the environment friendly solution. Today, the company helps saving tons of plastic, toner powder and aluminum, an equal of 134,400 kg of CO_2 emissions. With exports of its machines to over 15 countries in the Middle East and Africa, the company considers expanding its business into India and Pakistan.[279] Meanwhile, Egyptian entrepreneur Azza Faiad developed a cost-saving way to turn plastic waste into biofuel. If the innovation of the teenager becomes applied in Egypt, fuel worth $78 million could be won annually while relieving the countries garbage facilities.[280]

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[276] Rachel McArthur, "Egyptian Power Cuts Fuel an Ecommerce Solution," *Wamda*, June 2, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/memakersge/2015/06/egypt-powercuts-ecommerce-greenscene.

[277] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 82–87.
Schroeder 2013:82-87.

[278] Rachel Williamson, "Printing Money: Spear Ink's E-Waste Ambitions," *Wamda*, July 30, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/memakersge/2015/07/printing-money-spear-inks-e-waste-ambitions.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Terry Turner, "Teenage Girl Turns Plastic Trash Into Million-Dollar Biofuel," *Good News Network*, August 17, 2015, http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/teenage-girl-turns-plastic-trash-into-million-dollar-biofuel/.

Another relevant subject is finance. In most Arab countries the majority of people do not have bank accounts. In 2012, a similarly underbanked African country introduced a mobile payment system – people who never had a traditional phone and may still lack daily access to electricity can now sent and receive small amounts of money using a PIN number and a mobile phone.[281] Similar solutions are now spreading throughout the Middle East, building on the fact that many people do have smartphones but lack credit cards.[282] One example is London-based Dopay which offers small companies in Egypt to sent monthly salaries to its unbanked employees. The cloud-based service became highly popular in the country because it eliminates hurdles stemming from cash for both employers and employees, allowing the latter to use an online account without a credit card.[283]

Another inspiring example which was mentioned earlier: Zoomaal, a regional crowd-funding company launched in 2013.[284] Entrepreneurs, artists and social activists can present their project to the public. The projects that find sufficient support are realized, with no bureaucracy and no large, single investor being involved. The first projects included the funding of a documentary, a music album and hardware projects. Interestingly, payment options include not only credit cards but services that do not require bank accounts such as "CashU, Cashi, Cashna, Dixipay, Filspay, and Ukash."[285] Because it is a websites it does not only attract local investors but the Arab diaspora and funders from outside the region that care about projects in the Arab world. The service is very likely to spur creative projects which, a few years earlier, would have lacked necessary funding.

Of no less relevance is healthcare. Arabic content on health issues is still underdeveloped. With majorities in the region lacking regular medical check-ups, reliable information on this subject is of great importance to millions. Palestinian family doctor Mahmoud Kaiyal started his service WebTeb in 2012, publishing Arabic content on diagnosis and treatment of illnesses, all created and licensed from the Harvard Medical School. The platform is one of the first to offer reliable information in Arabic, allowing users to search for advice and an indication what specific symptoms could mean.[286]

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[281] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 72.
[282] Dan Glessner, "Finextra Blog: New Growth Opportunities for Banks: The Under-Banked Segment," *Finextra Research*, January 26, 2015, http://www.finextra.com/blogs/fullblog.aspx?blogid=10468.
[283] Sara Aggour, "Dopay Does Banking for Unbanked Egyptians," *Wamda*, August 13, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/2015/08/dopay-does-banking-for-unbanked-egyptians.
[284] Glen Dalakian II, "Zoomaal Launches First Crowdfunding Platform for the Arab World," *Wamda*, April 7, 2013, http://www.wamda.com/2013/07/zoomaal-launches-first-crowdfunding-platform-for-the-arab-world.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Nina Curley, "Palestinian Entrepreneur Leaves Medical Practice to Bring Health Advice to the Masses," *Wamda*, August 30, 2012, http://www.wamda.com/2012/08/leaving-a-medical-practice-to-bring-health-advice-to-the-masses-the-story-of-webteb.

In Egypt, InfoMed offers an annual subscription for 24 hours consultancy from nearby doctors. They will provide diagnosis over telephone and can be rated on their ability to support the patient. InfoMed undertakes collecting the medical history of each patient and providing the chosen doctor with the files which will be stored in a digital folder. The non-emergency service is helpful since many Egyptians only ask friends or the pharmacist for advice which often leads to the wrong medication.[287]

Carpooling, platforms for freelancers, platforms to sell items no longer needed, music streaming and food ordering apps: The list is long and goes on. As demonstrated by the few examples discussed here, the borders between profitable businesses and social enterprises become increasingly blurred.[288] None of the examples mentioned is innovative in the sense of a totally new technology or a brand new idea, but they help overcoming pressing problems in the countries where they were launched. Instead of waiting for the government to solve the problem of unemployment, overcrowded schools, outdated university curricula, power cuts, waste management, payments and investments, creative people leverage technology and become their own employer. This is the silent revolution of startups and entrepreneurship.

2.3.5 Summary

The internet revolution is a global phenomenon. The institutional landscape of the Middle East which has been characterized by strong centralization, hierarchies, and a lack of freedom magnifies the role of information technology as it beomes available to majorities in many countries within less than a decade. The so-called youth bulge has eagerly adopted social networks. The digital generation became shaped by the concept of the "new power" which is co-produced and co-owned. In the process the entrepreneurship community started growing, using creativity, technology and business sense to provide solutions.

Economically, this is significant because of the high unemployment, migration and the traditional aspiration of working in the public sector. *Politically*, this is significant because civil society and entrepreneurship have much in common – corruption, regional fragmentation, an unreliable legislation and the protection of politically-connected firms all contribute to the failure of startups. Supporting them, on the other hand, yields a diversified economy, job creation, a strengthened private sector and foreign investment. *Culturally*, social media activists are challenging societal hypocrisy, the absence of pluralism, participatory rights and the lack of visions for the future.

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[287] Iman Mustafa, "InfoMed Digitizes Egypt's Family Doctors," *Wamda*, August 19, 2015, http://www.wamda.com/memakersge/2015/08/infomed-digitizes-egypt-family-doctors.
[288] Jaggi, "The Rise of Female Entrepreneurs."

Two processes are happening in tandem. On a large scale people embrace the internet, breathing the relative absence of authorities and borders, exploring the many services and apps that address problems, making life easier. In small communities, the potential has been understood to build tomorrows companies and change the world. Although more research is needed, initial findings point to a steadily growing ecosystem for startups in the aftermath of the Arab spring. If entrepreneurs gain momentum they will be in a stronger position to challenge the status quo then they were as young protestors. In some aspects, they already are.

3   The silent revolution: A field study

"Arab children, [...]
Don't read about us, don't ape us,
Don't accept us, don't accept our ideas,
We are a nation of crooks and jugglers.
Arab children, spring rain, corn ears of the future,
You are the generation that will overcome defeat."
Nizar Qabbani, Syrian poet (1923-1998)[289]

The literature review lends some support to the hypothesis of the silent revolution. The lack of research on entrepreneurship in the Arab world and its implications necessitates further evidence, though. This second part attempts to extend the discussion by means of field research conducted in Amman, Jordan. This author spent almost six months in the Jordanian capital to gain a deeper understanding of the aspects discussed so far.

The field study thus builds on the previous section while, at the same time, overcoming one of its main limitations – namely, its broad regional focus and the general assessment of the entrepreneurship community. The first chapter introduces both Jordan's significance as an emerging hub for entrepreneurship and the great obstacles standing in its way. This is followed by a discussion of interviews conducted during July and September 2015 with young, educated Jordanians that comment on their experiences, opinions and aspirations. The third chapter is an extension of the interviews. Arabizi is a phenomenon closely related to the digital generation and adds to the overall discussion of changes in contemporary Arab societies.

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[289] John Case, "Nizar Qabbani's 'The Old World Is Dead,'" *People's World*, February 24, 2014, http://peoplesworld.org/poem-of-the-week-nizar-qabbani-s-the-old-world-is-dead/.

3.1 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

> "As a person, as a startup, you are doing fine.
> But as state, as working together as a group you'll find many problems."
> *Social entrepreneur*[290]

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan gained its independence in 1946. In addition to its sea border with Egypt, the country neighbors Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, and Israel and the West Bank. The population rose from 1.6 in 1971 to currently 6.6 million, 70 percent of whom live in cities.[291] The capital, Amman, has 2.2 million inhabitants.[292]

Politically the "absolute monarchy with a representative government" has embarked on a long-term reform process which, according to the government, brought about "greater empowerment and involvement of everyday citizens in Jordan's civic life, contributing to increased stability and institutionalization."[293] As the BBC cautiously notes, this "long-term political, economic and social change – known as the National Agenda – has yet to be implemented." The "upper middle income"[294] country witnessed its share of protests during the Arab spring, with the main demands concerning more political participation, an end to corruption and employment opportunities.[295]

Official figures put the unemployment rate at 13 percent,[296] however, when it comes to youth unemployment it numbers are as high as 34 percent.[297] Of all Jordanians looking for work, 60 percent are between 15 and 24 years old.[298] This is despite the well-developed education system – the literacy rate stands at 98 percent[299] – and the process of liberalizing the economy. Jordan, which invested heavily in its education and developed health care sector – at least partially because of its lack of oil and gas resources – struggles particularly to provide the rising numbers of university graduates with adequate job opportunities. Unemployment among university graduates remains above 36 percent.[300] The rate is even higher for female graduates, reaching a staggering 60 percent.[301]

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[290] Appendix: Participant 2, Question 7.

[291] World Bank, "Jordan," *World Bank*, accessed September 26, 2015, http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan.

[292] Jordan Embassy, "Quick Facts," *http://www.jordanembassyus.org*, 2015, http://www.jordanembassyus.org/page/quick-facts.

[293] Ibid.

[294] World Bank, "Jordan."

[295] Dale Gavlak, "Jordan Searches for Answers to Arab Spring Demands," *BBC News*, November 4, 2011, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-15579864.

[296] World Bank, "Jordan."

[297] World Bank, "Unemployment, Youth Total (% of Total Labor Force Ages 15-24)," *World Bank*, 2015, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS.

[298] Gérard Mayen et al., "Unemployment in Jordan" (European Training Foundation, 2005), entrepreneurship.intel.com/download/2062.

[299] Country Facts, "Jordan," *Country Facts*, 2015, http://country-facts.findthedata.com/l/186/Jordan.

[300] Jordan Times, "Unemployment down in Second Quarter," *Jordan Times*, June 21, 2010, http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/unemployment-down-second-quarter-dos.

[301] Lili Mottaghi, "The Problem of Unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa Explained in Three Charts," Text,

One of the most important employers in the kingdom are small and medium enterprises. These companies that have less than 250 employees each account for over 70 percent of the employed work force in Jordan.[302] Startups are a viable option for graduates to turn their skills and creativity into a potentially profitable project; however, in order to succeed a supportive ecosystem needs to evolve.

3.1.1 The ecosystem of Jordan

> "Youth are creating their own opportunities
> and are becoming job creators rather than job seekers,
> and this is the way we should support them."
> *Fadi Ghandour, founder of Aramex, entrepreneur, mentor, investor*[303]

An ecosystem consists of all the domains that have a direct or indirect impact on the startup. Startups begin with an idea, followed by the launch, growth and maturity. Along this way, at least the following aspects can improve the prospects of the enterprise substantially: Universities and talented people, supportive policies by the government, a community of successful founders that give back to their community, access to capital, partnerships with the private sector, and a risk-taking culture. As startup hubs evolve around the world each location will display some strengths and weaknesses. As long as some domains develop in a supportive direction the increasing quality and quantity of startups benefitting will likely lead to improvements along the other domains as well.[304] The Economist recognized Amman already in 2013 as being "one of the Middle East's leading start-up hubs," having the "most evolved" ecosystem in the region.[305] This can be explained by briefly looking into the domains mentioned above.

To start with, Jordan has many public and private universities compared to its small population, among them the respected Jordan University, the Philadelphia University, the American University of Madaba and the German-Jordanian University. Tertiary education has increased

Voices and Views: Middle East and North Africa, (August 25, 2014), http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/problem-unemployment-middle-east-and-north-africa-explained-three-charts.

[302] Press Release, "US$50 Million Project to Support Start-Ups and Enhance Access to Finance for Underserved Communities in Jordan," *World Bank*, April 10, 2015, http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/04/10/us50-million-project-to-support-start-ups-and-enhance-access-to-finance-for-underserved-communities-in-jordan.

[303] Fadi Ghandour, "Fadi Ghandour's Next Investment: Building a Future for Arab Social Entrepreneurship," *Knowledge@Wharton*, September 4, 2012, http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/fadi-ghandours-next-investment-building-a-future-for-arab-social-entrepreneurship/.

[304] Ernestine Fu and Tim Hsia, "Universities and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: Elements of the Stanford-Silicon Valley Success," *Kauffman Fellows*, 2014, http://www.kauffmanfellows.org/journal_posts/universities-and-entrepreneurial-ecosystems-stanford-silicon-valley-success/.

[305] The Economist, "Start-up Spring: Clusters of Internet Firms Are Popping up All over the Region."

by 40 percent between 2001 and 2007,[306] reaching 47 percent in 2012.[307] Yet the country is still miles away from the "innovative and diversified knowledge-based societies" that were envisioned for the 21th century by the governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members and Jordan.[308] As Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour acknowledged recently, the country had focused on quantity – having one of the highest shares of university enrollment in the Middle East – while the quality of the education leaves much room for improvement.[309] Zogan Obiedat, a former Education Ministry official, even went so far to claim that "Islamic State ideology is there, in our textbooks," paving the way for wide popular support should the fascist militia ever attempt to gain control of the conservative country.[310]

The government vowed to seriously address the frankly discussed problems of its education system. Queen Rania of Jordan not only called on Arabs and Muslims to take the lead in the fight against ISIS who "hijack our identity and brand us in the way that they want,"[311] but recognized that the education system still "doesn't turn out enough entrepreneurs" whom see envisions as the builders of Jordan's future. [312] To change this, the Queen heads numerous initiatives that aim to improve the education system. The probably most interesting project is *edraak*, a platform offering free online courses in Arabic.[313] The project was launched in late 2013 with the personal support of the Queen who emphasized that high quality courses from internationally renowned institutions were now within reach for the "intellectually hungry Arab youth."[314]

Even more significant is the pronounced encouragement of entrepreneurship by King Abdullah II. himself. Since his accession in 1999 he has been keen to develop a strong information and communication technology (ICT) sector. Among his most notable initiatives are the establishment of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MoICT) in 2002, the Jordan Education Initiative (JEI) and the El Hassan Science City that specializes in

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[306] National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, "Jordan: On the Fast Track to a Knowledge Economy," *US-Arab Trade Line*, Fall 2010.
[307] World Bank, "School Enrollment, Tertiary (% Gross)," 2015, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.TER.ENRR.
[308] National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, "Connecting Globally: Knowledge-Based Societies in the Arab World," *US-Arab Trade Line*, Fall 2010.
[309] Jordan Times, "Jordanians Have Focused on Education Quantity at Expense of Quality," *Jordan Times*, August 1, 2015, http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordanians-have-focused-education-quantity-expense-quality-%E2%80%94-pm.
[310] Karin Laub and Mohammed Daraghmeh, "Jordan Tries to Stem IS-Style Extremism in Schools, Mosques," *Associated Press*, August 7, 2015, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/400b609472404282a8312d7b6162d827/jordan-tries-stem-style-extremism-schools-mosques.
[311] Kathleen Miles, "Queen Rania: Let's Drop The First 'I' In ISIS. There's Nothing Islamic About Them," *The Huffington Post*, March 6, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/06/queen-rania-isis-islamic_n_6781160.html.
[312] Gordts, "Queen Rania."
[313] Compare: 2.3.4: Case Studies.
[314] Candace, "MOOCs for the Arab World."

research and development.[315] At the MENA ICT forum, the king addressed the countries "entrepreneurs and ICT labour force" as well as "the thousands of Jordanian youth who are studying to be tomorrow's ICT leaders" with the words "Unlock the potential. Imagine the future. Lead the way. You have Jordan's full support. And I am proud to count myself among your greatest champions."[316]

What might sound highly encouraging is not reflected by the Ease of Doing Business report released by the World Bank. Out of 189 economies, Jordan was ranked 113th in the edition for 2016. Regarding the "ease of starting a business," 88 countries placed fewer hurdles in the way of entrepreneurs. In the category of "getting credit", Jordan is ranked 185 with no legal framework to protect the legal rights of lenders and borrowers in place.[317]

Considering these difficulties – that could be subject of a separate thesis – it is encouraging to find another element of the ecosystem present in Jordan: That of successful, experienced entrepreneurs that share knowledge, networks and resources with aspiring founders. Two personalities stand probably out: Fadi Ghandour and Samih Toukan.

Ghandour launched Aramex in 1982 when he was 23 years old. The logistics services company became the first Arab company to be listed at the NASDAQ index and today counts almost 14,000 employees in 54 countries. Reflecting on the fact that Ghandour's struggles in the 1980s were that of an entrepreneur long before the term became popular, both he and Aramex have played a central role in supporting startups. Ghandour reiterates the inspiring potential of young entrepreneurs and calls on the private sector to take the lead on supporting their efforts to change the future of the region.[318]

One of the first and probably the most famous startup was launched in the late 1990s by Samih Toukan and Hussam Khoury – with Ghandour as a founding partner. The first Arab internet users came online, and the idea of Toukan was to create the first mail service in Arabic. *Maktoob*, meaning letter but also destiny, had 100,000 users in 2000. Five years later, it was 10 million and in 2009, Yahoo bought the company for over $170 million.[319] With these fortunes, Toukan launched an investment fund that, among others, acquired a stake in Souq.com, the "Amazon of the Arab world." *Souq*, meaning market in Arabic, started in 2005 as an auction site linked to

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[315] National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, "Jordan: On the Fast Track to a Knowledge Economy," 7.

[316] King Abdullah II, "Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II at the MENA-ICT Forum in Amman," *King Abdullah II Official Website*, October 10, 2010,
http://kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en_US/speeches/view/id/459/videoDisplay/0.html.

[317] World Bank, "Doing Business 2016 - Jordan," *Doing Business*, 2015, http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/jordan.

[318] Fadi Ghandour, "A New Framework for Mobilizing Corporate Entrepreneurship," *McKinsey on Society*, accessed September 26, 2015, http://voices.mckinseyonsociety.com/fadi-ghandour-corporate-entrepreneurship-responsibility/.

[319] Habib Battah, "Unpacking the Arab Tech Boom," *Beirut Report*, May 13, 2014, http://www.beirutreport.com/2014/05/unpacking-arab-tech-boom.html.

the popular *Maktoob* portal. Since then, it raised more than $150 million in investments in a promising market.[320] E-commerce is one of the fastest growing industries in the region. With growth rates of 300 percent in 2011[321] it is expected to be worth $15 billion in 2015.[322] As a logistics company, Aramex encourages young companies to build their e-commerce platforms by offering discounts and favorable agreements.

Next to a supportive community comes the need for funds. Indeed, the funding domain is a good example of how success breeds more success. It was after the unprecedented exit of *Maktoob* that King Abdullah II. had an important conversation with Usama Fayyad, todays Executive Chairman of Oasis 500. The meeting resulted in the vision to incubate 500 startups in Amman, providing them with funds, workspace, training and advice in return for an equity stake. One of the strengths of Oasis500, which was established in 2010, is its independence from the government; after an initial cheque from the Development Fund it was able to raise over $7 million from private investors. [323]

And increasingly, these investors are companies from the private sector. As Aramex benefits from growing e-commerce while startups enjoy the support of the established company, other corporations begin to look for mutually beneficial partnerships as well. Corporations from abroad join these efforts. Cisco, for example, invested $6 million in the Badia Impact Fund to support "mobile innovation, health care technologies and services, e-commerce, consumer Internet and digital media services."[324]

And it is not only financial support that companies offer. In late 2014, telecom company Zain Jordan launched its Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) in Amman's Business Park, home to many international IT companies operating in Jordan.[325] ZINC is not only an offer by ZAIN to enter into partnerships with innovative startups. The modern campus invites people to build their teams and discuss their business plans, equipped with free high-speed internet, a tele-presence room and virtual reality labs.[326] Most of Amman's startup events take place in the inspiring

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[320] Ed Attwood, "Ronaldo Mouchawar: How I Created Souq.com," *ArabianBusiness.com*, April 5, 2014, http://www.arabianbusiness.com/ronaldo-mouchawar-how-i-created-souq-com-545057.html.
[321] Nancy Messieh, "E-Commerce in the Middle East Grew 300% in the Past Year," *The Next Web*, June 3, 2012, http://thenextweb.com/me/2012/06/03/e-commerce-in-the-middle-east-grew-300-in-the-past-year/.
[322] Dania Saadi, "Aramex Seeks E-Commerce Acquisitions to Boost Profit," *The National*, August 1, 2015, http://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/aramex-seeks-e-commerce-acquisitions-to-boost-profit.
[323] Julien Brault, "Amman, City of 1001 Start-Ups," *Jordan Times*, August 3, 2013, http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/amman-city-1001-start-ups.
[324] "Cisco Announces First Venture Capital Funding Allocation in Jordan to Badia Impact Fund," *Cisco - The Network*, March 13, 2014, http://newsroom.cisco.com/press-release-content?type=webcontent&articleId=1365607.
[325] "Zain Launches Zain Innovation Campus (ZINC) a Platform for Supporting Entrepreneurship," *Zain*, June 16, 2014, http://www.jo.zain.com/english/media/pr/Pages/Zain-Launches-Zain-Innovation-Campus-%28ZINC%29.aspx.
[326] Maya Rahal, "Zain Jordan Launches Hi-Tech Incubator," *Wamda*, November 23, 2014, http://www.wamda.com/2014/11/zain-jordan-launches-hi-tech-incubator.

atmosphere of the venue, and an increasing number of companies[327] follow Fadi Ghandour's call on the private sector to lend its support to entrepreneurship as a form of highly needed corporate social responsibility.[328] The convergence of all these supportive developments not only increases chances of business ideas to succeed, it helps nurturing a culture of personal initiative and risk taking.

Traditionally, any university graduate would look for a safe job even if it did not pay very well to start his career and avoid unemployment. Because of the very realistic scenario of a failure, startups were not only a less preferred choice for students but discouraged by well-meaning friends and relatives.[329] As Rami al-Karmi, himself a successful Jordanian entrepreneur and investor, explains: In Jordan, "an entrepreneur is, in the eyes of his relatives, someone who is unemployed. Until today my mother fails to understand why I do not have a job like everybody else."[330]

But driven by the simultaneously decreasing prospects of the job market and the growing support for startups, more Jordanians at least consider entrepreneurship as an exciting choice. Students that participate in workshops and events join a community that is passionate about building things, leaving behind the mentality of a generation that expected everything to be provided for them by the government. As an observer noted, "there is fire in the blood of Jordan's young citizens and a hunger for success",[331] an impression that is shared by Schroeder[332] and supported by our previous discussion about the changing aspirations of the digital generation.[333]

3.1.2 Events in Amman

> "Seriously, I wish I would be sixteen years old again
> and had the chance to participate
> in all the awareness raising sessions that are offered today."
> *Graduate, organizer of entrepreneurship events*[334]

Throughout the year a variety of organizations hold events to encourage entrepreneurship, connect those with ideas to those with experience and funds, offer workshops to aspiring

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[327] Salim Ghazaly et al., "The Rise of Corporate Social Responsibility: A Tool for Sustainable Development in the Middle East" (Beirut: Strategy&, March 21, 2013), http://www.strategyand.pwc.com/global/home/what-we-think/reports-white-papers/article-display/rise-corporate-social-responsibility.
[328] Ghandour, "A New Framework for Mobilizing Corporate Entrepreneurship."
[329] Soukaina Rachidi, "How To Keep Your Entrepreneurial Dream Alive In The Arab World," *Entrepreneur*, August 20, 2015, http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249451.
[330] Brault, "Amman, City of 1001 Start-Ups."
Brault, Julien: Amman, city of 1001 start-ups. http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/amman-city-1001-start-ups
[331] Nellie Horn, "What Makes Jordan's Tech Scene Tick?," *Seedstars World Blog*, May 13, 2014, http://www.seedstarsworld.com/blog/2014/05/makes-jordans-tech-scene-tick/.
[332] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 193.
[333] Compare: 2.3.2 The digital generation.
[334] Appendix: Participant 8, Question 5.

founders and give them the opportunity to pitch their ideas. The events in Jordan also target schools and universities to encourage people to consider entrepreneurship as a career choice. This is for example the aim of *fakker ᵃǧdīd* or *newthink* whose Facebook page has over half a million followers. The Jordanian non-profit organization was launched in 2009 with the aim to "inspire the youth to think in a disruptive/innovate and new manner throughout several events per year."[335] A similar idea lies behind *Trip to Innovation* and *Startup Weekend*, with the former explaining the basics of a business plan and the latter offering people to build teams and develop an idea for a startup. Existing startups can apply for the workshops offered by Oasis500 and subsequently incubate their startup. Well-performing startups can pitch their ideas to SeedStarsWorld[336] or Endeavor,[337] who connect selected companies with international mentors and corporations, a step that is vital to grow into a high impact business.

This author participated at several events in Amman. They included an edition of the Startup Weekend, the Trip to Innovation and the MixNMenor held in March, April and June 2015, respectively. The following observations are based on notes taken during and after the events. Probably the most striking similarity between all events was the infectious enthusiasm. Amman is a rather sleepy city, a sea of concrete blocks and annoying traffic jams. The vibrant atmosphere at the events contrasted starkly with the crowds sitting idle in the coffee shops around the University of Jordan were I was staying. The energetic conviction of people attending the events was that they were about to leave their comfort zone, build something new, changing not only their life but the future of their country. Driven by criticism, questions and the conviction that they would find answers to all problems they embarked on a path beyond apathy or migration.

This idea lies at the core of Google-sponsored Startup Weekend, a three day format that encourages networking, discussions and the development of business ideas. Startup weekends have been held in more than 700 cities and 130 countries around the world. And they are easy to organize even under difficult circumstances. For example, neither the blockade of Gaza nor the war against Syria prevented citizens to hold an edition of the event in Gaza City and Damascus in 2014.

For Amman, the event in late March 2015 was the 6th edition of the Startup Weekend.[338] It brought together dozens of curious and talented people, mostly in their twenties and often with

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[335] NewThink, "NewThink," *Facebook: New Think*, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/newthinkjo.
[336] Seedstars, "SeedstarsAmman," *Seedstars World*, 2015, http://www.seedstarsworld.com/event/seedstars-amman-2015/.
[337] Endeavor, "Endeavor International Panel Amman," *Endeavor*, 2015, http://www.endeavor.org/in-the-news/20-entrepreneurs-from-15-companies-selected-into-the-endeavor-network-at-59th-international-selection-panel-in-amman/.
[338] Startup Weekend, "SWAmman 6th Edition," *Startup Weekend*, 2015,
http://www.up.co/communities/jordan/amman/startup-weekend/6065.

a background in programming or designing. One participant I met was only 16 years old. He had taught himself several programming skills and worked as a part-time freelancer. Others had an idea or recently launched their startup. They were looking for talented people to join their team, get advice and build their network in the community.

The team building session was followed by two days of hard work. The teams discussed their business plans, estimated the time needed to realize their milestones, tried to predict the demand for their service in Amman or the region in general. An additional incentive to come up with a convincing, amazing idea was the regional and the global challenge. The third day would see the presentations – each team got five minutes to pitch in front of a panel of experts. The winners would participate in the regional challenge and secure support from selected mentors and investors. The participants in the global challenge would meet the most promising entrepreneurs from all over the world and get international exposure.

I asked one participant on the local media coverage of the event, but he told me that the idea-stage would not be too interesting for the public as it was in the open whether the ideas would ever materialize. Even more important, the vast majority of the potential users would live in Amman where word of the mouth is faster and more trusted than most newspapers. And he was right, in many ways: None of the ideas presented in the end was without shortcomings. Very often the business model wouldn't critically look into the details. Sometimes the idea was not very plausible. But the event succeeded in two very important aspects: Its spirit and its multifaceted benefits for the entrepreneurs.

Beyond networking they learned how to pitch an idea, how to critically evaluate this idea beforehand and how to build a team. "Nothing of this is taught at universities, unfortunately," a participant told me. She had seen people preparing for their presentation and noticed how insecure many were once they stood in front of the panel. She complained about the lack of group assignments and presentations in front of the class during her studies, and indeed many students I spoke to were highly critical of their education. This, on the other hand, magnified the importance of events like the Startup Weekend. A student who was passionate about entrepreneurship would attend this and similar events, thus getting used to public speaking. Even more, he could start to see the weak points in business models presented by others and learn all the skills required to successfully interact with the institutions that support startups in their growth phase.

Very often one of the first question people asked me regarded my thoughts on the event. I felt many of them were more than happy to know that at least some foreigners were aware of this under-reported revolution taking place in a region that made headlines only with deaths and

killings for several years in a row. The Arab spring as a concept, an idea, wasn't dead, one guy told me during a break: It had taken a new form and spoke a new language. These revolutionaries were not taking to the streets for they knew that their laptops were more powerful than slogans or even weapons.

The CEO of the company that sponsored ZINC tried to convey this spirit as the event drew to a close. He started by conceding that these days, many of Jordan's most talented young people were poised to leave the country for good. "Think about it from another angle", he argued. The wish to migrate to a developed country for most is nothing but a wish to build a successful career, a legitimate reason without any doubt. Yet real success comes from doing something one is passionate about. People should not underestimate the rapid changes lying ahead for Jordan. Those who don't lose their ability to dream and envision things would find more support to realize them and build things than any generation before them, and probably more than many young people in other countries of the region. Referring to ZINC he emphasized that this facility was open for everyone, every day. Even so, it was nothing but a sign for things to come. For a country that would need to become a knowledge society in order to economically survive. If that transition took off demand for skilled, experienced and enthusiastic people would increase. Yet the only way to accelerate the transition and ensure its success was a culture of passionate learning and innovative thinking, something that would change the lives of those who choose to become entrepreneurs first and society as a whole second.

A successful entrepreneur reinforced this notion by pointing to the example of China which, according to him, leapt within only two decades from a developing country to the strongest economy in the world, largely by means of a highly achievement-oriented mentality and a generation that made learning its central mission. By contrast, he maintained, most Arabs are deeply convinced that "we can't do that", an idea which he found reinforced too often by schoolbooks and popular narratives. I thought of the abundant conspiracy theories which are believed even by educated people. Many contain grains of truth but feed into illogical narratives that render the Arabs as helpless victims, thus creating a self-enforcing prophecy that is more powerful than imagined and real enemies.

The speaker stressed that entrepreneurship was not a mere career choice but a mission, a mission that sought to solve problems, doing things in ways they weren't done before, believing in the future and the power of individuals – ordinary citizens – to make a difference and change the world. Realistically speaking, he concluded, this Startup Weekend was not about building the next Google or Facebook. It was about people becoming excited about the mission of entrepreneurship, about encouraging them to start experimenting and becoming resilient in

the face of difficulties. Of those who would become entrepreneurs the majority should expect to fail several times. But once they started thinking of it as a mission they would re-frame failures as invaluable learning experience.

Many of these points were reiterated in different ways at the Trip to Innovation and the MixNMentor event. The three key themes were always the power of individuals and the entrepreneurship community to shape the future, the liberating force of technology and the internet by empowering and connecting people, and the social implications and historic dimension for Jordan and the region, was entrepreneurship to gain momentum.

Without any doubt some of the change talked about was already there. More than a third of the participants at the events were women, a much higher share than usually found in Europe and North America.[339] People without any doubt are more individualistic than the older generation. They know more about the Germany national football team and American popular culture than I do. Even those who didn't spent a time abroad stayed in touch with friends and relatives in different parts of the world. Their aspirations evolved much more around self-realization than fulfilling societal expectations, many of which lacked legitimacy since society was not able to provide them with the education and jobs they were looking for. In the process, decentralization was an important point as many of their business ideas evolved around solving problems the government has not been willing or able to tackle.

It is not surprising, for example, that the winner of the Startup Weekend addressed one of Amman's most pressing problems – traffic jams. The idea: Building a car-pooling app that allowed students to see who was driving to their university, giving them the opportunity to notify the driver they wanted to share the ride. The driver would get his gas expenses covered, the cost would be lower than that of a cab for the passenger, and the traffic on the roads would get reduced, thus lowering the air pollution in the city. The founders of the app would get a small share of each transaction, amounting to a decent income if the service became popular. *Rakabli*, or Drive Me, was a typical example not only of a win-win situation for founders, customers and society at large but helps to illustrate the way copycats – businesses that already exist elsewhere – have a significantly higher impact in emerging markets. Most European capitals have a well-functioning public transportation system that often involves a metro and busses which operate according to a schedule. Amman had neither, forcing hundreds of thousands of students and employees to spent hours every day getting around in a rather small city. With a fast growing population and no changes in the infrastructure this problem is likely

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[339] The Economist, "Untraditional Choice: The Middle East Beats the West in Female Tech Founders," July 13, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/business/21581740-middle-east-beats-west-female-tech-founders-untraditional-choice.

to worsen in the future.

I liked the idea of the carpooling app also because it highlighted how the internet helps to save costs. Only a few years ago there was no theoretical alternative to a metro being build – if the government wanted to solve the issue of traffic jams. Such a project is not only expensive and takes time, very often construction – especially mega-projects – involve corruption and mismanagement that is difficult to monitor. Today, with the abundance of smartphones and reliable internet coverage, at least theoretically[340] most people driving a car could offer one to three persons a ride especially if they share the same route and the driver earns the money for the next tankful. The worse the traffic situation gets the more likely will Amman see the emergence of carpooling services. The greater the problem, the more likely the teams taking on these challenges create a success story – for themselves and their country.

When now-famous *Maktoob* was launched in the late 1990s, its founders had to use a slow long-distance modem as their internet connection. It took almost a minute to load a website and still cost them $2,000 a month.[341] Today, with the abundance of internet-enabled devices and ever increasing connection rates on the one hand and thousands of students teaching themselves programming skills and attending events that encourage and support entrepreneurship on the other it can safely be expected that great companies will be build by people that attented these events. In the process, more and more Jordanians could create their own jobs, employ their friends and tackle pressing challenges ranging from traffic jams to power cuts, waste management, education, healthcare, alternative energy, payments and beyond.

3.1.3 The society of Jordan

> "The internet, in the end, is a representation of the masses.
> Now if there is something wrong with them, with society at large,
> what happens is they will replicate their problems online."
> *Entrepreneur, about to leave Jordan*[342]

The close look at the evolving ecosystem and the inspiring events should not create the impression that Jordan is at the brink of becoming a leading hub of innovation, creativity and progress. It is a scenario. The more people, especially young Jordanians themselves, belief in it the likelier will their concerted efforts bring about the change needed for this to happen. But there is no automatism that drives society as a whole in this direction. Results should not be

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[340] The subsequent discussion tackled many question regarding the feasibility in Jordan: Would girls take a ride with a male driver? If for security reasons all drivers submit their personal details how could the company guarantee the data was protected? Was the Jordanian society open to the concept of carpooling? How could the company reach the critical mass to incentivice enough drivers to sign up, since a limited number of participants made the app more or less useless?
[341] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 36.
[342] "Mark Twain - Wikiquote," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, September 19, 2015, https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mark_Twain#Following_the_Equator_.281897.29.

taken for granted. A brief look at the economy, politics and society in Jordan at large provides the background against which the subsequent discussion of the interviews should be read.

From a business perspective it should be emphasized that Jordan is no easy place to do business as shown by the World Bank's annual report.[343] Still, Jordan had embarked on a long road of economic reforms that attracted foreign investment, reduced bureaucracy and encouraged entrepreneurship.[344] The probably most successful example of this policy is the Jordanian internet communication technology (ICT) sector. Starting at $560 million in 2000, the industry was worth more than $2.2 billion in 2014, giving it "a major role in capitalizing on the abilities of the country's knowledge workers."[345] Encouraged by the government and spurred by international companies that set up subsidiaries in Amman, the sector grew 25 percent annually over the last decade[346] increasing its contribution to the country's GDP from two percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2014, accounting for 6 percent of all jobs today.[347] It is also interesting to note that one third of the workforce in the Jordanian ICT industry are women – globally, the average stays at 10 percent.[348] One in five entrepreneurs participating in the Oasis500 program is a non-Jordanian. This paints not only an encouraging picture of the entrepreneurship and IT community but supports the notion that Amman by standards of the region enjoys a very supportive environment.[349]

While international institutions laud the countries stability in midst the ongoing wars in Syria and Iraq and investors highlight the steady economic growth since 2010, there are frightening parallels to Egypt and Tunisia which showed high stability and annual growth from the outside while average citizens increasingly reported declining satisfaction with their living conditions. According to a poll released in June 2015, almost 60 percent of Jordanians saw the economy of their country as "bad" or "very bad."[350] In fact, the social divide became more obvious recently as the mega project in Amman's Abdali polarized the public opinion. Critics point to the fact that gigantic real estate projects targeting the national and international business elite such as "the Boulevard" in Abdali were subsidized by the government while outside of Amman whole cities

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[343] World Bank, "Doing Business 2016 - Jordan."

[344] Sameer Jarrah, "Civil Society and Public Freedom in Jordan," Working Paper (Brookings Institute, July 2009), 1, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Papers/2009/7/07%20jordan%20jarrah/07_jordan_jarrah.pdf.

[345] Rasha Manna, "Multiplying Impact: Amman's High-Growth ICT Industry" (Jordan: Endeavor Jordan, November 2014), www.wamda.com/download/resource/419754/MultiplyingImpactResearchReport.pdf.

[346] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 199.

[347] Dena Levitz, "How Jordan's 'Progressive' Reputation Is Driving Amman's Female-Friendly Startup Scene," *1776*, December 2, 2014, http://www.1776.vc/insights/how-jordans-progressive-reputation-is-driving-ammans-female-friendly-startup-scene/.

[348] Ibid.

[349] Oasis500, "Things You Need to Know about Jordan's Tech Sector!," *Oasis500*, May 12, 2014, http://www.oasis500.com/things-you-need-to-know-about-jordans-tech-sector/.

[350] David Schenker, "Jordan's Economy Surprises," *The Washington Institute*, June 29, 2015, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/jordans-economy-surprises.

lack any prospects. The luxury district conveys an illusion intended for investors that paints Jordan as a thriving and liberal economy while an impoverished, conservative city in the south already witnessed open pro-ISIS demonstrations. It is often overseen that, taking Jordan's small population into consideration, the country had the highest per capita rate[351] of extremists joining the terrorists who are destroying Syria.[352]

And Jordan suffers economically as a result of the wars in Syria and Iraq, creating a perfect environment for extremist ideas to gain support. First, Jordan had to accommodate a million refugees. Second, trade with Syria and Iraq came almost to a halt, costing the Jordanian trucking industry alone amounts between $20 and $30 million every day. The country with no energy and scarce water resources of its own highly depends on trade. Now it is "running out of resources."[353] As a result, the United States increased their annual aid to Jordan significantly. Starting from 2015, the kingdom is set to receive $1 billion annually at least until 2017.[354] While many observers cite this as another argument for Jordan's guaranteed stability, it provides little incentives to discuss political reform, civil rights, the causes of extremism in the region and steps towards more inclusive institutions. If the economic situation continues to deteriorate for the majority of the population and the government fails to establish a comprehensive dialogue with its people the future looks bleak. Entrepreneurship would be affected twice: First because the projects and initiatives launched in Jordan could be at risk. Second, an atmosphere of repression and fear is not very conducive of creativity and innovation. In fact, a key complain of many interviewees was the state of the education system that did not encourage critical inquiry and debating.[355]

A good example to illustrate the effect of repression would be Jordan's controversial internet law from 2012 that requires news websites to acquire a license from a ministry. The operators are responsible not only to store all comments contributed but held accountable for every comment published. Noncompliance puts them at risk of being shut down.[356] This might be attributed to efforts countering extremism and terrorism. However, a recurring complain students would mention in conversations was another, equally convincing explanation. Decision makers in the government belong to the "old generation" that tries to treat the internet

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[351] In absolute numbers, Tunisians are placed first. See:
https://cdn.static-economist.com/sites/default/files/imagecache/original-size/20140830_MAC990_2.png
[352] Matheis and Ellebrecht, "Wie Ammans Luxusträume Jordaniens Gesellschaft Spalten."
[353] Benjamin T. Decker, "The Islamic State's Biggest Threat to Jordan Isn't Violence - It's Economics," *VICE News*, May 13, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/the-islamic-states-biggest-threat-to-jordan-isnt-violence-its-economics.
[354] Mohammed Arshad, "U.S. Plans to Boost Aid to Jordan to $1 Billion per Year," *Reuters*, February 3, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/02/03/us-jordan-aid-idUSKBN0L72ET20150203.
[355] See: 3.1.1 The ecosystem of Jordan
[356] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 199.

as a mere tool that has to fit into the existing society, its legislation and logic.[357] While recent developments such as the government's activity on social media[358] points to a more proactive approach several people I talked to were deeply disillusioned with red tape, *wāsṭa* and society at large.[359]

The best development for Jordan at large and entrepreneurship in particular would be an end to the wars in Libya, Sinai, Yemen, Iraq and Syria. Entrepreneurs are affected by the deteriorating economic prospects and a political atmosphere that makes it difficult to call for more reforms and freedoms. For their enterprises to be successful it is vital to scale. Scaling is easy in the United States, the European Union, India or China because these markets offer hundreds of million potential customers. Jordan, on the other hand, is a tiny country with a few million inhabitants. After covering the market in Amman startups need to gain access to Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad and the Gulf in order the reach a critical mass.[360]

For peace to return to the region, the regional powers involved in the wars would need to acknowledge that none of them can win militarily. Alternatively, global powers would need to agree on a framework that entails pressuring their regional allies towards making concessions. Both scenarios remain highly unlikely. The Thirty Year's war between Protestants and Catholics led to the Peace of Westphalia that prescribed the concept of national self-determination and non-interference. The century-long wars between France and Germany gave rise to a trade union that made future wars almost impossible and gave birth to the European Union. The two approaches differ significantly, but either one could provide a starting point for the Middle East. Until that happens entrepreneurs will have to double their efforts in order to succeed.

When discussing entrepreneurship in Jordan it is also important to keep in mind the fact that entrepreneurs constitute a small community in a country where "a coalition of Islamists and tribal conservatives routinely find enough common ground to block the government's more progressive proposed reforms."[361] As a researcher told me once: "Sometimes I feel we are living in a bubble" – pointing to the fact that, while it was easy to access the entrepreneurship community and meet all the motivated, educated people convening to exchange ideas, there is a very different face of Jordan in impoverished Eastern Amman and the neglected country side. People especially in neglected cities that live below the poverty line increasingly turn from

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[357] *For example, see*: Appendix: Participant 2: Question 2, Participant 9: Question 5, Participant 11: Question 1.
[358] For example, see: Appendix: Participant 2: Question 3, Participant 9, Question 3.
[359] The majority of these conversations were not part of the interviews, but compare: Appendix: Participant 9, Question 2 and 7 and Participant 11.
[360] "The Critical 9 Percent: Why Scaleup Companies Are Vital for Job Creation in Jordan" (Endeavor Jordan, February 2015), http://issuu.com/endeavorglobal1/docs/the_critical_9_percent_report__jord.
[361] Jarrah, "Civil Society in Jordan," 1.

conservativism to extremism. Surveys indicate growing support for Salafist ideas in Jordan.[362] To Salafists, almost every concept discussed so far – progress, critical thinking, civil society, flat hierarchies and democracy – are heresies. Human empowerment to them is its very negation. Their ideal state is either Saudi Arabia or ISIS, depending on whether they believe in an incremental or violent change of society.[363]

It has been mentioned earlier that young people tend to be less religious while being more inclined to support political Islam.[364] The government's strategy, arguing that ISIS does not represent Islam,[365] might thus fail to address the fact that support very often is not primarily driven by sincere religious convictions.[366] In fact, poverty and a lack of perspectives have been identified as a core motive behind many Jordanians that travel to join terrorist groups in Syria.[367] This is supported by de Soto who offers a compelling account on how insurgencies in Latin America proved impossible to defeat militarily but imploded once financial inclusion and legal rights were ensured for all citizens. He recommends similar efforts to legalize the informal sector in MENA. Providing access to financial institutions for everybody would turn the foot soldiers of terrorist movements into merchants while military solutions often produce more fighters.[368] Foreign aid and foreign investment alone will thus not be sufficient to ensure stability in the long-term. The more so if the benefits never reach rural areas and the impoverished quarters of Amman.

At the same time, Jordan's government can't solve all of these challenges alone. According to Fadi Ghandour, public-private partnerships are required that empower communities to address their challenges. He argues convincingly that "the role of the private sector is not simply to maximize profits but to invest in their societies where their well-being and future are inextricably tied."[369] Being of those who do instead of talk, he launched *Ruwwad,* a "non-profit community empowerment organization that helps disadvantaged communities overcome marginalization through youth activism, civic engagement and education."[370] Ghandour established the project in Jabal Nathif, a refugee camp in East Amman with an unemployment

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[362] Rana al Sabbagh, "Jordan's IS Airstrike Takes Public by Surprise," *Al-Monitor*, October 3, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/10/jordan-is-war-rejected-by-public-originals.html.

[363] Maher al-Shawabkeh, "Will IS Find a Foothold in Jordan?," *Al-Monitor*, October 1, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2014/09/jordan-jihadi-salafist-movements.html.

[364] Hoffman and Jamal, "The Youth and the Spring."

[365] It is no coincidence that the leading cadres of ISIS come from Saddam Hussein's security apparatus. Jordanians, foremost the ones who show sympathies towards the terrorists in Syria on grounds it was governed by a "dictator," often endorse Saddam Hussein.

[366] Laub and Daraghmeh, "Jordan Tries to."

[367] Tom Fenton, "Jordan on the Brink?," *Human Security Centre*, March 31, 2015, http://www.hscentre.org/latest-articles/jordan-brink/.

[368] de Soto, "The Capitalist Cure for Terrorism."

[369] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 134.

[370] "Our Story," *Ruwwad for Development*, accessed November 1, 2015, http://ruwwad.net/our-story.

rate 50 percent over the national average and few opportunities for higher education. The idea of the hub is compelling: Government institutions, companies, donors and volunteers provide the neighborhood with the means needed to "take ownership of their own challenges and opportunities."[371] The project was not only a success but has been replicated in Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt. It provided Jabal Nathif not only with a children's library, a health clinic and workshops but encouraged people to take their future into their hands. Businesses donated computers, professionals taught skills, and community members would contribute with their time and labor.

One of the volunteers at *Ruwwad* was Ala' Alsallal. His parents, driven out of Palestine, settled in East Amman. Ala' loved mathematics from a young age, taught himself programming, started building websites as soon as he was able to get a computer and became inspired by entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates and Fadi Ghandour. Today he is a founder himself. His company *Jamalon* aims at becoming the region's leading online book retailer. The road from growing up in a small neighborhood with limited perspectives if any to managing a fast-growing company that sells over ten million titles in over twenty countries is hardly perceivable without the combination of his intelligence and determination on one hand and the support offered by initiatives such as *Ruwwad*, the training offered by Oasis500 and personalities such as Fadi Ghandour.[372]

Today *Jamalon* successfully defies the censorship imposed on dozens of books by various Arab governments, offering a "banned books" section on his platform that is very popular.[373] The significance of the story of *Jamalon* is twofold. It will definitively inspire more people in East Amman to become entrepreneurs – there is a huge difference between learning about tBill Gates who launched Microsoft in his famous garage and that guy from a known family in the same neighborhood who launched the leading book retailer of the Arab world. And it will, hopefully, inspire more wealthy people, corporations and governments to rethink how sustainable their current policies are. They have to ensure that their institutions are inclusive and allow people to become their own job creators.

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[371] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 134.
[372] Ibid., 128–133.
[373] Gideon Lichfield, "The Amazon.com of the Middle East Is Launching a 'banned Books' Section to Confound the Censors," *Quartz*, June 6, 2014, http://qz.com/216817/the-amazon-com-of-the-middle-east-is-launching-a-banned-books-section-to-confound-the-censors/.

3.1.4 Summary

Jordan is a small country with limited resources. Hence the priority of the government was to invest into its education system and turn the country into a hub for trade and technology. Amman today boosts a strong ICT sector. In the future, the government hopes to supplement the established companies with innovative startups that could help providing not only much needed jobs but mitigate the brain drain.

Startup hubs require a supportive ecosystem – talent, mentors, investors, support organizations and a favorable legislation. As the head of the Jordanian ICT association, Abed Shamlawi, argues the ecosystem in Amman is not mature – yet the best to be found to date in the Middle East.[374] For example, university enrollment in Jordan is high yet the quality of the education system has often been criticized. Jordan fares not very well in the Ease of Doing Business reports, yet numerous organizations designed to support entrepreneurs mitigate difficulties such as receiving a bank loan. The royal family is an outspoken supporter of a vision that sees the country as an attractive destination for tech-entrepreneurship.

Numerous initiatives and events promote the vision of an Arabic "startup spring." While some of them encourage people to learn about entrepreneurship, business models and programming, others bring startups and mentors together, offering workshops to founders with very specific questions and challenges. The enthusiasm, creativity and progressive atmosphere at these venues can be contrasted with the dire outlook for a country in midst wars and chaos. The more so if it is conceded that the murderous ideology at work in Syria and Iraq finds sympathies in Jordan. Here lies a key challenge for society – poverty fuels extremism while extremism threatens entrepreneurship, investment and reform programs. Public-private partnerships and community empowerment is the best and maybe only solution to counter extremism in the long-term. Much depends on whether the political and business elites understand this and act according to it.

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[374] Levitz, "How Jordan's Reputation."

3.2 Interviews: Voices of the digital generation

"My hope is that we get rid of the borders,
and that people start to look at each other as human beings
so that we don't see the religion, language, shape, ethnicity and clothes of the other,
but the person that is hidden behind, its ideas. After that, everything is becoming easy.
I don't hope this for us only but the world as a whole."
Entrepreneur[375]

A set of seven open questions (**Q1-Q7**) was designed to learn more about the perceptions and aspirations held by young people living in Amman. Around twenty persons were invited to participate.[376] During my stay in Jordan I had numerous conversations on aspects covered by these questions, however the following discussion will consider only the set of 13 complete and recorded interviews. Because the participants will remain anonymous they are referred to with their respective numbers in the Appendix (**P1-13**) where the complete transcripts of the interviews can be found.[377]

There was no selective criteria applied when it came to choosing participants. Having a startup or being related to entrepreneurial initiatives was no prerequisite, although it was vital for the study to include a few with such background. All participants were between 20 and 30 years old. They are thus part of what we have defined as the "digital generation" earlier.[378] All of the interviewees were living in Amman at the time of the interview, nearly all of them being Jordanian citizens. Another commonality among the participants is their tertiary educational background.[379] The interviews were held in the spoken Arabic dialect. The questions try to provide a glance on perceived challenges, hopes and fears regarding the Arab world. They attempt to capture the relationship between societal and technological change. In addition, a question regarding the change of the spoken Arabic language has been included.

3.2.1 Economy and culture

"The biggest problem in our region is
our lack of respect for the right to disagree."
Designer and artist[380]

The perceptions and aspirations regarding technology and entrepreneurship should be seen against the backdrop of the hopes and fears. Building this context was the aim of *Q1* and *Q7* which inquired about the greatest challenge for young people in Jordan on the one hand, and the greatest hope and biggest fear concerning the region on the other.

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[375] Appendix: Participant 13, Question 7.
[376] See: 6.1.2 Questions.
[377] See: 6.2: Transcripts.
[378] See: 2.3.2: The digital generation.
[379] Nearly half of all young Jordanians are enrolled at universities. See: 3.1.1.
[380] Appendix: Participant 4, Question 7.

Seven out of 13 participants[381] directly cited unemployment as the main challenge for young people in Jordan, often linked to the overall economic situation. *P12* mentioned the high cost of living while *P2* pointed to the severe difficulties for university graduates to start their own life and to marry without finding a well-paying job. On that note, *P10* explained that "the student is forced to wait three or five months until he finds a job. Even then, his salary will be very, very low. Sometimes it will be below the minimal wage which, in Jordan, stands at 300 Jordanian Dinar ($420). The student will have no problem working for 250 Dinar: He is ready to do everything just in order not to be jobless."[382]

Four participants think of culture as the main challenge.[383] "What I see is that many don't know what they actually want to work. Many don't look for what they would love to do; already at school and later at the university those choices are made on their behalf."[384] Two other participants saw less educational institutions and more the pressure of the family – the old generation and their adversity to individualism – responsible for the lack of personal freedom and development. "Let's say I want, for example, to become an English professor. They will start telling you this is not a good job and this and that, they will put pressure on you, and ultimately everybody ends up studying engineering and medicine [...]. It not only leads to imbalances in the job market but many have no idea why they became an engineer in the first place. [...] They have no dreams. It is all about getting the specialization, working, marrying, getting children and so on. It's a circle."[385] Very similarly, another participant referred to the "expectations of the family" which would discourage their child to do anything entrepreneurial, mainly because "they are lacking knowledge about startups and entrepreneurship."[386]

Three interviewees had distinct opinions. *P11* did not complain about the scarcity of jobs or the constraints of Jordanian culture – having been an entrepreneur for ten years he obviously got around those. Instead, he cited *wāsṭa* and red tape as the biggest challenge: "You're spending your time with their bureaucracy while you could build your business."[387] *P13* pointed to the small size of the Jordanian market which makes imports – especially technology products – expensive. At the same time it forces startups to scale at a very early point in order to grow into successful businesses.[388] *P6* believed the wars and extremism formed the greatest challenge for the youth in Jordan which he described as being progressive and more democratic than their

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[381] Appendix, P1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 12:Q1.
[382] Appendix: P10:Q1.
[383] Appendix, P4, 5, 7, 8:Q1.
[384] Appendix, P4:Q1.
[385] Appendix, P7:Q1.
[386] Appendix, P8:Q1.
[387] Appendix: P11:Q1.
[388] Appendix: P13:Q1.

counterparts in other countries of the region.[389] This political threat was nearly equivocally shared by the interviewees when being asked about their fears regarding the future of the region. Eight Jordanians directly mentioned the wars and terrorism,[390] while even more mentioned aspects of it (the loss of security,[391] loss of freedom,[392] becoming a refugee again[393]). The concern is more than understandable. Iraq and Syria are less than a two hour drive away from Amman. *P2* exemplary recalled how "five years ago it took you one hour [from Jordan] to Damascus, and two to Beirut." He continued "it feels as if you are living on a volcano" – lots of entrepreneurial activity happens, but the fear remains that "everything might be lost."[394]

The threat of terrorism was not only framed as security challenge. The son of Palestinian refugees explained how, to him, ISIS forms "a greater danger than Israel. I personally see Israel as my foe; but this organization is a greater enemy because they are abusing my religion. I know my religion and they implement it completely wrong, they are completely disconnected from the religion that I know. The way they kill people and treat other religions like the Christians is no different to Nazism, it is this and nothing more: Nazism."[395]

A young IT specialist had an interesting assessment of the wars going on. He told me, "with all the negative things we are talking about, it will lead to something positive. Why? Because […] look at Japan how they were completely destroyed and afterwards rose to new strength […]. Let's say the Arab world is a very difficult place now, the society is backward… but after thirty years the youth has a new idea, they build greater and better things: I see things more positive than negative. Think about Europe's world wars and how Western society developed afterwards. We didn't had our world war yet, and sure I don't expect [something on the scale of] a world war to happen here but still – when everything is over we will develop, we are going to build something new."[396]

It is interesting to see how unemployment was framed in either economic or cultural terms. For some, the bad economy caused the high unemployment while for others the lack of individual choices contributed its share.[397] Similarly, when *P4* mentions the lack of pluralism and the inability of many to respect the right to disagree[398] he points to a cultural aspect that might have exacerbated the crisis in many countries. This might be driven partially by what *P8*

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[389] Appendi: P6:Q1.
[390] Appendix P2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12:Q7.
[391] Appendix: P2, 8, 10, 11:Q7.
[392] Appendix: P9:Q7.
[393] Appendix: P3:Q7.
[394] Appendix, P2:Q7.
[395] Appendix: P10:Q7.
[396] Appendix: P5:Q7.
[397] Compare the discussion on development theory in 2.2.1.
[398] Appendix: P4:Q7.

described as *ṯaqāfat il-ʿēb* or culture of shame, the conformity and obedience demanding culture of the face that does not allow for individualism, non-conformity and making of untraditional choices.[399] If individual choices are frowned upon and people feel uncomfortable with differences of opinion wars are easier to ignite and more difficult to solve. Does this indicate that the literature review paid not enough attention to culture[400] as a reason for lagging development?

I believe the contrary to be true. The critical reflection on these issues are shaped by the educated background of the participants, and the stronger they feel social realities and personal convictions to collide the likelier will they shape society in a way that serves human empowerment once they become managers, policy makers, professors, parents, voters, writers and so on. Inflexible societal insistence on traditions is a recurring theme throughout many of the conversations I had and could be identified as the key challenge for the digital generation. *P2* accordingly framed this as a generational conflict when mentioning the "old guard" that, though being a minority of the population, made all decisions with nearly no youth representation in place. The extent to which established institutions fail to deliver they are losing legitimacy, and the same could hold true of traditions. One of the factors that pushes young people away from traditions is the deeply felt illegitimacy of *wāsṭa*: "Of course, *wāsṭa* has a very bad impact, without it the youth takes the lead and starts developing the country. It is young people that think the way entrepreneurs think. This can lead the country [out of the crisis] and improve it. Improve it from bad to better and better – until it becomes great."[401]

The majority of the respondents thus seemed confident in their own abilities and that technology and the internet would positively influence the region. Five cited technology as their greatest hope,[402] followed by four who wished for Arab unity and a culture of dialogue[403] and three hoped that, at least, armed conflicts may come to an end.[404] No one formulated this idea better than one entrepreneur who summarized her hope for the region and the world as a whole to "get rid of the borders, and that people start looking at each other first and foremost as human beings."[405]

More than once technology was compared to the liberating atmosphere of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolution. One participant argued: "The Arab Spring did not give the youth their rights. [...] In my opinion, the youth will take their role after a while in one way or the other.

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[399] Appendix: P8:Q7.
[400] See: 2.2.1: Development Theory.
[401] Appendix: P7:Q7.
[402] Appendix: P2, 5, 6, 7, 12:Q7.
[403] Appendix: P1, 4, 6, 10:Q7.
[404] Appendix: P1, 3, 11:Q7.
[405] Appendix: P13:Q7.

This is why they are focusing on technology now, I see the majority working on the Internet, and this is going to have an impact on the reality we are living in."[406] The Jordanian government seems to agree. As *P2* and *P9* pointed out, the increased engagement of authorities on social media is an unprecedented move to engage in a (however limited) dialogue with ordinary citizens. The internet might have started changing the way governments interact with their citizens.

And citizens, especially the young people interviewed here, seemed to be confident of their ability to positively change their society. This is a considerable move in a region where traditions value seniority and demand respect towards elderlies. People draw on the Arab spring, their advanced education, and their ability to build new things on the one hand and point to the unsolved challenges of the region – a legacy of the old generation – on the other. Their lead in technology can thus not be confined to economic aspects. New identities, thoughts and life styles take shape, and outdated traditions are criticized vehemently as people feel they lost legitimacy. The impact of technology on society is intriguing.

3.2.2 Society and technology

> "People started to think more about the future.
> Now everybody is saying that the future is technology.
> As a result you will find many people looking for what is happening abroad:
> There is a huge transfer of technology and this pushing us forward."
> *Undergraduate, IT consultant*[407]

It is too early to assess the multifaceted implications of the internet revolution on society. This is especially true for developing countries and emerging markets where the impact is even higher. Considering the fact that especially a country like Jordan is home to a largely conservative society it could be expected that the changing values held by young people[408] become more visible once they get into leading positions of ministries, companies and other institutions.

To get an idea of technology-driven societal change, participants were asked one question about perceptions and one about aspirations. The first asked whether the internet actually changed society. In particular, I argued that the internet gave more power to citizens and weakened the strong centralization found in all Arab countries. The second question asked whether *wāsṭa* was declining as a result of the internet. As an example, I mentioned professional networks such as LinkedIn and a job site that is well-known in Jordan.[409]

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[406] Appendix: P5:Q5.
[407] Appendix: Participant 5: Question 7.
[408] Compare: 2.3.2 The digital generation
[409] Appendix: 6.1.2 Question 3 and 4.

Everybody supported the idea that the internet was a great thing. They differed, however, in their assessment of its impact on society. Six confirmed it was driving positive change.[410] Four were skeptical however on how society was willing or able to use it in a positive way. Hence they preferred to describe its influence as rather neutral.[411] Three participants believed its impact on how society works was overestimated.[412] One of them even saw negative aspects prevailing: "No! The authorities want the internet so you can breathe from within it. You want freedom? Here it is, the internet. […] Nothing in society is going to change, never, what changes is the surveillance and what increases is the power of the intelligence agencies."[413]

The only other respondent that mentioned the surveillance aspect framed it in another way. The monitoring of people without their knowledge counters my thesis – the internet increases transparency and increases decentralization, empowering citizens – but, according to him, it depends on how responsible authorities use their new power.[414] It has been discussed earlier how the vast majority saw the potential loss of security as the greatest threat, hence they were not so much concerned with the monitoring of their online activities. This belief was also shaped by the Arab spring – there, the internet was rather an enabler than an obstacle. Social media was "the key driver behind the demonstrations of the Arab spring",[415] reinforcing the power of the people as they took to the streets because "social media was more important than television or radio, both because it was faster and able to cover more aspects."[416]

One argumentation holds that the internet in general plays a good and a bad role simultaneously, being a "double-edged sword",[417] a mere "tool"[418] on its own. Not denying that it does give "transparency of sort", one participant noted that it "also backfires. […] Yes, it gives power to the masses, but sometimes the masses don't know what is best for them […]. The internet, in the end, is a representation of the masses. If the problem is in the society it only gets duplicated into the internet."[419] Examples for this are abundant. Some people "believe and spread whatever they find online",[420] others such as an extremist preacher from the University of Jordan finds a podium to spread his hatred in social networks.[421] For example, nobody disagreed that the internet is a great tool to acquire knowledge and communicate; what

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[410] Appendix: P4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13:Q3.
[411] Appendix: P1, 2, 10, 11:Q3.
[412] Appendix: P3, 6, 9:Q3.
[413] Appendix: P3:Q3.
[414] Appendix: P10:Q3.
[415] Appendix: P2:Q3.
[416] Appendix: P10:Q3.
[417] Appendix: P1:Q3.
[418] Appendix: P2, 10:Q3.
[419] Appendix: P11:Q3.
[420] Appendix: P1:Q3.
[421] Appendix: P2:Q3.

skeptics doubt is whether the majority of society will use it most of the time in this direction: If society is perceived as extremist, stupid or conservative, then the only role of the internet becomes confined to providing them with more of the same.

Those who are none of the above, however, had never so easy access to information, knowledge and people. "It has become very easy for everyone to start his business. You need an idea, no budget."[422] In this sense, the optimists who believe the internet will transform society see its empowering potential for individuals more than its role for society at large. From a cultural perspective one participant emphasized "you get the freedom to choose the sources of your information, you get exposed to more knowledge, and if your information is wrong you have more than one opinion, challenging you to search for the right answer."[423] This is an important aspect given the fact that critical thinking and inquiry-based learning is neglected even at universities.[424]

With regards to decentralization effects, two interviewees mentioned the fact that the Jordanian government had a very successful online media presence including one of the most influential Twitter accounts in the world considering the population of Jordan.[425] One of the respondents saw this as a sign that Jordan moved towards e-governance where people are encouraged to interact with authorities in an efficient and non-bureaucratic way: "You can ask the municipality Amman and they will reply directly to you! [...] I hope we can accelerate, but for Jordan I think it is very good."[426]

To some this indeed reflects a form of decentralization or democratization. "It helps shedding light on the things that the people suffer from, at its center you have the people not the leaders. Those leaders who were always on top are holding less power today."[427] Governments and media are becoming "more horizontal."[428] And the fast spreading news make it easier to "criticize those responsible if they cause problems, it is not like before. This influences the political process in general in a positive manner."[429] If this was the case it means the discussed authoritarian legacy of early-conquered countries was finally coming under threat.[430] If the internet accelerated human empowerment it truly was a historic force that enabled entrepreneurship since it was able to weaken centralized authoritarian structures.

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[422] Appendix: P8:Q3.
[423] Appendix: P4:Q3.
[424] This is a fact I can relate to from my own experience at the University of Jordan. It has also been acknowledged by ministers, see: Chapter 3.1.1 The ecosystem of Jordan.
[425] Appendix: P2, 9:Q3.
[426] Appendix: P9:Q3.
[427] Appendix: P5:Q3.
[428] Appendix: P13:Q3.
[429] Appendix: P12:Q3.
[430] Compare: 2.2.3 Institutions and society

Since the difficulties of finding a job was the most cited challenge, the question regarding the relationship between *wāsṭa* and the internet was of personal concern to most participants. It is interesting to see nine of them agreeing that the internet lowered *wāsṭa*, especially because of professional networks such as LinkedIn and its Arabic competitors.[431] One participant mentioned his brother who, thanks to LinkedIn not only looks for his potential next career move but gets unsolicited offers.[432] "*Wāsṭa* has become much less", another interviewee agreed.[433] A third added that a new – positive – form of *wāsṭa* can be observed where the friend list on social media becomes a source of support. This is classical networking without the corrupt dimension.

Others were more cautious. Several persons noted that the usage or avoidance of *wāsṭa* depends on the employment policy of the company:[434] "With regards to *wāsṭa*, it became limited, mainly towards governmental institutions. The public sector has remained somehow shielded from the internet and globalization. Although even there you find the progress – the situation is much better now because everything becomes transparent."[435] Others felt that even the private sector did not fully see the potential of applications online. Regardless of whether they allowed for *wāsṭa*, personal networks and recommendations seemed to be more reliable and faster to secure a job interview. They blamed this on the fact that the technology was new[436] and on culture, saying this was "the way things work" in Jordan.[437]

A pessimistic perspective argues that "*wāsṭa* does not happen because employers have no other way to hire people. It happens simply because they choose to do things in this way. So if you give them the internet or any tool […] they wouldn't use it unless they believe in it."[438]

The more competition exists and the more companies, especially startups, rely on qualified talent with suitable skills, the belief in its use is likely to grow. "It helps to fill the gap in the company; internet portals provide me with the resume of people that have certain qualifications,"[439] an entrepreneur noted. In fact, since startups are first movers in terms of technology the increasing numbers of jobs that could be created soon might accelerate not only the usage of online platforms but increase competition in different industries. If established companies fail to acknowledge that they are no longer the only one in the market, and if the

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[431] Appendix: P1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 ,8, 10, 12:Q4.
[432] Appendix: P10:Q4.
[433] Appendix: P8:Q4.
[434] Appendix: P4, 5, 11:Q4.
[435] Appendix: P5:Q4.
[436] Appendix P6:Q4.
[437] Appendix P6:Q4.
[438] Appendix: P11:Q4.
[439] Appendix: P12:Q4.

government does not shield them against competition, then indeed *wāsṭa* could increasingly disappear.

3.2.3 Perceptions of entrepreneurship

> "There is a world called entrepreneurship;
> you don't have to be rich, you don't have to be the smartest person;
> you have an innovation and you are passionate, you can have support."
> *Entrepreneur*[440]

Entrepreneurship has become a trend in Jordan. Ten participants supported this assumption drawing on their own experience, citing the supportive environment for entrepreneurship in Amman and the difficult job market as key drivers. Out of those who agreed with the hypothesis, only one was skeptical that it actual formed a positive trend.

Explaining his reservations, he argued that "lots of media outlets portray startups as the way out, which I completely understand. In the end this is how you create jobs. But I don't think this is a way for everyone. I think we witness a replacement of the mentality that has prevailed for the last three decades: Fathers tell their children they need to become a doctor or an engineer, just because they know this leads to well paid jobs. Now the same happens again: Go and start your own business. Thus you find many businesses being launched, they operate for a while, than they fail and shut down. Only people who have an apt for this, who were born to do this, are surviving. And unfortunately, lots of these young people leave the country: I'm in no way optimistic. To be honest, six months from now I will be out of the country for good. Because I got to a point where I don't see it happening."[441]

A contrary assessment was given by a participant who was five years younger: "I think the situation is changing currently – let's assess it after one or two years. It is grooming, a lot of infrastructure is being built as we are talking, support organizations that are helping these people. So in my opinion in the next year and the year after things will become much clearer. Especially in the field of IT, because most of the startups here work in this field. These businesses can be built on a low or zero budget and we already have many incubators, people that care about this topic, and we get a lot of support from investors to accelerators and so on. I was incubated by Oasis500, in the IT sector, and from my experience it is becoming very clear now how this sector grows. Unfortunately it is limited to IT and engineering, but I hope it will spread towards all sectors that witness high unemployment. For example human sciences or medicine: There you still don't find the culture of entrepreneurship."[442]

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[440] Appendix: P9:Q5.
[441] Appendix: P11:Q5.
[442] Appendix: P12:Q5.

The emphasis on the current development might seem naïve at first, given the fact that skills, networks and successful companies need much more time to evolve. But the effects of the institutions created during the last years are reaching an increasing share of the Jordanian youth. One organizer told me: "Sure, sure. I feel the trend is not coming from the universities, it is coming from the schools even! They get lots of inspiration, really I hope I would again be sixteen years old and get those awareness rising sessions!"[443]

At the core of awareness lies the idea that creativity and passion are assets that everyone can nurture and develop. "Now during the last two years many things happened. Accelerators, funders like Oasis500, like Wamda. They are trying to get to the universities now to tell people: There is a world called entrepreneurship; you don't have to be rich, you don't have to be the smartest person; you have an innovation and you are passionate, you can have support. Of course it will need time – but let's hope!"[444]

Doubting that the old mindset would change quickly according to which the best jobs were found in the public sector, a pessimistic activist told me he did not feel any change: "The Jordanian guy doesn't want to be the one who takes initiative. He wants to consume, like a bank."[445] However, with increasing individualism, something that is driven by urbanization, smaller family size, education and higher living standards, some of those lucky enough to obtain a position might no longer find this work fulfilling. A recent graduate observed: "Many worked for a company and, after a while they said: No, I want to work on my own, I will get support here in Jordan, and there are courses that teach me how to run a business. I have friends that tried to open a company, some of them succeeded…"[446] Another participant couldn't agree more: "What is promising is the supportive environment for startups that we currently have. What I see is that lots of startups operate in Jordan, it's a huge movement. Young people if they do not find a job will create their own opportunities as freelancer or entrepreneur, thus also helping others whom they may employ."[447]

This is an important point since the rise of startups does not imply that everyone working there needs to be the founder. A young IT professional told me: "Because there are no jobs, so what do I do? I start thinking I want my own startup. I want to start on my own. People with this mindset employ the others that are waiting for job, you get it? You have twenty thousand graduates, five thousands find jobs all the while fifteen thousand are waiting. Now five of the fifteen start something as entrepreneurs, and at some point they will employ the other ten

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[443] Appendix: P8:Q5.
[444] Appendix: P9:Q5.
[445] Appendix: P3:Q5.
[446] Appendix: P7:Q5.
[447] Appendix: P12:Q2.

thousand. This is the beautiful thing that is happening, although the background is less beautiful – we graduate and many of us become entrepreneurs out of that need for money and making a living."[448]

Hence, even if there was some truth in that "ninety percent of the students that graduate attempt to find a secure job, even if it paid less than the minimum wage",[449] the idea is spreading that there is a third option beyond unemployment and badly paying jobs. In fact, this goes beyond a mere rational calculation, it is becoming a culture with an important, liberating aspect: That of ownership: "It became very beautiful, one is working on it, gets an idea of what entrepreneurship is about and… in the end you are not totally obsessed with becoming employed."[450]

When asking whether the emerging startup scene could change society in the long run, helping to accomplish some of the demands the Arab spring uprisings failed to deliver, most participants agreed. An IT consultant saw a positive, self-enforcing cycle accelerating: "I see a lot of things happening now, let's compare it to only three years ago: By then, I barely knew of two startups here. Now if you look around, that guy started a company, then this one, too. The third started looking for employees, as I told you, he looks for talent and for resources […] this goes back to the topic of knowledge, in order to work at a startup it is vital to understand more, learn more, it is a positive, a self-enforcing circle."[451] Another student saw even an impact on the way business was done by traditional companies: "Of course it will have an impact in the long run. The incumbent companies are pushed to become [innovative and customer friendly] like the new ones, you know. And there is an impact on the youth, they start working more on their own."[452] Young people becoming eager to invent and experiment, supported by various initiatives and institutions, could one day present to the world a genuinely Jordanian innovation: "The new, excellent ideas are the future on a worldwide level, so if something like this was to come out of Jordan it will bring us foreign investment, lots of jobs, and appreciation from people outside of the country. They will say hey, these countries come up with new things! This is a beautiful idea and might bring lots of money [into Jordan]."[453]

ntrepreneurship in this sense is a continuation of the Arab spring indeed. As one Jordanian argued: "For sure, entrepreneurship and startups are forwarding the goals which the Arab spring failed to achieve. The youth rose "we want, we want"; we want jobs, we want salaries,

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[448] Appendix: P5:Q5.
[449] Appendix: P10:Q5.
[450] Appendix: P6:Q5.
[451] Appendix: P5:Q2.
[452] Appendix: P6:Q2.
[453] Appendix: P7:Q2.

we want support. Startups and entrepreneurship have and continue to realize those things, in some ways. Increasingly, you see how young people no longer wait till they get a chance, instead they are creating it on their own."[454]

This enthusiastic picture was cautiously questioned by a social entrepreneur who knew the state of ecosystems outside of the region. His warning concerned the notion that the number of startups or the mere existence of supportive initiatives would resemble the quality of businesses established and their chances of long-term success. "Startups, I don't like to see them as a trend, like: Let's build one after the other. Everyone who has no understanding of startups launches one. Wait a minute, what do you know [about business]? So, this is nothing to be too optimistic about – especially in the Middle East where you don't have the strongest support… there are many challenges, ranging from skills to funding and support initiatives… […] What is promising is the [supportive] movement which I see in the Jordanian private sector, five years ago everything they did was only PR."[455]

His cautious remarks were shared by two interviewees who doubted the potential of entrepreneurship for Jordan.[456] To them, the countervailing forces were simply too strong. They were not against the idea of entrepreneurship, but "unemployment reaches twenty-five to thirty percent, that is huge. Those companies will be incapable of taking on this issue, they can't provide all these people with everything they need."[457] Even more pessimistic, *P11* noted that "many people bring about positive change, they try to push things forward. But the results remain unclear, because there is so little in comparison to the opposing forces. All in all I am not optimistic."[458]

While *P11* referred to bureaucratic institutions and the conservative society, *P9* was frustrated by the slow adaptation of technology and low work ethics: "We say to ourselves we are in the field of technology, the startups for example often use technology, but we are a country that is not ready for technology. So many give up, take their backs, leave for Dubai, Lebanon, somewhere else. My startup is one of those which proved successful, but the problem is the culture, the laziness. Many prefer to make a call, *yallah*, do everything for me."[459]

Those who viewed things more positively were likelier to believe in change of society driven by entrepreneurship. *P13* highlighted that startups were the achievement of the young generation, adding to the feature of self-empowerment a generational dimension: "[…] Okay, we are talking

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[454] Appendix: P8:Q2.
[455] Appendix: P2:Q2.
[456] Appendix: P3, 11:Q2.
[457] Appendix: P3:Q2.
[458] Appendix: P11:Q2.
[459] Appendix: P9.Q2.

about the environment, renewable energy and so on; but those are specifics. Now if we look at it more broadly, those ideas, they are pushing the society forwards. I see the impact on a broader scale. Those companies are built by young people, not the old generation. There is nothing traditional about these companies [...]."[460]

Traditional companies that were used to not having to compete, governments that were used to not being criticized openly, and old people that do not envision that things can be done in entirely new ways: These facets become challenged by those who discovered their love for knowledge, unleash their creativity and focus on problem-solving. To one participant, this would lead to a revolution in the Arab world driven by the young generation and entrepreneurs in particular: "The Arab Spring did not give the youth their rights. [...] In my opinion, the youth will take their role after a while in one way or the other. This is why they are focusing on technology now, I see the majority working on the Internet, and this is going to have an impact on the reality we are living in."[461] Entrepreneurship in the context of the contemporary Arab world is something that goes ways beyond solving unemployment challenges. It could become a catalyst for societal change.

3.2.4 Summary

The interviews by large support the hypotheses on technology, startups and the digital generation. Five key arguments have been supported by most of the participants: *First*, the lack of jobs is the greatest challenge and entrepreneurship is the best answer. *Second*, young and educated people are highly critical of their societies. Be it *wāsṭa*, the lack of self-determination in a traditional society, or the mentality of "the old guard" and some people's low work ethics. This is not only because they feel the negative impact all of this has on their personal lives but because they are well aware of how things are done elsewhere. They are looking towards Europe and its institutions, they are reading about development and politics, and they are globally connected knowing people living in other parts of the world. *Third*, technology and the internet is a force for societal change. Especially those who doubt the impact on society at large can be assumed to look very critical at their environment. This reinforces the idea that a new generation with distinct values and a great sense of awareness aspires changes that go beyond job creation. This is encouraging even from a mere economical perspective since we have demonstrated the multi-faceted problems that contributed to the dysfunctional job market.[462] *Fourth*, entrepreneurship is becoming a trend in Amman. It creates a new community and

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[460] Appendix: P13:Q2.
[461] Appendix: P5:Q5.
[462] Compare: Chapter 2.2 The Past: Stagnation.

provides young people with options that their parents never had. The encouraging examples of successful startups and the initiatives targeting schools and universities give young people a sense of ownership over their future. *Fifth*, to some the combination of these developments are a continuation of the Arab spring and a great source of hope for the future of the region.

This process however takes place surrounded by fear. Everybody agreed that the wars raging on in neighboring Syria and Iraq and the policies that gave rise to one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in modern history threaten not only the security of Jordan but the prospects for future development in large parts of the Arab world. The forces working towards empowerment, knowledge and humanist values surely will prevail in the end. They always did, in the long run. But if situation remains as it is – that is, deteriorating – than what could be achieved within the next decade might take a century.

3.3   Arabizi: Sociolinguistic insights

> "It is beautiful to open up,
> but we are losing a bit of our Arab identity."
> *Organizer*[463]

The Arab startup spring has been described as a "quiet revolution" by Christopher Schroeder,[464] Sabine Saade,[465] the business portal Bloomberg[466] and the Financial Times.[467] If the tech-revolution affects economic, political and social realms this profound change should be *hearable* as well – that is, it should be reflected by changes in language, according to sociolinguistics.[468] Sociolinguistics look into the evolution of spoken and written language in people's everyday life, considering their societal background.[469] The subsequent analysis of the participant's perception of Arabic, a look at their actual use of language and the potential implications for the future of the Arabic language add to the observations of the field study and highlight another facet of the current shifts underway in the region.

3.3.1   Perceptions of Arabizi

> "Language develops when the speakers
> of that language innovate and create the technology;
> the technology will be used in the language of the people that created it."
> *Entrepreneur*[470]

With only two exceptions,[471] the vast majority of respondents felt that the spoken Arabic language changes in Jordan.[472] The change most commonly referred to was the increased usage of English terms or even a mixture of English and Arabic.[473] While nobody overtly appreciated this change, five Jordanians framed the development in neutral terms[474] while three were concerned about it.[475]

The concerns evolved largely around the increasing share of English terms or even the loss of Arabic as the preferred language of Arabs: "The downside, I feel, is that we are losing our

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[463] Appendix: P8:Q6.
[464] Maha Abdelilah El-Swais, "A Technological Revolution in the Arab World," Text, *Voices and Views: Middle East and North Africa*, (June 11, 2015), http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/technological-revolution-arab-world-people-are-assets-not-problems.
[465] Saade, "A Startup Fever with a Middle Eastern Twist."
[466] Stephanie Baker, "Jordan Rises as Internet Hub While King Curbs Expression," *Bloomberg.com*, October 1, 2012, http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-10-01/jordan-rises-as-internet-hub-while-king-curbs-expression.
[467] Jaggi, "The Rise of Female Entrepreneurs."
[468] David Britain, "Sociolinguistic Variation," *LLAS Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies*, accessed October 11, 2015, https://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1054#toc_4.
[469] Ronald Wardhaugh and Janet M. Fuller, *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 7th ed. (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 153.
[470] Appendix: P13:Q6.
[471] Appendix: P3, 6:Q6.
[472] Appendix: P1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 9, 10, 11, 12, 13:Q6.
[473] Appendix: P1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13:Q6.
[474] Appendix: P1, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12:Q6.
[475] Appendix: P2, 7, 10:Q6.

language to a certain degree, our language is becoming weaker, our culture, to a degree, is becoming a Western culture. It is beautiful to open up, but we are losing a bit of our Arab identity."[476] A way to introduce new expressions without adapting a foreign language could be the Arabization of these terms: "What is good is the appearance of new terms that might express an idea very precise. But too often these words come from foreign languages. And this is bad, because the people use the foreign words instead of its Arabized form, though this is a problem stemming from the people and their culture, not the language itself."[477]

Key reasons cited were the weakness of the Arab language or the unwillingness of its speakers to absorb the new terminology into the Arabic language, driving it towards a mixture of Arabic and English. As one student put it, "the change is there, sure. Why, because the world language, and the language of the internet, is English. This leads to the birth of a, let's say, Arabic-English culture. When I talk to you I say computer, not ḥasūb."[478] Highlighting the lack of adequate Arabic expressions, one respondent confirmed the strong change taking place: "The Jordanian dialect wasn't the way it is today forty or thirty years ago. Many new words were invented or taken from foreign languages, maybe because they are easier or express an idea more precisely."[479]

Technical terms are one of the most important reasons behind the popularity of English. "I think everything related to the internet and technology in general requires English language skills before Arabic. Arabic is changing in that we mix the language with many English terms. And there is a group of people that mix the two languages a lot. This is a severe loss for the Arabic language which is not ready to face the scientific progress that is happening in the world today. And it is difficult… I mean, the language develops when the speakers of that language innovate and create the technology; the technology will be used in the language of the people that created it."[480] Similarly, another participant noted that the development of any language was a historic necessity, adding that "with or without the internet – it only accelerated the process. Sure this change happens towards the language where you find more progress, economically and technologically. Those that invent and develop the technology, historically, have others changing their language towards them in general."[481] The weakness of the Arabic language, according to this view, only reflects the current weakness of the Arabic education, science and lack of innovation in the region. At another point in history it was Arabic words that were

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476 Appendix: P8:Q6.
477 Appendix: P1:Q6.
478 Appendix: P5.Q6.
479 Appendix: P10:Q6.
480 Appendix: P13:Q6.
481 Appendix: P4:Q6.

introduced into English, Spanish and other languages – among them many words used in English to this day. For example: Alchemy, alcohol, algebra, algorithm, arsenal, average, cotton, hashish, tariff and zero.[482]

While some believe that the internet accelerates the decline of the Arab language, others emphasize that it could become a tool for its revival. Both online and offline, quality content in Arabic is lacking on many relevant topics: "I feel we are missing a good dictionary, not a great one, just a usable dictionary... on management, leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation."[483] As a result, "people speak English in business; so you feel you need to focus on that language in order to be more successful."[484] That could change if more concepts become taught in Arabic and content is available in Arabic: "Lately, there have been many projects. The University of Jordan, for example, has translated the medical terminology into the Arabic language."[485] Another student agreed, saying: "So in my opinion English as a language is essential, people need at least to understand and talk in it. It is an international language and the internet forces people to work with it. This is especially because we lack professional content in Arabic, so people read a lot in English. Yet in Jordan it differs slightly, there has been a movement during the last years that supports the Arab world by creating content in Arabic that is needed."[486]

So far, social networks lead many people to write in Arabizi. This is not only the mixture of English and Arabic, but the use of Latin letters combined with numbers for letters not available in this alphabet. *Invention* for example would be written *i5tira3* (*Arabic*: iḫtirāʿ). One participant conceded not to use the Arab letters at all, although she spoke Arabic (but studied abroad): "I don't write Arabic unfortunately, only ʿArabīzī, that's what I write."[487] Even more profound is the change among those who abandon Arabic even as a spoken language, as another Jordanian told me: "We've just been talking about the internet and if you read about this topic, business, marketing and so on, you will find the literature to be in English. Lots of the information which we are consuming is in English! So the language is seeping into our own language – it gets to a point where someone like me, who stayed all his life in Jordan, talks half of his talk in English and [only] the other half in Arabic. So it definitively has a huge effect, and the Arabic language is declining in many countries, industries and communities."[488]

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[482] For an alphabetical list, see: "List of English Words of Arabic Origin," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, June 23, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_English_words_of_Arabic_origin&oldid=668241230.
[483] Appendix: P2.Q6.
[484] Appendix: P7:Q6.
[485] If they did, I wonder why they not simply used Syrian books. In Syria, medicine has always been thought in Arabic.
[486] Appendix: P12:Q6.
[487] Appendix: P9:Q6.
[488] Appendix: P11:Q6.

The overall picture is clear: An unprecedented change in the spoken and written Arabic language is taking place, however the outcome remains unclear. History has shown that prosperous, dynamic societies coin new terms as they invent and innovate. Was the Arab world to regain its economic and political strength as a result of the potential tech-driven transition lying ahead, the outcome could be a resurge and renewal of its language. On the other hand, much evidence points to the second option where multiple topics, especially those related to business and science, become irreversibly linked to the English terminology. For some sections of society, especially those who studied abroad and work in international organizations, Arabic is losing its relevance. Its value is becoming reduced to heritage, a process accelerated by the fact that Standard Arabic – compared to European languages – is very unflexible with the integration of foreign words. On the other hand, recent efforts attempting to offer quality content in Arabic, targeting many people that do not feel comfortable with English, should be noted. As some feel they are in a process of losing their identity and heritage, this trend could reverse some of the current developments.

3.3.2   Arabic and English in the interviews

"… šūf online mīn byaʿmel account."
Social entrepreneur[489]

When conducting the interviews I asked participants to use Arabic the way they would usually talk. For all participants this meant they would not use Standard Arabic but versions of the Jordanian dialect. In retrospect, three categories of speakers can be identified: Respondents that tried to speak only Arabic,[490] respondents that included various English terms,[491] and respondents that extensively employed English phrases.[492] Because of the shared characteristics – age, country, educational background and the same questions asked – it can be argued that these preferences reflect conflicting responses to the previously discussed crises of the Arabic language: While some feel comfortable speaking Arabic, or trying to preserve it, others started abandoning it – the majority probably unconsciously opts for a compromise where they use English terminology where they feel it appropriate.[493]

This third approach can be observed in many instances. "They are working on media, feedback and information" (byištiġlu ʿalā l-*media*, ʿalā l-*feedback*, ʿalā l-maʿlūmāt).[494] "Then came the

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[489] Appendix: P2:Q4.
[490] Appendix: P1, 3, 10.
[491] Appendix: P2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13.
[492] Appendix: P9, 11.
[493] Another factor potentially influenced the language preferences: Some participants might have preferred English to make it easier for me to understand them. Others might have tried to speak only Arabic out of respect for a foreigner's efforts to learn the language.
[494] Appendix: P6.

social networks" (baʿdīn ṣāret il-*social networks*), "because you see online who creates an account" (leʾanno šūf *online* mīn byaʿmil *account*), "it became a trend" (ṣār fī *trend*). "There are additional sources of information. [...] And entrepreneurship is not only about money, it is also about opportunities, networking and so on." (Fī *source of information* tāni. [...] Fa il-*entrepreneurship* miš bass maṣāri, kamān furaṣ la-n-*networking* w ġēra.)[495] Similarly: "And let us say the promising thing about them is the currently supportive environment for the startups." (W-ḫallīna nəḥkī inno *promising* fīhum il-*environmental* daʿm la-l-startups fī l-waqt il-ḥālī).[496]

The adaptation of the English terminology goes along with some kind of Arabization. A prominent example would be the addition of the Arabic article as in the following example: "muḥtawā [...] ʿan il-*management*, wa-l-*leadership*, wa-l-*entrepreneurship*, wa-l-*innovation*."[497]

Another phenomenon is that of adjectives which are placed according to the Arabic, not the English grammar: "Qualified people that fill the gap which I have in the company." (Nās *qualified that fill the gap* yalli ana ʿindī yāh bi-š-šarike.)[498] Another aspect that can be observed is the application of the Arabic dual form to English words (websitēn, computerēn), although this can't be demonstrated by the conversations that were recorded.

Sometimes it is not clear why an English word has been used since the Arabic word is well known and the term is not technical, for example "there are many people who think about the future of technology" (fī ktīr nās ṣaru yfakkru bi-l-*future* tabaʿ il-technology).[499] It could be a stylistic or unconscious choice to use *future* instead of *mustaqbal* here, maybe because the Arab word for future literally translates as that *what you receive* (istaqbala) whereas the modern concept of future, especially for entrepreneurs, refers to that *what you create* as opposed to that what you receive. Another example however indicates that the usage at least sometimes is rather random: "I predict a kind of chaos – a kind of chaos of information." (*I predict kind of chaos – kind of* fawḍa bi-l-maʿlūmāt). Here, chaos is used in English first and then in Arabic. But because the whole phrase started in English, the response is very close to the second category – those who mix English and Arabic phrases in their statements.

The other approach is to switch between English and Arabic within sentences (code-switching). A typical English-Arabic sentence looks like the following: "There are lots of people trying to make positive change, there are those who try to push things forward. But the effect of their work doesn't materialize, because there is so little in comparison with the counter-force so,

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[495] Appendix: P13.
[496] Appendix: P12.
[497] Appendix: P2.
[498] Appendix: P12.
[499] Appendix: P5.

basically, I am not optimistic." (Fī ktīr nās ʿam yiḥāwilu yaʿmilu *positive change*, fī nās biḥāwilu *to push forward*, bass il-*effects* tabaʿ šeġlum miš ʿam titbayyan. Leʾinno *there is so little in comparison* maʿ l-*force* yalli ğāye min al-itiğğāh at-tāni. *So basically* māni mutafāʾil).[500]

Sometimes speakers extend the English parts in their sentences to a degree where it becomes difficult to tell whether it is an Arabic or English sentence: "The problem is that lots of people they get to positions not because they deserve the position or they are qualified; just because they know someone who knows someone who can put them there. This is a real problem." (Məškelet inno ktīr nās *they get to positions* miš leʾinno *they deserve the position or they are qualified*; bass leʾinno *they know someone who knows someone who can put them there*. Fa-hayy məškele). Another example: "In the government they are clueless; I mean, everything in technology, even in arts, which as a concept wasn't already there when you think about doing it, you find a lot of push back from certain groups in society." (Il-ḥukūme *they are clueless*; yaʿni ayy išī bi-t-*technology* bi ayy išī ḥatta bi-l-*arts that as a concept* bi-l-balad mā kān mawğūd *as a concept already when you come* taʿmilo, *you find a lot of push back okay* mən *certain sectors in society*).[501]

In an extreme case, thoughts are expressed in English with Arabic phrases functioning as bridging phrases: "It is a *wāsṭa* to go faster – not like, you don't have to pay to get the job, but on LinkedIn you find five hundred resumes of qualified applicants, two hundred resumes via e-mail, so… maybe where it works the most is Dubai, but a while ago I did a test. I applied [online] to hundreds of jobs in my field, but nobody responded." (It is a *wāsṭa* to go faster – *miš inno*, you don't have to pay to get the job, *bass ʿalā* LinkedIn *btetlāʾi ḥamsmīt CV mastūte*, *w-mītēn CV via e-mail, fa… yumken aktar šī yezbuṭ bi-Dubai*, but a while ago I did a test. I applied to hundreds of jobs in my field, *wala ḥada ḥaka maʿī*).[502]

This modern phenomenon is referred to as *Arabizi* – a broad "phenomenon in the Arab world known as "the language of youth" which is a mix of Arabic and foreign languages, mainly English and French."[503] While Arabizi[504] has often been confined to the writing of Arabic with Latin letters in SMS and online platforms,[505] we will henceforth refer to the overall mixture of the two languages as Arabizi with an emphasis on the new popularity of English and its implications for the Arabic language. Arabizi is "a modern mix of Arabic and English, mostly used by the

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[500] Appendix: P11.
[501] Appendix: P11.
[502] Appendix: P9.
[503] Mahmoud Abdalla, "The Place of Media in the Arabic Curriculum," in *Arabic and the Media: Linguistic Analyses and Applications*, vol. 57 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 270.
[504] In case it is a mixture of Arabic and French, it is referred to as *Frarabe*.
[505] Mohammad Ali Yaghan, "'Arabizi': A Contemporary Style of Arabic Slang," *Design Issues* 24, no. 2 (2008): 39.

western-educated elite[506] of the Arab world."[507]

3.3.3 Renewal or dilution of the Arabic language

> "The Arab spring didn't give the youth its rights. […]
> I believe they will assume their role in the future in one way or the other,
> and this is a reason why they are now so drawn to technology –
> because it is the future."
> *Undergraduate, IT consultant*[508]

Arabizi forms one of two potential responses to a rapidly changing world driven by technological innovation and scientific progress: The adaptation of the language which is not only dominating science and business but a prerequisite for those who wish to work in these fields internationally. The second approach holds that the Arabic language should not be abandoned for it is capable of absorbing new terminologies. The supporters of Arabizi realize the need to adapt to a new reality while the latter fear for a destruction of the Arabic language and, ultimately, identity.[509]

Arabizi has been interpreted as a facet of the generational change taking place in the Arab world. In Egypt in particular, English was long considered to be the language of the colonizer – a language of a power that tried to leave Egyptians uneducated and weak. In the internet age, this trend became reversed: It is an empowering tool to gain access – to knowledge, information, and the outside world.[510] The other Arabic country where Arabizi has become a widespread phenomenon is Amman, Jordan.[511] In both cases, Arabizi becomes increasingly the only way for some young people to express themselves since their education is mainly in English with little attention to and importance attached to Standard Arabic.[512] As a result, they "live, speak, and interact with both Arabic and English – not as separate languages – but within the same conversation."[513] This does not come without problems. In extreme cases they might not have full command of either language – but more importantly, their mother tongue is neither real English nor Arabic, creating a kind of "unsettled identity."[514] Still, it could be argued that Arabizi not only marks the generational change but helps creating the space where young people "reinvent their identities as they liberate themselves from real-life restrictions."[515]

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[506] *Elite* in my opinion is used in a very broad sense here.
[507] Lelania Sperrazza, "Arabizi: From Techno-Lution to Revolution," in *Toward, Around, and Away from Tahrir: Tracking Emerging Expressions of Egyptian Identity*, First (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 31.
[508] Appendix: Participant 5, Question 7.
[509] Abdalla, "The Place of Media," 270–271.
[510] Sperrazza, "Arabizi: Techno-Lution to Revolution," 30–33.
[511] Abdalla, "The Place of Media," 270.
[512] Sperrazza, "Arabizi: Techno-Lution to Revolution," 34–35.
[513] Ibid., 34.
[514] Ibid.
[515] Ibid., 36.

These developments are of great significance given that Arabic is the language of Islam and its holy book, the Arabic civilization and Arab nationalism of the 20th century. However, the two attempts to preserve the Arabic language are the Syrian example and the recent efforts – mainly in Jordan – to counter the increasing popularity of English have not yielded the awaited results so far. In Syria, subject matters that are taught in English and French in all other Arabic countries – such as physics or medicine – were arabized early on.[516] But with the advance of the internet and the rapid introduction of new technology it becomes increasingly difficult to cope with the change, especially that there is so little content available in Arabic. The ambivalence was captured by the latest Arab Youth Survey which found that three in four "of Arab youth agree that the Arabic language is central to their identity but almost half of those polled (47 per cent) say it is losing its value." Overall, more than sixty percent agreed that "knowing English can advance one's career more than knowing Arabic."[517]

It is too early to assess the path Arabic language will take in the 21th century. Different trends can be observed – increased literacy theoretically implies greater knowledge of Standard Arabic, the language of Arab media. Continuing globalization could imply the decrease of the number of spoken dialects, and the internet currently accelerates the adaptation of English as the key language especially when it comes to technology and science. In a second wave, the same medium could increase a return to Standard Arabic as a common language for academics, business and science.

The key prerequisite is not a governmental decree here and there but – again – an organic, authentic foundation that drives it. More specifically, research, innovation, economic prosperity and political influence would be needed to renew a genuine Arab language of science that meets the requirements of daily conversations in a technology-driven world. It has been discussed how Arab states focus on foreign trading partners while intra-Arab trade has remained stagnant for decades.[518] Arguably, the likelihood of a renewal of the Arab language equally depends on the impending political and economic integration of the Arab world. This could be driven by its current crisis, but it would require huge efforts by policymakers among whom visionaries are scarce these days. The result in a growing economy and increased regional efforts to conduct research would have a much higher impact on the renewal of the language than any sponsored campaign – or, in the case of the United Arab Emirates, even a law.[519]

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[516] Abdalla, "The Place of Media," 270.
[517] ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, "AYS 2015," 7.
[518] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 300.
Compare: 2.1.2 Freedom: Political demands.
[519] Ola Salem, "Law Planned to Preserve Arabic Language in the UAE," *The National*, November 25, 2014, http://www.thenational.ae/uae/law-planned-to-preserve-arabic-language-in-the-uae.

3.3.4 Summary

The technological revolution sweeping through the Middle East is changing not only aspirations and values but impacts the spoken Arabic language. This supports the hypothesis that a historical shift is taking place in the Middle East of which entrepreneurship is only a facet. The phenomenon known as Arabizi is the combination of Arabic with foreign, mainly the English, language. While it is unclear as to how far the Arabic language will continue to lose its importance in the 21th century, it can be said that the openness to new vocabulary and the acceptance of English as the current world language facilitates the integration of MENA into the globalized world, providing its citizens with access not only to the knowledge available in English but to people from around the globe.

The attitudes towards the declining value of Arabic in business and science vary between acceptance and reservations regarding the potential loss of identity and heritage. The future of Modern Standard Arabic in business and science depends mainly on the degree to which Arab states manage to integrate. Increased cooperation, especially in education, business and research would increase the usefulness of Arabic tremendously. At the same time, the education system needs to be improved in order to yield new concepts, theories and inventions. Steps taken so far evolve around the creation of quality content in Arabic, but it remains to be seen if this alone will be able to bring about a lasting renewal of Arabic as the preferred language for entrepreneurs and businesses.

4   Conclusion

The literature reviewed largely supports the initial hypothesis that the Arab world is witnessing a silent revolution. The field research confirms these findings for Jordan. We have argued that the Arab spring failed to solve economic, political and societal problems because of their deep cultural, historic and institutional roots. Looking into the potential impact of entrepreneurship we found each of these three domains affected in several ways.

Economically, startups constitute an importance source of job creation. They strengthen the private sector. They innovate in various industries ranging from education to energy, healthcare, payments and e-commerce. Hence they become a much needed source of diversification especially for oil-dependent economies. Because of their need to scale beyond the small markets available in most individual Arab countries, an increasing number of startups enters neighbouring markets over time. By doing this they could spur intra-regional trade that remains drastically underdeveloped to date.[520]

Jordan in particular witnessed a strong growth of its ICT sector. This was noticed by corporate and private investors who help accelerating the growth of startups with investments, mentorship and events. As a result the number of startups is rising, among them some that will turn into fully-fledged corporations. These developments could convince neighboring countries to increase their efforts to support entrepreneurs as well. Otherwise their skilled graduates would migrate to countries that are more welcoming. Already today, one in five entrepreneurs in Amman is no Jordanian citizen.[521]

Politically, the rise of entrepreneurship implies three new developments for the region. *First*, a regional entrepreneurship community is taking shape that involves founders, skilled graduates, investors, mentors and companies. Together they form a civil society very similar to the original meaning of the word – a group of businessmen that has the power to negotiate with governments and the old elite their right for trade and commerce.[522] *Second*, policy makers finally come to understand the vital importance of small businesses.[523] This implies sound economic reforms including less protection for state-linked oligopolies, the rule of law, increased efforts to fight corruption and incentives for people to start their own business. *Third*, both entrepreneurship and the internet gives more power to ordinary citizens vis-à-vis

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[520] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 299.
[521] Oasis500, "Things You Need to Know about Jordan's Tech Sector!"
[522] Zakaria, "A Region at War with Its History."
[523] Arno Maierbrugger, "Venture Capital on the up for UAE Start-Ups," *GulfNews.com*, October 12, 2014, http://gulfnews.com/gn-focus/http-gulfnews-com-gn-focus-business-loans-start-up-funding-1.1396109.

authorities. This does not only apply to the government but banks, for example. Crowdsourcing is a democratic tool that allows people to sponsor projects they consider worth realizing. This is a central feature of human empowerment. Because MENA was found to be the least progressive cultural zone the impact of the internet revolution holds a particular significance for its future development.[524]

Jordan reacted to this phenomenon with an internet law that is typical for the region. It requires news websites to register their platform, holding them accountable for every user comment published.[525] On the other hand, government entities increasingly engage with citizens via social media and introduce e-governance services. The degree to which governments are suspicious of social media, the transparency and the flatness of the internet is an indicator of how serious regimes are about real change. Still, it is a simplification to draw the only fault line between governments and startups; additional potential conflicts were found between generations,[526] the marginalized country side[527] and conservative elites that block reform programs.[528] Most interviewees were optimistic in this regard, though, stating that the internet furthers transparency and gives a voice to citizens.[529]

Socially, there are five key implications of entrepreneurship. *First*, entrepreneurship provides ownership – "youth finally are going to own their future."[530] By taking things into their hands and creating their own jobs, a historical shift is taking place that no longer follows the top-down approach of authoritarian, centralized governments. Solutions are developed and tested at the base, citizens take on responsibility and demand autonomy in return. Various surveys found majorities of the digital generation to aspire running their own business, with substantial shares considering entrepreneurship as a career choice.

Second, societal hierarchies don't exist online which furthers questioning some of those that exist in society. The internet encourages debates and free exchange of opinions. It facilitates campaigns and the discussion of societal taboos. The access to foreign books, music and movies accelerates this trend. This has a huge influence on a generation that from the beginning joined social media platforms and learned how to benefit from the vast amount of knowledge available

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[524] Welzel, *Freedom Rising*.
[525] Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 199.
[526] *For example, see*: Appendix: Participant 2: Question 2, Participant 9: Question 5, Participant 11: Question 1.
[527] Decker, "The Islamic State's Biggest Threat to Jordan Isn't Violence - It's Economics."
[528] Jarrah, "Civil Society in Jordan."
[529] Appendix: P2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13:Q:3.
[530] Fadi Ghandour, "Aramex's Fadi Ghandour: Unrest Demonstrates Why It Is Important for Arab Entrepreneurs to Build New Ventures," *Knowledge@Wharton*, March 22, 2011, http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/aramexs-fadi-ghandour-unrest-demonstrates-why-it-is-important-for-arab-entrepreneurs-to-build-new-ventures/.

in the largest human network ever created.

Third, both the internet and entrepreneurship make *wāsṭa* a less reliable asset. Professional networks and merit-based hiring policies seemed to be more and more common in Jordan. The first reason is that there is no *wāsṭa* on the internet. In fact, the internet provides greater transparency. The second reason is the need for competitiveness as the economies are less controlled and protected by the state and connected elites.

Fourth, entrepreneurship offers an alternative to the two most popular choices of well-educated graduates: Joining the over-staffed public sector or migrating. In instances, migrants returned home sensing the potential of the emerging entrepreneurship community. In other cases services such as crowdsourcing platforms allow the diaspora to contribute to projects in their homelands.

Fifth, the potential of startups to solve very specific problems will become clearer over time. Carpooling might be a fancy tool for students in Berlin or London, but in Amman and Cairo that lack proper public transportation it could lower traffic jams, pollution and numbers of car accidents. Since startups go well beyond e-commerce and entertainment future solutions for pressing problems can be expected in banking, education, energy, health care, to name but a few industries. In case this potential becomes unlocked over time, the widely felt frustration during the aftermath of the Arab spring could bring back the feeling of ownership, liberation and self-confidence.

The thesis comes with a very apparent limitation: The future remains unknown. Revolutions take time to unfold, and the startup revolution is not exception to this rule. This thesis was able to find evidence both by means of a literature review and a field research that the startup revolution has begun, especially in Amman. But it is too early to say that irreversible changes have taken place. Many interviewees were concerned about the future of the Levant. People that lack basic needs such as safety don't yearn for empowerment. Yet almost everyone expressed his hope for peace, co-existence, more pluralism and progress.

For Jordan in particular, much depends on the political fate of the Levant and the outcome of the wars in Syria and Iraq. For the region in general, private sector development, education and support for small businesses and entrepreneurship and more inclusive policies in general will be vital. Malik and Awadallah summarized this challenge: "The Arab world lies at the cusp of a new era. It is witnessing an unprecedented demographic transition resulting in one of the "largest youth cohorts" in its history. [...] The future of the Middle East crucially depends on

whether it can convert this youthful transition into a productive transition."[531]

The combination of desk and field research proved to be a valuable approach since I was able to talk to people with diverse backgrounds and varying perceptions regarding my hypotheses. A key limitation beyond the unpredictability of the region's future is the lack of existing studies on the subject which forced me to draw on diverse subjects during my literature review to make my point. Another limitation is the lack of cross-country comparisons. However, these limitations open a vast range for potential future research questions.

One approach could compare the development of entrepreneurship in MENA to other emerging markets, especially Southeast Asia and Latin America. Another approach could compare entrepreneurship in the Gulf, the Levant, Egypt and North Africa. For smaller studies it could be interesting to ask questions similar to the ones used for this thesis in other Arab capitals to find similarities and differences with Jordan.

Beyond startup-focused studies a wide range of potential questions comes to mind. In the traditional world of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) women rarely owned a company. It is estimated that out of 12 million SMEs in the Arab world less than 0.3 million are led by women.[532] Startups on the other hand are often launched by women.[533] The Economist estimates that one out of four startups has a female founder.[534] This phenomenon as well as the actual and potential role played by the Arab diaspora in supporting startups and drive development in individual countries could provide interesting insights. Other internet-related subjects that were discussed only briefly were the role of social activism and social media,[535] the influence of technology on religiosity[536] – and atheism.[537] With efforts underway to revive the Arab language it could be insightful to look into language preferences over time, especially now that more Arabic content is created online.[538] Should the reconstruction of war-ravaged Arab countries begin one day, research could be conducted on the role of technology and entrepreneurs in the process.

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[531] Malik and Awadallah, "The Economics of the Arab Spring," 309.

[532] Mehrunisa Qayyum, "Revolutionary Business: Rethinking Entrepreneurship in the Middle East," *Midan Masr*, 2012, http://www.midanmasr.com/en/article.aspx?ArticleID=162.

[533] For further readings, see: Schroeder, *Startup Rising*, 147–170.

[534] The Economist, "Untraditional Choice: The Middle East Beats the West in Female Tech Founders."

[535] Ali, "Egyptian Women Dress."

[536] Shediac et al., "Generation A"; Cole, *The New Arabs*.

[537] Benchemsi, "Invisible Atheists."

[538] Sperrazza, "Arabizi: Techno-Lution to Revolution."

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6 Appendix

6.1 Interview questions

6.1.1 Arabic
Question 1

Bi-rāʾyak, šū hiyye ahamm at-taḥaddiyyāt le-š-šabāb bi-l-Urdun il-yōm?

Question 2

Ana šāyef ənno eš-šarikāt an-nāši'a raḥ titḥaʾʾaʾ ahdāf ʿadīde taba ir-rabī il-ʿarabī fī l-buʿd il-baʿīd. Hiyye btitwaffar waẓāʾif w-furaṣ; btitḥill mašākel w-btitġayyar l-muǧtamaʿ. Btitwāfiʾ maʿ l-fəkra am laʾ, w-lēš?

Question 3

Šū huwwe taʾṯīr il-internet ʿalā il-muǧtamaʿ? Maṯalan, hal byuʿṭī ʾuwwe li-l-muwāṭinīn? ʿAm yḫaffif tamarkuz as-sulṭa maṯalan?

Question 4

Šū hiyye l-ʿalāʾa bēn il-internet w-il-wāsṭa – šāyif il-wāsṭa ʿam titḫaffaf? Lamma btitfakker bi-LinkedIn aw Aḫṭabūṭ ṣār fī ṭuruq ǧdīde li-l-ḥuṣūl ʿalā waẓīfe.

Question 5

Bi-l-Urdun, hal btaʿtaʾid inno ʿadad mutaḫḫariǧī l-ǧāmiʿāt yalli yballšu yʾassisu šarikāt nāšiʾa ʿam tizdīd, w-šū is-sabab?

Question 6

ʿAm mnəḥkī bi-l-ʿarabī: Hal btitfakkar inno il-luġa ʿam titġayyar bi-sabab il-ʿawlame w-il-internet? Ezā hēk, ilā ayy ittiǧāh btitġayyar?

Question 7

Naẓaran ilā mustaʾbal il-waṭan il-ʿarabī, šū huwwe akbar amal w-akbar ḫōf bi-nisbe la-illak?

6.1.2 English
Question 1

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges currently for young people in Jordan?

Question 2

I believe that, in the long run, startups will achieve several goals of the Arab spring. They provide jobs, opportunities, solve problems and eventually change society. Do you agree with this idea or not, and why so?

Question 3

How do you perceive the influence of the internet on society? For example, does it give more power to the citizens thus limiting the centralization of power?

Question 4

How about the relationship of the internet and wāsṭa? Do you see wāsṭa waning? Thinking of LinkedIn and Aḫṭabūṭ, there are new ways to find a job.

Question 5

Do you see numbers of graduates that launch a startup in Jordan increasing, and what ist he reason behind it?

Question 6

We are talking in Arabic here – do you think the langugage is changing because of globalization and the internet? If so, in which direction?

Question 7

Looking into the future of the Arab world, what is your biggest hope and your biggest fear?

6.2 Transcripts

6.2.1 Participant 1

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
July 29th, 2015	22	male	Student

Halla' awwal šī bəṭlaʿ ʿa-bālī bi-nisbət lə-l-taḥaddiyyāt huwwe al-baṭāle bi-šakl asāsi, yaʿni taḥaddiyāt iqtiṣādiyye. Le'anno lamma ykūn fī istiqrār iqtiṣādi ykūn fī aʿṣār tāniye bi-l-ḥayāt. Fa-ahamm ᵊšī ᵊnrekkez ʿalā l-ǧānib əl-iqtiṣādi w-huwwe yešmal aktar mən šəġle, minha əl-baṭāle, əl-iġtirāb, mumken it-tasawwul; yaʿni yu'addī ilā mašākel iǧtimāʿiyye. Fī kamān ʿadam qudra ʿalā d-dirāse, məš bass ṣuʿūbāt əl-māddiyye lil-ʿā'ilāt wa-innamā barḍo il-iqsāṭ il-ʿāli ǧiddan lil-ǧāmiʿāt. Fa-hāda bi-ra'yī bi-šakl asāsi əl-taḥaddiyāt: Al-baṭāle, al-dirāse, al-iġtirāb – yaʿni bi'addī li-l-tafakkuk al-usari w-bi'aṯṯir ʿalā l-aṯār al-iġtimāʿiyye.

Question 2

'Akīd ᵊbwāfiq. Le'anno əš-šabāb bi-ḥāǧe ilā waẓā'if w-furaṣ ʿamal, w-aš-šarikāt an-nāši'a hiyye aktar šī raḥ tuwaffir hāda šī. W-əl-rabīʿ əl-ʿarabī 'aṯṯer bardo ʿalā l-ǧānib il-iġtimāʿi lāzem eḥki, yaʿni tafakkuk usari, əẓ-ẓurūf id-dirāsiyye, il-ġahl 'adda ilā ziyādet ǧahl fī baʿḍ əl-ḥālāt, fā... 'akīd iš-šarīkāt in-nāši'a raḥ tirfaʿ al-mustawā al-iqtiṣādi ilhum bardo maʿ l-mustawā l-iġtimāʿi wa-ṯ-ṯaqāfi.

Question 3

Hād byaʿtamid ʿalā mustaḥdim il-internet, miš l-internet nafso. Yaʿni l-internet fīk taḥki huwwe silāḥ ḏū ḥaddayn, yaʿni fī ǧānib silbī w-fī ǧānib iǧābī. Fa əza kān al-mustaḥdim insān muṯaqqaf, w-āʿrif kīf yestaḥdimo, raḥ yistafīd minhu istifāde ktīr kbīre, w-əza kān insān ǧāhil, raḥ yestaġillo baʿḍ al-fi'āt aw baʿḍ al-ittiǧāhāt w-raḥ ṯallīho tiḍaʿha w-mumken sayṭir ʿalā ʿaqlo – bi-l-aḥīr byaʿtamid ʿalā l-mustaḥdim; ra'yī. Yaʿni fī aḥki fī tasāwi. Inno istiḥdām an-net miš maqṣur bass ʿalā l-ʿilm w-il-ṯaqāfe aw kəza la'inno ṣār fī ᵊšī tāni tamāman, ṣār fī wasīle iʿlāmiyye, la-našr baʿḍ il-afkār w-taṯbītha fī-l-muǧtamaʿāt. Bi-l-iḍāfe ənno saham šakl ktīr kbīr... maṯalan, fī-l-mustawa l-urdunī, bi-ziyādet il-ġahl fī baʿḍ al-fī'āt. Le'anno fikra waḥde btəntešir bi-ṯawānī ʿabra ktīr mawāqiʿ l-internet w-biḥoṣṣ bḍakkar Facebook. W-zayy mā ḥakēt ənno l-mustaḥdim il-ǧāhil raḥ yṣedde' ʿalā l-fikra, bi-kəll əs-suhūle, w-raḥ yenšurha bardo ʿalā WhatsApp aw hēk ittiṣālāt tāniye. Fa-ana bi-ra'yī inno fī tasāwi.

Question 4

Bi-kull it-ta'kīd. Yaʿni bwāfiq ʿalā hayy l-fikra, bass biḍall et-taʿdīm bi-naẓarī yaʿni taʿdīm mubāšir ʿalā aš-šarike, w ʿamal muqābalāt šaḥṣiyye maʿ hada l-šaḥṣ, bikūn afḍal. Le'anno fī ktīr nās mā bikūnū ktīr ṣadd'īn bi-l-sīre ed-dātiye tabaʿtun yalli biḥuṭṭu ʿalā ṭarīq il-internet w-hād bi'addi ilā taḍiʿ il-wa't tabaʿa aš-šarike. Le'anno hiyye raḥ tfakkir inno hād al-šaḥṣ bi-hayy l-

muwāṣafāt il-mawǧūde ʾeddāmha bi-l-āḫer biṭlaʿ šaḫṣ tāni. Yaʿni aw maṯalan fī ašḫāṣ mumken ybālġū bi-qudurātun w-bi-muwaṣafāṯun aš-šaḫṣiyye fa-hād ᵊšī biʾaddi ilā ihām aš-šarikāt bi-qudurāt hāda l-šaḫṣ. Ana bitwaqqʿa ktīr nās bistaḫdimūhon [al-mawāqiʿa], bass mən ḫibratī aš-šaḫṣiyye laʾ, muʿẓam an-nās biʾaddimū šaḫṣiyyan ʿalā š-šarikāt w-biʾaddimū mubāšira.

Question 5

Muʿẓam al-mutaḫḫariǧīn bi-šakl asāsi bi-ʾaddimu ʿalā šarikāt yalli ilha sumʿa ktīr kbīre w-mašhura bi-s-sūʾ. W-iš-šarikāt in-nāšiʾa bitkūn lissa bi-awwalitha, w-mumken kamān mā btuʿṭī rawātib ktīr ᵊmnīḥa. W-šaḫṣ muttaḫarriǧ min al-ǧāmiʿa bi-l-aḫaṣṣ əš-šabāb bikūnu muqbilīn ʿalā az-zawāǧ, fa-beddhon yǧammʿon maṣāri. Iš-šarīkāt in-nāšiʾa mā raḥ btistaḫdimon bi-hayy iš-šəġle. Fa-biḥāwilū ʾaddma btuʿṭi aš-šarike rawātib mnīḥa aw inno yiḫtiribu ilā dual il-ḫalīǧ maṯalan ʿašān byaḫdā rātib aʿlā. Fa-mā bitwaqqʿa iqbāl ktīr ʿāli l-iš-šarīkāt in-nāšiʾa illa əza kān min qibal il-ašḫāṣ yalli ktīr miḥtāǧīn ḥatta wa law bi-rātib basīṭ.

Question 6

Akīd. ʿAm tettġayyer w-tġayyeret faʿliyyan, bi-šakl hāʾil bi-l-fitra l-aḫire. Fī aḥkī inno bardo ǧānib iǧābi w-ǧānib silbi. Al-ǧānib al-iǧābi inno am yiṭlaʿ muṣṭalaḥāt ǧdīde, ṣār fī iš-šaḫṣ yiʿabbir ʿan fikra bi-muṣṭalaḥ daqīq, muʿabbir, bāḫod min luġa tānye yumken, al-ǧānib is-salbi inno in-nās miš ʿam bistaḫdimu hay-l-muṣṭalaḥāt al-muʿarrabe w-ʿam baḥdu al-muṣṭalaḥ kamā huwwe min il-luġa il-aǧnabiyye. Bass il-meškle miš bi-l-luġa w-innamā bi-n-nās w-aṯ-ṯaqāfe.

Question 7

Akbar ḫōf bi-nisbet la-illi it-taʾsīm is-siyāsī, w-al-ḥudūdī, bi-l-iḍāfe ilā tafriqa bayna an-nās, nizaʿāt w-al-iḫtilafāt bizīd il-kurh benātna. Akbar amal bi-nisbe illi waḥi hayy-l-nizaʿāt, aw, ʿal-aqall, il-ḥulūl bi-s-salām.

6.2.2 Participant 2

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 24th, 2015	27	male	Graduate, social entrepreneur

Question 1

Bi-šakl ʿām al-baṭāle, yaʿni furaṣ ʿamal. W-fī muškle tāniye yallī huwwe et-tašmīš, aw beddak ᵊtkūn ka-šabāb fāʿil bi-l-muǧtamʿa taʿak; il-mušārake. Baʿd ir-rabīʿ il-ʿarabī ṣār fī ḥirāk baʿēn ṣār yənzel; āh, fī fiʾāt, āh, nāšiṭa: Bass mā mnəḥkī ʿan barnāmaǧ; mnəḥkī tamṯīl aš-šabāb siyāsī w-bi-l-muǧtamʿa. Il-ḥiwār maḥdūd, nuḫbawī, kamān… huwwe bi-ṣūra ḫātiʾa. Maṯalan ḥatta bi-l-qānūn bi-maǧlis an-nuwwāb enta ma bitṣīr ᵊtraššaḥ ḥālak ka-nāʾib ḥatta ʿumrak ṣār ḫams w-tlātīn… w-aṣlan mā fī ḥada fōʾ il-ḫams w-tlātīn, kəllon ᵊkbār. La-hēk: ʿAndak il-baṭāle w-at-tamṯīl as-siyāsī al-iǧtimaʿī. W-btitlāʾi šabāb mawḍūʿ az-zawāǧ ṣār ktīr ṣaʿb ʿalēhum leʾanno mā ʿindo kawār ḥayāt w-mā yiǧīb bēt leʾanno irtifāʿ il-maʿīše bi-l-urdun bēnma mā bilaʿū furaṣ ʿamal

ġayyide. Fa-l-baṭāle bi-l-Middle East ʿand iš-šabāb biwāṣṣl ilā ḫams-w-ʿišrīn, tlātīn, ḫams-w-tlātīn biwaṣṣel. Fa-btetlāʾi ykūn aš-šābb hopeless, hayy ktīr taḥaddī.

Question 2

Hallaʾ bi-nisbe illī hallaʾ al-mawḍūʿ yallī ana ktīr dāḫil fīh ənno kīf il-startups, w-ḥatta aktar il-social startup, kīf btetwaffer furaṣ ʿamal ᵊǧdīde btəthill məškelet il-baṭāle, w-ʾana maḥdūm es-social leʾanno es-social kamān bišiffī ġayr il-impact bi-t-tawẓīf, ʿindak il-impact it-tānī huwwe il-value yalli byaʿmelha hay-l-startups li-l-community. Bass il-mawḍūʿ miš kāfi la-ḫālo. Maṯalan bi-l-Urdun: Fī startups bass bəddak kamān furaṣ ḥukūmiyye bi-š-šeġl beddak mašārīʿ kbīre ʿašān… il-startups beddha nawʿiyye muʿayyine min il-ašḫāṣ: Hallaʾ hiyye ḥall, bass miš il-ḥall il-awḥad. Yallī laḥazət ənno ktīr startups ṭlaʿet min ḫilāl yaʿni bi-fitrat ir-rabiʿ il-ʿarabi. Bass bi-nafs il-waʾt il-waḍʿa is-siyāsi waḍʿāt il-ḥurriyāt mā ḥassēto. Kamān ka-startups, il-startup mā beddi yāhā tkūn trend, mnaʿmal startups, startups, w-kəll wāḥid lessa mā byaʿref šū huwwe startup; beddho startup, enta ēš btaʿref? Ma beddna nkūn mutafāʾilīn ktīr – ḫāṣṣa bi-bīʾa zayy il-Middle East yallī mā fī id-daʿm li-l-startups… yaʿni lessa ktīr taḥaddiyāt, in kān skills, in kān funding, in kān support initiatives… yaʿni beddak startup, ḥakī fāḍi, btištiġil, mīš mafhūm… Fī daʿm, bass zayy iš-šarikāt yalli hiyye tusammēha PR campaign, idfaʿ ʿalā project w-ḫallaṣ. Bass bi-l-private sector bi-l-Urdun minšūf ktīr movement ṣaḥḥ yṣīr, leʾanno yirǧaʿ ḫams snīn kəll ši kān PR. Hallaʾ ṭalaʿ ʿandak mətl Ruwwad Tanmiyye, Aramex, yaʿni… ZINC ktīr impact ʿando. W-fī mətl Shoman Foundation yallī hiyye la-l-Bank il-ʿArabī, šeġl ktīr murattab; fī impact. Ka-ḥukūme miš kāfiye. Kəll ši bi-ṭ-ṭarīʾa il-ḥukūmiyye it-taqlīdiyye… uṣlūb at-taʿāmul ktīr… yaʿni il-management style… ḥatta yallī bištiġlū itlaʾēton ǧāyīn bi-wāsṭa aw maḥsūbiyye, w-fī ktīr nās baʿrefhum w-ʿan il-fasād. Fa-enta mumken fīk tebʿad ḫālak ʿan hēk environment, w-btaʿtamed aktar ʿalā l-private sector.

Question 3

Akīd. Miyye bə-l-miyye enta bteḥki ʿan il-internet baʿdīn ṣāret il-social networks, baʿatet power la-kull ḥada bi-l-hayy, in kān min business aw il-startups w-il-marketing. Hallaʾ aġlab il-business bibīʿu online, mətl Jamalon bi-l-Urdun, yaʿni btibnī sūʾ ǧdīd, w-hayy šəġle ktīr muhimme. Wa r-rabīʿ il-ʿarabi kān il-muḥarrik il-asāsi li-š-šuʿūb lākin li-l-asaf ḫāliyyan hiyye tools tamam; fa-hallaʾ mnilʿab maʿ l-tools w-maṯalan is-siyāse daḫal ilā s-social media. Hallaʾ kənt ʿam beʾrā article, Diwān al-Malik al-Urduni raqam wāḥad ʿarabiyyan, ʿalā mustawā il-ḥukumāt il-ʿarabiyye ka-l-mutābiʿīn w-il-interaction maʿ yallī byaʿməlha; raqam ʿašara ʿālamiyyan, raqam ḫamse numūwwan ʿālamiyyan. Il-campaigns as-siyāsiyye… Hayy il-arqām bi-nisbet la-s-sukkan ka-dawle, fa-fī numū ktīr ʿam yṣīr bi-mawḍūʿ tadaḫḫul il-ḥukūmāt. Fa-hōn kamān fī ktīr aḥzāb, fi ktīr ǧihāt muʿayyana in kānet iǧāʿbi aw silbī tetḥakkam fi-l-mawḍūʿ, il-

campaigns yallī bitṣīr…

Btitnazzil post, kull byaʿmel share, bikūn ġalaṭ āḫer šī. Fa… fī ktīr mašakel biṣīr ḥatta fī nās btibnī la-ḫālha il-mutābiʿīn w-yṣīr tintiʾid w-btaʿmil ašyāʾ yaʿni fī mətl ḥāda Dāʿi əsmo, ykūn Šayḫ, fī ktīr byiḥku hallaʾ ʿan in-nās al-ġayr muḫaǧǧabīn fa-wuṣlū ktīr unṣuriyīn wa wa wa. Huwwe Šayḫ bi-l-Ǧāmiʿa il-Urduniyye, Doktor Šarīʿa, w-ʿindo mutābiʿīn ktīr, fī ʿando barnāmiǧ ʿando ʿa-Youtube w-byiḥki w-baʿdēn ṣār mətl yentaʾid ašyāʾ ʿan nās yalli mā byaʿmlu ašyāʾ islāmiyye wa-l-mutābiʿin ṣār ʿandon halla kayān. ʾĀṭa lahu manbar la-kull ḥada, bas bi-nafs il-waʾet fī nās biḥakkam bi-hēk manaṣeb bi-šakl ḫāṭiʾa aw ṣaḥḥ. Ṭabʿan miš kəll šī sayyʾ. Kān fī bint bə-ʿumr sittʿašr sənne bi-aḥdāṯ Ġazza kānet btaʿmil Live-Tweet ʿan Ġazze fa-kull il-ʿālam kānet ʿam tutābiʿ bint ḫamstaʿšr sənne btaʿmil taġṭiyye live w-hiyye ʿāyše bi-Ġazze aḥsan min kull il-campaigns w-kānet ʿandha miṣdāqiyye aktar min ktīr kān. Hallaʾ fī fake campaigns, wāḥid byaʿmel Hashtag w-kedda w-enta btitǧīb mašākel il-muǧtamʿa ilā il-internet w-btaʿmilha akbar w-btittḍall bi-iṭārha. Fī taʾṯīr, mətl it-tilifizion, kwayyis, bass fī ittiǧahāt muʿayyane btuʿṭīk eṣ-ṣūra bi-šakl ktīr ġalaṭ. W-ktīr btitḥakkam mīn maʿo maṣāri; enta mumken btaʿmil campaign btaʿmil sponsorship ykūn ʿendak ḫamsmīt šufū; mumken fī-l-message taʿak ykūn fī unṣuriyye w-karahiyye, ykūn ġalaṭ. Bass bi-n-nihāye ʿendak il-power ənnak tūṣal ilā n-nās. W-ṣār fī šī en-nās bisammūhu al-muʾaṯṯirīn, hum byuʿtabarūn en-nās an-nāšiṭīn ʿa-s-social media; hallaʾ ana bi-nəsbet la-illī baʿtaʾid ktīr ḫaṭaʾ; hinne bikūnu min ǧiha muʿayyana bass enta ma mitʾakkid mumken bi-ḥayāthum fāšilīn; w-yimken byiḥku ʿan product ʿašān birūḥū ʿalā reḥle aw muʾtamar w-bass.

Question 4

Online w-LinkedIn kwayis, bass fiʿlan miš hēk btitwaẓẓaf. Leʾanno šūf online mīn byaʿmel account… biṣīr; bass mumken bi-l-Urdun mumken bi-šakl ʿālami inno inta ʿam tiṭlaʿ maʿ wāḥid zayyak w-ḫaṭṭēt LinkedIn kwayyis, bass huwwe birūḥ ʿalā events w-n-nās hadōl byiḥkī maʿahum. Hum ʿam byaʿrifuh, fī personal relationship, ʿam byefhamu. Yaʿni online yṣīr bass miš ktīr, nesbe ktīr ḫafīfe, ḥatta bi-š-šarike kbīre bikūn il-condition ḥada byaʿref ḥada.

Question 5

Ah, ṣār fī trend. Miš raqam ʿāli ktīr bass il-fikra ṣāret muntašira. W-yallī ana ḫāyif mənho ənno il-fekra ʿam bitrūḥ kamān bi-šeġle min nāḥiye šwayy salbī, ənno enta mazʿūǧ w-ykūn sāliʿ, w-btitḥiss ykūn fī fašal, bikūn bwaʾʾif. Fa-mā beddak enta il-trend tekbar baʿdīhā teḫtafī. Leʾanno yṣīr maṭalan inno fī fašal kbīr fa-ana maʿ inno in-numū ykūn šwayy šwayy, step by step, il-environment ykūn ṣaḥḥ, il-support, ed-daʿm le-l-startups.

Kull-mā bizīd mustawā et-taʿlīm, il-mindset, et-taṭawwur biṣīr huwwe ǧāhiz aktar, hayy btāḫod ʿumr btāḫod fitra ṭawīle. Bass laʾ, fī taṭawwur iǧābi, nās byaʿmalu startups w-biballišū, ʿam

yet'allamū ktīr ašyaʾ.

Question 6

Ka-business fī ktīr muṣṭalaḥāt yallī mā bta'rifha bi-l-'arabī. An-nās mā bištiġlū ktīr 'alā tarǧamat hadōl il-muṣṭalaḥāt. Kunt 'am bišūf mən fetra ḥada byiḥki 'an mawḍū' 'am byaḫod ḫuṭuwāt ṣaḥḥ, fīh, bass fī 'andak naʾs ktīr bi-l-muǧtamaʿa il-'arabī. Online w-offline. Hallaʾ ana bištiġil bi-l-social innovation aw social entrepreneurship. Fa-šī beddna na'melo huwwe bi-l-mawḍū' et-ta'līmi, beddna hallaʾ barnāmaǧ kāmel, dirāse kāmle, meddet sənne, zayy ma'had. W-na'mel tadrīs la-yallī henne il-change makers. Fa-nəḥna hōn lāzem na'mel šī bi-l-'arabī. W-ana bšūf ənno muḥtawā 'arabī miš 'am btetlāʾi muḥtawā ǧayyid, miš mumtāz, ǧayyid… 'an il-management, wa-l-leadership, wa-l-entrepreneurship, wa-l-innovation. Fi-kitāb mən 'išrīn sənne il-muṣṭalaḥāt ta'o miš befhamha, w-il-kātib mā 'ando experience. Ana beddi ballaš business, dawwar 'alā muḥtawā 'arabī, mā belaʾīš.

Question 7

Akbar ḫōf siyāsi. Ya'ni 'am yṣīr ṭala' Sūriya, 'Irāq, Maṣr, Yemen, Lubnān 'am yṣīr, il-mašākel yallī 'am bišīr ktīr ḫōf! Ya'nī ana fakkart bi-laḥza inno ana ba'mel startup w-il-Urdun ḫirbat. Kəll šī enta 'am bta'mlo yumken yeḏīʾ. Šūf Sūriyā kīf ṣāret. Ləbnān hallaʾ il-waḍaʿ ᵊktīr ṣa'b. Bass fi'liyyan enta 'am bteḥki ISIS 'a-buʿd sāʿa 'andak. Ḫams əs-snīn enta kənt sāʿa kənt bi-Dimašq w-kamān sāʿatēn kənt bi-Bērūt. Fa-kān zamān akbar məškle 'endak mawḍū' Isrāʾīl Filasṭīn, bass hallaʾ 'endak il-'Irāq, w-fī ḫōf ktīr. Maṣr, Lībya, Tūnis, as-Sa'ūdiyye, Kuwayt, tafǧīrāt, azmet il-Yaman, kəll-hayy ḫōf. Btətḥess enta 'āyeš 'ala burkān.

Il-amal iš-šabāb, il-ǧīl eǧ-ǧdīd, bass mā ba'ref, lessa fī amal, enta btetšūf il-startups, en-nās, il-passion, btetḥammes. Nəḥna ka-ašḫāṣ šāṭerīn. Aṭla' barra ana, bḥess ana bi-level, ya'ni kunt bi-course w-ma'ī nās min tna'šr dawle, kənt mən a'lā n-nās bi-l-course. Ka-insān aw startup umūrak kwayyis; bass ka-dawle aw šeǧl ǧamā'i, fī mašakel ktīr, il-amal inno fī cooperation – šūf Almānia, fī il-muʾassassat w-'amal kwayyis in kān ḥukūmiyyan aw qiṭā' ḫāṣṣ. Mā fī strategy, kəll wāḥid bišteǧil la-ḫālo hōn, ana ba'melo, biġaṭṭī ǧuzʾ wāḥid, il-private sector bikammel, kull wāḥid 'ando, w-id-dawle aḥyānan bta'mil – bass mā ba'ref əza fī strategy. Fī mašākel – bass la, fī amal.

6.2.3 Participant 3

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 24th, 2015	25	male	Activist, Artist, Actor

Question 1

Šeǧl. Raqam awwal – šeǧl. Hād taḥaddī la-kəllayātna… w-al-ḥurūb. Baṭāle, ḥurūb, ta'līm. Ya'ni lā yūǧad ladayna ta'līm. Hadōl tlāt šeǧlāt, tuʾaṭṭir 'a-š-šāri'a l-ʾurdunī bi-šakl kbīr, w-'alā iš-šabāb

bi-šakl akbar. W-lākin al-ḥalaqa il-aqwa benāton hiyye it-taʿlīm w-kaḏālika il-baṭāle.

Question 2

Lā. Yaʿni btiḥkī ʿan šarīḥ kbīr mən il-muǧtamʿa il-urdunī enta lāzem bətkūn šarikāt qādira ʿalā isṭiʿāb šaʿb kāmil. [*Fa-aš-šarikāt miš ʾādira…?*] Abadan. Ṣaʿbe ǧiddan. Hād marbūṭ kaḏālika fī l-waṭan al-ǧiyūgrāfī w-il-iqlīmī. Aš-šarq al-awsaṭ w-kaḏālika en-nuqṭa il-ahamm yallī huwwe eš-šabāb nafso. Il-baṭāle yuqārib ḥams-w-ʿišrīn lā tlātīn bi-l-miyye, fa-hād ʾabəd kabīr ǧiddan. Fa-hayy iš-šarikāt mā raḥ yigdir, ma raḥ tegʾder tuʾammimhum kəll išī.

Question 3

Laʾ! Es-sulṭa beddha internet, ʿašān inta naffas min ǧuwwa l-internet. Beddak ḥurriyye? Hayy hiyye il-internet. Beddak ḥurrīyat ir-raʾyī – hayy l-internet. Lākin yuḍrəb ʿa-šāriʿ – laʾ. Ḥurriyyat it-taʿbīr bi-š-šāriʿa – laʾ. Mā raḥ tigʾder, ha-yeqmaʿūk. Hōne miš maʿok. W-ḥatta əza biǧī Blogger, hād tafǧīr min ad-dāḥil. Raḥ tṣaff maqtūl. Leʾannak enta makānak il-aṣlī laysa ʿalā il-internet. Mā raḥ yitġayyir il-muǧtamʿa, abadan, bal raḥ yzīd il-murāqabe, w-ha-yzīd ṣaġām il-amn.

Question 4

Hād fī šī mənno. Fīš wāsṭa ʿalā l-internet. Wa-lākin fī āḥer nuqṭa, raḥ yisatto l-wāsṭa. Enta btitdawwar maṯalan ḍaʿāyāt w-intaḥbak wa-lākin māʿ r-raḥš tkūn inta la-ḥālak ha-ykūn fī ḥamse sitte hayy ha-ykūnū mufawwḍīn maʿahum.

Question 5

Mā fī. Yaʿni iš-šabāb yallī ʿam byiḥruǧu, yḥarriǧu, mā fīš lā mašāriʿ wala ayy šī. ʿAm byistanna dawr ḥatta yištiǧilu. Fī nuqṭa muhemme lāzem btaʿrifhā. Aš-šabāb hōne miš mamnūʿ inno yisḥar. Yaʿni mā bidawwir. Mā beddo huwwe ykūn ṣāḥib il-action. Huwwe byistalqī kəll šī, kaʾanno bank. Mā ʿam ydawwar mā ʿam yġayyir bi-ayy… ēh.

Question 6

La, ṣaʿba ǧiddan. Limāḏa? Leʾanno ʿindak il-aqalliyāt il-ʿirqiyyāt, muḥīṭ il-waṭan il-ʿarabī yuqārib miyye-w-ḥamsīn lahǧe. Fa-ṣaʿb, mā fīk temḥīḥā. W-fī duwal tistaḥdem hayde l-lahǧe, il-ʿāmmiyye, aktar min il-fusḥa. Fi maṣr… Fa lā, ṣaʿbe.

Question 7

Akbar amalī ybaṭṭil fī ṣlāḥ. W-akbar ḥawfī yṣīr marra tāniye lāǧiʾ. Leʾinno ana lāǧiʾ min arbaʿīn səne w-ʿam ḥāwel ma yṣīr marra tāniye lāǧiʾ.

6.2.4 Participant 4

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 24th, 2015	29	male	Designer

Question 1

At-tawẓīf. Il-istiʿdād li-sūq il-ʿamal yaʿni. Hiyye aktar šī bšūfha. Mā bēn lammā il-wāḥid

yataḥarraǧ mni-l-ǧamiʿa laʾinno yaʿref šū eṭ-ṭarīq eṣ-ṣaḥḥ yallī huwwe beddo yištiġil. Number two yallī bšūfha hiyye… ənno l-wāḥid byaʿref ēš beddo yištiġil. Inno fī ktīr mā bidawwru ʿalā ēš huwwe biḥibb yištiġil; inǧabar ʿalē ʿan ṭarīq il-madrase aw ʿan ṭarīq il-ǧamiʿa w-mā fakker bi-mustaqbalo. Yaʿni going with the flow, kīf aḥkīhā… māši maʿ at-tayyār yaʿni.

Question 2

Hmm, ḥasab maǧāl šəġl iš-šarika an-nāšiʾa… Muwāffiq bi-šakl ʿām.

Question 3

Šūf – al-Internet kwayyis la-l-muǧtamʿa. Šī beddo yfattiḥ in-nās ʿalā biyaʿrifu maʿlumāt aktar, hayy… w-mā ykūn fī ḥdūd la-l-maʿlūme. Inno fī ḥurriyye mən wēn btitġīb əl-maʿlūme, yataʿarraḍ nafsak la-maʿlūme aktar, əza mā ʿindak il-maʿlūme ṣaḥḥ enta fīk tiḥtibar maʿlūme enta btaʿrifha mən ʿiddat ǧihāt fa-bitwaqqaʿ – eh; nihāʾiyyan lam yakun šī sayyʾ. Ṭabaʿan yaʿtamid ʿalā ʿaqliyyet eš-šaḥṣ, bass wuǧūd il-internet, bi-l-ʿaks šeǧle mumtāze.

Question 4

Hallaʾ ḥasab eš-šarike. Yaʿni əza kān ʿindha standards muʿayyine la-t-tawẓīf aw qism HR mumtāz aw muḥtarif, bi-l-ktīr bifīd šarikāt like LinkedIn. Bass əza kānet iš-šarike miš mabniyye ʿalā asās standards muʿayyine aw miš šaġġāle bi-šaffāfiyye maʿ in-nās, ʾakīd il-wāsṭa number one ʿašān tištiġil: Ḥasab aš-šarike.

Question 5

Miš miťakkid min il-arqām, bass ḥada bištiġil bi-tadrīb il-startups w-hēk byiḥkīli ənno il-Urdun mən aktar əd-duwal bi-l-manṭiʾa yallī byiṭlaʿ fīhā startups w-hiyye ayḍan mən aktar ad-duwal yallī byisquṭ fīhā startups. Fa hiyye šeǧle kwaysse w-miš kwaysse bi-nafs il-waqt. Yaʿni byiṭlaʿ kammiyye min il-startups w-bi-nafs il-waqt byesquṭ, mən aktar ed-duwal yalli byifšal fīha startups w-mā bikammlū aktar min sənne aw sitt tešhur.

Question 6

ʾAkīd. Hayy ḍarūra tārīḥiyye hayy. Yaʿni bi-wuǧūd aw ʿadam wuǧūd il-internet, bass sarraʿ il-process. Bass it-taġyīr wāǧib aw šī ṭabīʿī. Akīd atwaqqaʿ it-taġyīr byitwaǧǧīha bi-ittiǧāh il-luġa yallī ʿindaha taṭawwur aktar, iqtiṣādiyyan w-tiknologiyyan. Al-awwal, il-maǧmūʿa yallī yataḥaddaṯū bi-luġa muʿayyane w-ʿindahum technology, iqtiṣād ʿāli… al-ʿālam kəllho bittaǧih ilā luġathom bi-šakl ʿām. Yaʿni ka-ṭārīḥ. Al-internet bass sarraʿa il-process.

Question 7

I predict kind of chaos – kind of fawḍa bi-l-maʿlūmāt, w-il-muḥtawā il-ʿarabī, bi-nisbe la-l-internet w-l-manṭiqa; bi-nesbe li-ṯ-ṯaqāfe, ana bḥebb iṯ-ṯaqāfe taʿa il-manṭiqa; it-taġyīr ʿam bimšī bi-ṭarīqa miḥbaṭa ǧiddan… w-al-maṣādir šwayy šwayy ʿam ᵊtmūt, aw ʿam teḥtəfī, w-ʿamm yṣīr šəǧlāt raʾisiyye, maṣādir le-ṯ-ṯaqāfe aw il-maʿlūmāt, aw il-ʾusus tabʿahum aktar, bass teqder

teḥkī what I hope is inno ᵊtkūn at least nittafiq ʿalā ḥaqq il-iḫtilāf… Akbar meškle bšūfha fi-l-manṭiqa hōn ʿadam iḥtirām ḥaqq il-iḫtilāf. Inno ykūn il-muḫtalif ʿannak yaʿni qad yakūn ʿadū fa-bass law šwayy ḥaqq il-iḫtilāf ykūn mawğūd aw in-nās tifham maʿna ḥaqq il-iḫtilāf… that's my hope, hiyye ahamm išī. Law ṣārit baʿdha ktīr mašākel btənḥall. Fī ktīr yaʿni.

6.2.5 Participant 5

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 24th, 2015	23	male	Undergraduate, IT Consultant

Question 1

Ḥelū. Bi-l-Urdun fī mağmūʿa, bass mumken ahamm min hayy l-mağmūʿa iṯ-ṯaqāfe ka-t-taʿlīm, w-il-iqtiṣād; bass iṯ-ṯaqāfee biṭlaʿ ašī al-akbar – əza kān ʿand il-muğtamaʿ ṯaqāfe qawwiyye aw piece asās ənno kull ḥada ᵊtšūf iš-šabb min ʿindo ṯaqāfe qawwiye, fa-hād ašī raḥ yaʿkis ʿalē ənno yğīb ayy ḥada beddo yāh. Fa-ənno ana bi-raʾyī at-taḥaddī al-ahamm li-l-muğtamaʿ l-urduni iğmālan ənno ykūn ʿindo level kbir mən il-ʿilm, level kbīr mən al-fahm la-l-muğtama bi-šakl ʿamm, miš bass id-dirāse… w-il-maʿrifa in kānet barmağe, kānet ṭibb: Ana bi-raʾyī ḫallīna naḥki ana šū baʿtibir taḥaddī – taḥaddī il-wāḥid əza ṭalaʿ ʿalā et-taḥaddī betṭawwer aktar. Fa-l-wāḥid ana bi-raʾyī miš bass bi-l-Urdun əza kān ṭalaʿ ʿalā mawḍūʿ il-ʿilm kān fahmān bi-šī ṣār ʿando background mnīḥ ʿan ayy šī hayy šī biḥallī yaṭṭawwer aktar. Fa-hād aš-šī il-asāsi. Hallaʾ baʿdēn il-ğānib il-iqtiṣādi w-il-ğānib il-tanmawī huwwe zayy ma ʾəltellak šwayy aqall ahammiyyan min il-ğānib il-ʿilmī, lēš, leʾanno bi-marḥale muʿayyane min il-bani adam bi-l-Urdun raḥ ywaṣṣel ilā marḥale ənno ʿašān yšağğaʿa ykammel masīrto ka-ʿilm ka-ṯaqāfe bilzam ğānib māddī, ʿašān ykammel, tamām. Hallaʾ fī nās ʿašān mā fīš ʿandhum ṯaqāfe, il-ḥubb li-l-maʿrife, būḫdum maṣāri yḍabbiro bi-ğēbton. Fī nās laʾ, yūṣalu ilā marḥale mā fīni kammel illa əza ʿindī daḫle ğayyide. Hād min nāḥyat eš-šabb il-urduni.

Hallaʾ ka-Urdun, ka-kull, ka-balad, ḥāliyyan azunn il-ešī yalli bihemmha aw biḥallīha betṭawwer hiyye mən en-nāḥiye es-siyāsiyye la-ḥadd muʿayyin, tamām, fa-inno əza kān il-balad qawwiyyan siyāsiyyan w-ana baʿteber il-Urdun ğayyide mən en-nāḥiye es-siyāsiyye, fi-əza kān siyassiyyan qawwiyyan fa-hād ešī byaʿkes ʿalayha fa-ykūn ʿalaqātha maʿ il-kull bi-šakl aqwā. W-bardo yaʿkes ʿalēha zayy mā ḥakēna əza ʿandhom ʿilm, əza kān eš-šaʿb il-urdunī muğāza bi-l-ʿilm, bi-l-maʿrife, fa-hā išī raḥ yenʿakis ʿalā il-iqtiṣād. Il-iqtiṣād raḥ yebnī siyāse. Leʾinno il-iqtiṣād huwwe l-mansiq il-ʾāṯir hayy l-ayyām. Fa-hēk il-iqtiṣād byebnī siyāse, w-l-siyāse ḫallas – hād l-asās bi-raʾyī.

Question 2

Hallaʾ ka-šarikāt in-nāšiʾa wāḍiḥ, w-kīf biṭʾaṯṯir wāḍiḥ miyye bi-l-miyye tamām; w-kīf intilāqha mən il-Urdun wāḍiḥa: Ana šāyif inno ktīr ʿamal ʿam yballaš, yaʿni ʿam mnəḥkī muqārane maʿ tlāt

sanawāt ʾabl tamān, tlāt sanawāt ʾabl mā kān fī ʿandna ġayr ḥasab maʿrifti təntēn mən iš-šarikāt in-nāši'a. Hallaʾ ʿam bšūf lammā rūḥ fī hāda l-flān ballaš yaʿmel šarike, flān byaʿmel šarike, hāda ballaš yeṭlub muwaẓẓafīn zayy mā ḥakēt, ballaš yiṭlub muwaẓẓafīn ballaš yiṭlub resources, il-resources zayy mā ḥakēna inno kull ḥada ṣār zayy mā mnerǧaʿ ʿalā l-mawḍūʿ il-ūla, ʿašān yballeš yištiġil, bi-l-hayy il-šarike in-nāši'a, lāzemo ydrus w-yifham aktar, fa ḥa-š-šī yaʿmel yaʿni huwwe kəllo maʿ l-baʿḍ hiyye daʾira mutakāmile maʿ baʿḍiha. Fa-hiyye fikrat il-mašrūʿ in-nāši'a hiyye fiʿliyyan tikbar w-ʿašānha tikbar bilzimha muwaẓẓafīn byifhamu, hayy šī bisāʿid il-Urdun kamān, ṣār fī nās biʾūlu beddi awṣal ilā marḥale muʿayyane min il-ʿilm ʿašān aballiš fīhā.

Question 3

Akīd. Hallaʾ ka-internet bšūf bi-sabab il-internet hād išī mā byiḫtilif ʿalē ayy ḥadā inno šī dāʿim, tamām; w-šī bisāʿid ktīr. Yaʿni kānet maṯalan ḫallīna neḥkī aḥkīlak ʿan taǧribat maṯalan in-nās yalli ʾablīna, in-nās yalli mā kān fīš internet. Kān, law beddi awṣal ana la-Yunis, tamām, aḥkīlo ʿan ʾaḍiyye, aw eḥkīlo ʿan ayy šī maṯalan yṣīr ʿandna bi-l-Urdun, kān lāzem ibʿatha barīd, tamām… la-bēnma yūṣal il-barīd kān beddo alf sene. Hallaʾ ṣār bi-Message ibʿatlak yāha at maximum biḥkīlak bi-arbaʿ w-ʿišrīn sāʿa bitkūn ʿāref il-mawḍūʿ. Hād min nāḥiye. Min nāḥiye tānie, ṣār ʿindna il-mawaqiʿ it-tawāṣul il-iǧtimāʿi, min Facebook, Twitter, Instagramm… hayy šiġlāt. Hayy ṣāret taʿmel daġġe ʿalā iš-šiġlāt yalli byʿāni minha iš-šuʿūb miš il-qiyādāt. Hallaʾ il-qiyādāt yalli fōʾ kān dāʾiman yusayṭiġu, w-ʿam yḫeff quwwet il-qiyāda. Biḫeff quwwet en-nās il-mutaḥakkimīn bi-l-balad, ʿalā maṣlaḥat inno kull il-balad taʿref.

Hayy hallaʾ menšūf kīf maṯalan Lubnān hallaʾ Lubnān eš-šāʿb mḍāʾiyyʿa min mawḍūʿ iz-zbāle w-hēk šeġlāt. […] Hād aši biġammaʿ daʿm il-muǧtamaʿ kullayatha la-nuġġayyir hayy l-qaḍāya. Fa-ṣāret il-qaḍāya muš tetmerkez ʿalā šū beddo el… ḫallīna neḥki il-qāʾid, aw šū beddo il-banī Adam yalli bi-s-sulṭa yṣīr bi-d-dawle, la, ṣār šū iš-šaʿb beddo bi-dawle leʾanno ṣawto waṣal miš bass ilā id-dawle ilā l-ʿālam ka-kull.

Hallaʾ min nāḥiyat ʿilm w-ṯaqāfe, tamām, hallaʾ kān fi-l-bidāye ʿašān inta btāḫod ʿilm min makān muʿayyan ma bilzam ġayr taʿak, tamām… aw hayy šeġlāt. Hallaʾ btiḥkī maṯalan šū beddī, beddī ʿāmel maṯalan šī ʿan il-entrepreneurship. Bass google entrepreneurship w-šūf kam šī w-kam taġribe w-experience w-daʿm biṣīr. Hād ḥakēna inno l-wāḥid kīf beddo yəṭṭawwer…

Question 4

Ṣaḥḥ. Hallaʾ šūf zayy mā ḥakēna ṣāret iš-šarikāt il-mutaḥakkime ḫāliyyan aw ḫallīna neḥki inno nerǧaʿ ilā as-suʾāl it-tālet yallī huwwe suʾāl ēš, suʾāl il-entrepreneurs w-il-šarikāt in-nāši'a. Hallaʾ iš-šarikāt in-nāši'a hiyye šarikāt ḫāṣṣa. Mā fīš fīhā wāsṭāt, mā fī hayy š-šeġlāt, lēš? Leʾanno bi-n-nihāye ṣāḥeb iš-šarike beddo šarikto timšī, aktar min ayy šī tāni. Fa-ana maṯalan mā beddi dawwer ʿalā inno ibn ʿammī – la; lāzem ibn ʿammī byaʿref šū bištiġil maʿī šū mā bištiġil maʿī.

Halla' hād ašī ysā'id le'anno ṣāḥib iš-šarike 'ašān yāḥod il-qarār. Ṣār ysā'id mawāqi'a zayy LinkedIn aw Aḥṭabūṭ zayy mā ḥakēt, is-social network iğmālan. Ṣār fī ktīr choices iḥtār bēnhum iš-šaḥṣ il-munāsib, ṣaḥḥ. Bass mawḍū' il-wāsṭa – halla', mawdū' il-wāsṭa ṣār yinḥaṣir bi-š-šarikāt bi-šakl 'āmm, la-l-šarikāt il-ḥukūmiyye. Il-qiṭā' il-ḥukūmī miš ktīr dāḥil mawḍū' il-internet w-miš dāḥil ktīr mawḍū' il-awlame. Ma' inno fī taṭawwur, lammā btedḥul halla' ilā šarikāt ḥukūmiyye btitlā'i il-waḍ'a tḥassanat ktīr, le'inno ṣār kəll šī makšūf. Ana əza bəddi wazẓfak lāzem ğīb ḥada tāni le'anno Twitter w-Facebook neḥna əza arā'ib mnefdaḥna fi'lan; ēh miš salbī il-internet.

Question 5

Iğmālan iš-šeġle fīhā šī salbī w-iğābī. Fi'lian 'adad in-nās yalli Byitḥarraġu bi-s-sū' il-Urduni akbar min is-sū' nafso. Ya'ni maṯalan. Il-Urdun taḥtāğ ḥallīna neḥki kam raqam taqrīban maṯalan taḥtāğ kəll sənne bi-l-mu'addal ḥams talāf muhandas. Ḥams talāf bištiġil IT. Byetḥarraġ kull sənne ḥamsta'ašar la-'išrīn alf, tamam? Halla' mīn yalli bištiġil? Ṣār yištiġil the best of il-ITs in kānet tetḥarraġu aktar in-nās mā bišteġlu. Halla' ṭala' il-ğānib il-ḥelu bi-l-mawḍū', inno men il-ḥamsta'ašar alf aw 'ešrin alf yalli ṭala'u fī 'indak maṯalan ka-raqam maṯalan ḥamsta'ašar alf banī Adam 'ā'id. Al-ḥamsta'ašar alf banī Adam minhum fī ḥamstālāf minhum beddo yištiġil. Le'inno fīš šeġl, šū bya'mel? Yballiš yfakkar ana beddi 'āmel šarike nāši'a. Beddi balliš la-ḥāli. W-hadōl bišiğğilu ḥamsta'ašar alf ġērhum min yalli taḥarrağ, 'araft kīf? Ṣār 'indak 'išrīn alf, ḥamse birūḥu mubāhara 'ala waẓā'if tamām, ḥamsta'aš bu'idu. Ḥamse min il-ḥamsta'š ballšu bya'milu il-entrepreneurs, w-il-'ašara yṣīru yištiġlu ma'on. Fa-hād it-taqsīm il-ḥelū yalli ṣār. Ma' inno ṣār akīd min il-waḍ'a, ya'ni mā mnitḥarrağ 'ašān minṣīr entrepreneurs; bass le'inno kəll ḥada biḥtāğ maṣāri w-hayy šiġlāt.

Halla' is-silbī ya'ni fī nās min hadōl in-nās, il-ḥams tālāf, mā bištiġlu. Fa-yalli mā bištiġil yballaš mustawā iṯ-ṯaqāfe 'ando yinzal, w-hād biḥallī mustawā ṯaqāfet il-Urdun kəllo yinzal. Le'inno, lammā tibnī šarikāt, ḥamstalaf mā raḥ yištiġlu – miš kəll il-'ašara talāf bištiġlu. Hād yalli mā bištiġil biğūz raḥ yif'ud ṯaqāfto bi-marḥale mu'ayyane.

Question 6

It-taġyīr mawğūd akīd. Lēš, le'anno luġat il-'ālam, luġat il-Internet hiyye il-Inglīzi. Fa-had išī bya'kes inno w-ḥallīna neḥkī inno yitwallad ṯaqāfe 'arabiyye-ingliziyye bi-nafs il-wa't. Fa əza mnəḥkī ana w-yāk mā baḥkīlak ḥasūb baḥkīlak computer. Fa-mā baḥkīlak inno Anẓimat il-Ma'lumāt baḥkīlat IT, il-Information Systems. Ya'ni ṣāret la-kəll šī ism inglīzī. Halla' hād šī akīd baḥkīlak aṯṯar 'alā l-luġa il-'arabiyye. Bass fī kamān šeġle tāniye bšūf kamān inno fī ktīr nās hōn min il-'arab iğmālan šāyif inno il-luġa il-'arabiyye 'am yinzal. Fa-balleš yid'amha bi-šiġlāt tāniye btinzal 'alā l-internet bi-l-luġa il-'arabiyye. Ana bi-fitra kent ma' group kānu... ktīr ḥakēna 'alā

mawḍūʿ daʿm il-luġa. Ġayr Google fī ktīr šarikāt bištiġlu maʿ l-baʿḍ inno kəll l-luġāt tkūn mawǧūde. Bass il-luġa bitkūn ḥasab is-sūʾ w-l-kull byaʿrif hād il-luġa il-ingliziyye, hiyye il-luġa il-mutaḥakkime ḥāliyyan fi l-muǧtamaʿ.

Question 7

Hallaʾ min nāḥiyet il-amal il-fikra yalli ʿandi inno il-waṭan il-ʿarabī ḥāliyyan bidḫol bi-maǧāl, w-ktīr nās baʿrifhon hnīk, yalli huwwe il-IT. Fa-inno ktīr nās fi-l-waṭan il-ʿarabī byidḫul bi-maǧāl il-IT… w-il-Computer w-iš-šiġlāt yalli fīhā ktīr inno smart technology tamām, hayy šiġlāt ktīr – il-amal bi-l-waṭan il-ʿarabī inno bšūf ktīr nās biballšu byaḫdu hayy il-field. Ḫāṣṣan mā beddo ykūn ʿindo background qawwī w-mā beddo dirāse ʾabl, inno enta ayy ḥada bi-s-sūʾ eǧā ʿa-bālo yballiš ka-IT person kān bi-imkāno yidḫul bi-hayy l-field. Hallaʾ wēn iš-šeġle il-ḥəlwe yalli ana bšūfha? Inno fī ktīr nās, byidrus hād il-maǧāl, dirāsat hād il-maǧāl… ṣār fī nās yfakkru bišakl aʿmaq bi-hād il-maǧāl ballšu yiṭṭalaʿu ilā l-mustaqbal bi-šakl aktar w-daʾiman mnəḥkī inno il-future hiyye il-technology. Fa-fī ktīr nās ṣāru yfakkru bi-l-future taʿa il-technology, w-bi-l-waṭan il-ʿarabī fī nās ktīr bifakkru bi-had eši yballšu yǧību afkār, l-afkār yalli barra, il-afkar il-mawǧūde its already bi-America, in-nās yalli ʿindon maʿrife kəll šī ʿan il-IT il-Information Systems biǧību ilā il-waṭan il-ʿarabī. Yaʿni fī transfer le-l-technology yalli barra la-hōn, wa-l-producers la-l-technology yṣīr nṭawwir aktar ʿalēha aktar w-aktar. Hayy il-nāḥiye il-iǧābiyye yaʿni. […]

Iš-šī is-salbī – w yemken min is-salbī byetlaʿ šī iǧābī – inno il-waṭan il-ʿarabī ḥāliyyan biʿānī min il-mašākel yalli hiyye zayy mā ḥakēna Dāʿiš zayy mā ḥakēna ṣirāʿ il-adyān, ṣirāʿ il-ḥukūmāt… hād byetaṯṯar ʿalā l-waṭan il-ʿarabī tamām. Hallaʾ hayy is-silbiyye yalli ʿam mnəḥkī ʿanha warāha fī iǧābiyye. Lēš, leʾinno kəll šī beǧī drop, fī minho w-baʿdī mubāšira byiṭlaʿ – fa ana bi-raʾyī inno ḫallīna neḥkī maṭalan ḫilāl yaʿni zayy mā daʾiman minšūf taġribat il-Yabān; il-Yabān eǧā il-drop ʿalā l-āḫar baʿdēn kīf il-Yabān ṣāret yiṭlaʿ šī qawwi. Fa-ʿindi tafāʾul inno maṭalan mnəḥkī baʿd tlātīn sənne hallaʾ tamām fa-tinsā min hallaʾ kān fī inno yumken il-waṭan il-ʿarabī kān bi-makān ktīr qāsī w-yṣīr il-muǧtamaʿ ktīr ktīr ma daḫlo bi-dunya w-ktīr baʿīd ʿan il-ʿālam killayāto w-bass baʿd hayy l-tlātīn sənne yetlaʿ šī ǧdīd, šī… yiṭlaʿ šabāb ʿindhum fikr, ʿindhum šiġlāt, yibnū šī akbar w-aḥsan. Fa-ana raʾyī šwayy iǧābiyye aktar mən is-salbiyye. Ḥatta wa-law bfakkir bi-zamān ḥarb il-ʿālamiyye iṯ-ṯāni yalli ṭawwar Orōba kullayāṯa, huwwe baʿd il-ḥurūb, baʿdēn il-muǧtamaʿāt il-ġarbiyye ṭawwarū… w-neḥna mā eǧā ḥarbna il-ʿālamī la-hallaʾ, w-ana atawaqqaʿ inno miš ha-ykūn ḥarb mətl il-ḥarb il-ʿālamiyye, bass yentuǧ minha taṭawwur lil-ǧdīd.

Bass ana biḥkīlak ʾadd-mā kān ʿalā l-mawḍūʿ ḍarṭ, kəll šī msakkir w-muġlaq, fīhā bi-n-nihāye yaʿni zayy il-qunbula ḫallīna neḥki. Il-qunbule titdall titḥašša tiṭlaʿ tiṭlaʿ baʿdēn tiṭlaʿ minhā iš-šī il-kbīr. Fa-hād yalli bšūfo bi-l-waṭan il-ʿarabī, inno law timšī w-enta bi-s-sūʾ fī ktīr nās bifakkru fī ktīr nās ʿindhum afkār fī nās beddhum yištiġlu. Ir-rabīʿ il-ʿarabī mā ʿāṭa la-š-šabāb ḥaʾʾon.

Leʾinno ir-rabiʿ ballaš bi-š-šabāb w-intaha bi-šī tānī; bi-sayṭarat nās tāniyyīn yallī miš maʿ iš-šabāb ḫallīna mnəḥkī. Ana bi-raʾyī iš-šabāb raḥ byāḫdu dawrhum baʿd fitra bi-ṭarīʾa aw uḫrā. ʿAšān hēk ʿam byimšu tiǧǧāh it-technology, ktīr bšūf inno aġlab iš-šabāb yištiġlu ʿalā l-internet w-hād byinʿakis ʿalā l-wāqiʿa.

6.2.6 Participant 6

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 25th, 2015	20	male	Student

Question 1

Ahamm it-taḥaddiyāt yalli hiyye il-awḍāʿ il-muḥīṭa bi-l-Urdun. Fa-bitṣīr iš-šabāb ktīr maḍġūṭīn bi-sabab il-aḥdāṯ yalli bitṣīr – yaʿni ʿindak taṭarruf fikrī, id-dīni, is-siyāsi; hād biʾaṯṯir ʿan iš-šabāb. Iš-šabāb yaʿni ṭāqa w-iš-šabāb ktīr muhtammīn bi-l-mawḍūʿ, yiṯʾaṯṯir ktīr ʿalēhum. Šabāb il-Urdun ḥāliyyan ʿandhum fikra, fikrat it-taṭawwur, ġayr iš-šabāb bi-l-manṭiqa. Yaʿni ʿandhum maǧāl demoqrāṭiyye, fī ʿandhum maǧāl ḥurriyyāt, fa bi-t-tāli šabāb il-Urdun byaʿrifu eṣ-ṣaḥḥ min il-ġalaṭ, yaʿni fī ktīr nisbe min iš-šaʿb wāʿī w-btaḥkī ṣaḥḥ bi-mawḍūʿ il-dimoqrāṭiyye. Tawaǧǧuh il-ǧīl il-ḥālī huwwe taṣaḍḍī la-l-fikra l-ġalaṭ, inno yinšuru fikrat eṣ-ṣaḥīḥ. Fa-dāʾiman ḥāliyyan fī ktīr mubādarāt, intašarat ktīr.

Question 2

Akīd raḥ titʾaṯṯer fī l-buʿd il-baʿīd, leʾanno iš-šarikāt iǧ-ǧdīde yalli btiḥkī ʿanha maṯalan btistaḫdem il-internet btāḫod feedback min il-customers, bifīd in-nās aktar, iš-šarikāt titḫallat ʿan il-mafhūm it-taqlīdī li-š-šarike yalli hiyye iz-zabūn byišteri w-birūḥ ʿaraft kīf. Mā mnistaḫdem il-internet mətl iʿlānāt waraqiyye, iš-šarikāt taṭawwarat aktar. Fa-akīd raḥ titʾaṯṯer fī l-buʿd il-baʿīd; hayy iš-šarikāt mawǧūde btitšaǧǧaʿ iš-šarikāt it-taqlīdiyye ᵊtṣīr zayyhā ʿarafᵊt kīf. Fa-biṣīr ʿamaliyyat taʾṯīr mən iš-šabāb, raḥ yištiġlu la-ḫālon aktar, byištiġlu ʿala l-media, ʿala l-feedback, ʿalā l-maʿlūmāt. Raḥ tirfaʿ il-kafāla la-n-nās, w la-l-muntaǧ eṣ-ṣġīr nafso inno yḥiss ḥālo aqrab min is-šarike miš bass ᵊzbūn.

Question 3

Il-internet maṣāḥa kbīre li-l-muwāṭinīn, akīd byiʾaṯṯer ʿalā l-muǧtamaʿ. Il-internet intašar ḥāliyyan bi-ṣūra ktīr ᵊkbīr. Bass bḥiss bi-l-ʿamaliyye is-siyāsiyye il-internet bikūn šwayye yaʿni bass nāqil li-l-aḫbār. Il-internet bisāʿid bi-maǧāl il-maʿrife.

Question 4

Bi-l-Urdun bšūfa šwayy lessa. Lamma bteḥki Britānniyya hēk barra muntašira aktar, zayy LinkedIn. Sūʾ il-job bikūn aqwa šwayy; ʿindna hōn šwayy lessa beddha. Leʾinno it-tawāṣul maʿ iš-šarikāt šwayy… yaʿni il-ʿalāqa maʿ l-wāsṭa w-il-internet miš bifhamha; mā fī ʿalāqa mubāšara.

Question 5

Ah bizīd. Ana bšūf ktīr mubādarāt ḫāṣṣa ʿan iš-šarikāt in-nāšiʾa. Fī afkār ǧdīde. Fī ktīr ktīr mašāriʿ… il-mawḍūʿ ṣār ḥelu, il-wāḥid yištiġil ʿalēha w-byāḫod fikra ʿan il-entrepreneurship w-mā bikūn ʿayno bass ʿalā waẓīfe.

Question 6

La. Ṣaḥḥ bi-l-internet yumken bi-hadaf tekanī aḥyānan mā btitšūf il-ḥurūf il-ʿarabiyye, yṣīr yiktubu bi-l-lāṭiniyye, bass ḫāliyyan fī ktīr mašāriʿ, mətl min il-Ǧāmiʿa il-Urduniyye tarǧamat il-muṣṭalaḥāt iṭ-ṭibbiyye ilā l-ʿarabiyye. Fī ktīr mašārīʿ, w-əl-luġa il-ʿarabiyye qawiyye, w-ktīr tetʿabber ʿan šiġlāt. […]

Question 7

Il-ḫōf bidāyatan yaʿni kull il-mašārīʿ yalli minšūfha il-ʿamal yalli minšūf bi-l-mustaqbal yistintiǧ inno kān bi-ṭarīqa ḫāṭiʾa aw miš hād yalli beddna yāh. Yaʿni il-ān il-kull byiḥku ḥurriyye w-is-ṣaḥḥ bi-l-makān eṣ-ṣaḥḥ. Fa-maʿ kəll šī ʿam yṣīr bi-l-manṭiqa yumken bi-n-nihāye mnirǧaʿ zayymā badēna. Ktīr ḥisir il-waṭan il-ʿarabī. Eh – bass ana bšūf inno il-amal akbar. Fī waʿī, ʿindna ṯaqāfe, ṯaqāfat il-ḥiwār ṯaqāfet id-demoqrāṭiyye… fa-ana bšūf il-waḍʿa mnīḥ.

6.2.7 Participant 7

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 26th, 2015	23	male	Graduate, engineer and entrepreneur

Question 1

Bfakker inno aktar šī huwwe eḍ-ḍaġṭ al-muǧtamʿī – ēš yṣīr lamma mnekbar? Mā fīš ʿindna ṭawʿiyye kāfiyye la-š-šabāb inno ana ēš mumken… aw ēš maʿna ḥulum aw ēš maʿna inno ana kūn ṣāḥib ʿamal aw ēš maʿna inno ḥaqqaq ayy šī beddī yāha min zamān. Fiʿliyyan nəḥna bass mindawwer ʿalā inno ṭarīqa muʿayyane ka-muǧtamaʿ inno adrus ayy ḫuṣūṣ mahma kān; aštaġil šwayy, atzawwaǧ, ǧīb awlād w-hākaḏa. Hayy dāʾira. Mā fī inno, maṯalan, ana mumken beddi akūn ustāḏ inglīzi – baʿdēn yṣīru byiḥkūlak ustāḏ inglīzi miš kwayyis aw miš zayy hēk, ykūn fī ḍuġuṭāt, zāʾid inno in-nās birūḥu faqaṭ ʿalā l-handase w eṭ-ṭibb, yalli hum yfakkru inno hayy ykūn ilha makān iǧtimāʿī akbar min it-taḫaṣṣuṣāt it-tānīye, biḫallī ġayr at-tawāzun fī l-muǧtamaʿ kāmila, ǧāʾib inno fī ktīr nās byaʿrifūš lē beddi kūn muhandas… […] fa mā ʿindo ḥulum faʿaliyyan. Fa hiyye mən waqt il-madrase bi-raʾyī.

Question 2

Biwāfiq nawʿan mā – leʾinno fī ktīr mən iš-šarikāt iǧ-ǧdīde in-nāšiʾa ḫuṣūṣan ḫāliyyan yalli ana šāyif tawāǧuh fi l-Urdun, inno beddhum faqaṭ il-afkār iǧ-ǧdīde w-il-mumayyize ǧiddan. Fa-l-afkār iǧ-ǧdīde il-mumayyize ǧiddan ilha mustaqbal ʿalā mustawā l-ʿālam kəllha. Fa mumken hiyye tizhar bi-l-iqtiṣād, yemken ətǧīb mustaṯmirīn min il-ḫāriǧ, mumken furaṣ ʿamal ǧdīde,

mumken tiği intibāh in-nās barra inno min hayy id-dual mumken teṭlaʿ afkār ğdīde, fekra ḥelwe fekra tğīb masārī ktīr.

Question 3

Wuğūd il-internet sabbab wāʿī akṯar, fī ktīr maṯalan manāṭiq mā kānu byaʿrifu šū yṣīr bi-l-balad, zāʾid inno ṣāret in-nās tigdar teṭʿallam online w-hād mā kān mawğūd; fa-ṣāret in-nās ḥatta wa law mā tigdar tūṣal la-muʾassasāt taʿlīmiyye kwaysse leʾanno kān fī qariyye nāʾiyye w-il-mudarrassāt miš kwaiyyse yigdir yidḫul ʿalā l-internet w-yitʿallam. Mumken inno ašyaʾ silbiyye inno l-aḫbār l-maġlūṭa mumken is-social media kamān... bass ṣāru byaʿrifu aktar šū biṣīr fī-l-balad w ḫāriğ il-balad...

Ana maṯalan əza kān beddi dawwer ʿalā makān business šūf il-events il-mawğūde bi-ZINC bidawwar ʿala mīn yumken yaʿmel events bifīdni, wēn fī amākin bigdir iftaḥ fīha šarike, mīn yumken ysāʿidni w-hakada yaʿni.

Question 4

Ṣaḥīḥ, nawʿan mā, leʾinno bi-l-internet btāḫod šeğl ʿalā mabdiʾa il-skills w... LinkedIn aw Aḫṭabūṭ tigdir tšūf mumken il-muwaẓẓif, iz-zalame l-masʾūl ʿan it-tawẓīf, mumken yšūf aktar min miʾat šaḫṣ baʿden byiḫtār ḥasab il-skills wāḥid yiḥko telefon byiḥko tafaḍḍal ḫōd hād... yaʿni, yumken mā ykūn rāḍiʿa ktīr, mumken bi-n-nihāye yṣīr fī wāsṭa; lākin ḫaffaf akīd.

Question 5

Ah. Yalli šāyifho min ḫilāl aṣdiqāʾī, āh fī. Fī aktar min šaḫṣ bikūn yğarrib yištiğil fī šarike w-hayy baʿdēn gāl la, ana beddi ištiğil šeğle ḫāṣ, ṣār yšūf inno fī daʿm li-hād il-qiṭaʿ fī l-Urdun, ṣār yšūf maṯalan inno fī dawrāt business hōn, fī aṣdiqāʾo ğarrabo yiftaḥu šarike, ṣināʿan qiṣṣa nāğiḥa fī l-Urdun la-šaḫṣ fa... Ana ḥāss inno ṣār fī trend inno n-nās tfakkaru tiftaḥu šarike ḫāṣṣa gabl yištiğlu.

Question 6

Akīd. Il-ʿawlame aw il-internet biḥallī n-nās hiyye tṣīr teḥkī mumken bi-l-luġa il-inglīziyye fī ḥayāṯa l-yawmiyye; ana nafsi, ana min in-nās il-muqātilīn min ağlī il-luġa il-ʿarabiyye, fa-mumken ḥatta fī l-internet mumken nuktubu fī-l-ʿarabīzī, huwwe yalli ana ma bfaḍḍlo leʾanno maṯalan bittaği naḥwā difāğ [?] il-luġa l-ʿarabiyye, biṣīr iš-šaḫṣ lammā yiktub fī l-ʿarabīzī bibaṭṭil ʿindo mahārāt bi-kitābet il-luġa l-ʿarabiyye w-it-taʿbīr ʿan nafso bi-šakl kāfī. Huwwe faqaṭ taʾṯīr l-internet w-il-ʿawlame w-it-telefīzyūn. Zāʾid inno fī aġlab il-amākin taʿāwun il-business fī ktīr byiḥku l-luġa l-inglīziyye, fa-bithiss inno ʿašān titkūn nāğiḥ lāzem tiḥkī bi-l-inglīzi akṯar. Ah, mumken hād ykūn ġalaṭ. Fī muʾassassāt la, byiḥkīlak mnəḥkī bi-l-ʿarabī dāʾiman w-ṭūl il-waqt, bass fī muʾassassāt la, bitṣīr inno lāzem tkūn fī ktīr inglīzī fī dāḫil iš-šarike, yaʿni... bi-raʾyī ġalaṭ. Bi-raʾyī əza ḥābb nənğaḥ lāzem eṭ-ṭarīq il-afḍal la-t-tawāṣul ka-ʿarab hiyye il-ʿarabiyye. W-il-

inglīzī akīd muhimm ʿašān titwāṣel maʿ nās tāniyyīn.

Yaʿni fī nās mā byigdiru yaʿni tḫallaṣu mnə-l-tnēn, fa-ṣāret inno huwwe lammā yiǧi yiḥkī ʿarabī la-ḥāl ma byigdir, w-lammā yeǧi yeḥkī inglīzī la-ḥāl ma byigdir. Fa bi-l-inglīzī ydaḫḫal kalimāt ʿarabiyye w bi-l-ʿarabī ydaḫḫal kalimāt inglīziyye. Hād sayy la-š-šaḫṣ nafso w-bi-raʾyī li-l-muǧtamaʿ.

Question 7

Akbar ḫōfī inno timtadd il-ḥarb la-l-manāṭiq yalli māfīš fīhā ḥarb.

Akbar amalī inno in-nās, iš-šabāb, yimsikūhum il-umūr, leʾinno ana šāyif inno bimsik il-ʾāde [?] in-nās, il-wuzara kedda, hum nās mumken min eǧ-ǧīl il-qadīm ǧiddan, mā ʿindhum taṣawwur mabdaʾī, mā ʿindhum šumūliyye bi-t-tafkīr, fa law yimsik iš-šabāb il-wāʿī aw iš-šabāb il-mustaḥiqq, ṭabaʿan yaʿni il-wāsṭa ilha aṯṯir ktīr sayy, leʾinno bidūn wāsṭa iš-šabāb yemsiku, yṭawwer il-balad, iš-šabāb yalli bifakkru bi-ṭariqat il-entrepreneurs, yimsiku l-balad w-baʿdīha bitḥassan. Yṣīr min sayy ilā afḍal ilā afḍal ilā mumtāz.

6.2.8 Participant 8

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 26th, 2015	28	female	Graduate, Organizer

Question 1

Ahamm taḥaddiyyāt yalli hiyye titwaqqaʿ il-ēle, il-āʾile; bitkūn yalli miš munfatiḥa ʿalā l-startups w-il-entrepreneurship. La-ḥadd hallaʾ fī ʾāʾilāt mā byaʿrfu bi-šū il-wāḥid yballiš mašrūʿ, mašrūʿ ṣġīr, bifakkru inno əza raḥet byaʿmel mašrūʿ byefqud dirāsto aw yḍīʿ. Fa-atwaqqaʿ yalli hiyye yaʿni, miš il-ēle, naqṣ il-maʿlumāt ʿand il-ēle ʿan il-entrepreneurship w-il-startup.

Question 2

Fi l-Urdun inta btaʿref kān rabīʿ nice, cool – huwwe kān il-hadaf aṣlan min il-rabīʿ il-ʿarabī inno… yaʿni titġayyar namaṭ il-ḥayā, tḥassan, yṭawwar, miš l-wāḥid ykūn wāʾif mā kān. Fa-akīd il-entrepreneurship w-il-startups akīd ʿam tiḫdim ġāyāt mā ʾidirit ir-rabīʿ il-ʿarabī yiḫdimhā yaʿni. Ṭallʿu iš-šabāb beddna beddna; beddna waẓāʾif, beddna rawātib, beddna daʿm. Il-startups w-il-entrepreneurship ḥaʾʾat w ʿam tḥaʾʾiʾ hayy l-ašyāʾ, yaʿni. ʿAndna mazz [?] iš-šabāb kīf il-wāḥid mā yistannā tiǧī furṣa kīf huwwe yiḫtirʿ furṣa. ʿAllamat kīf yzīd il-revenues faraḍan əza ʿando bussiness yzīdo mən ḫilāl našrit ṯaqāfat targeting audience w-il-customers. Akīd yes ḫedmet, ḫedmet iktīr.

Question 3

Akīd, āh. Decentralization akīd. Tuʿṭī… mā biʾder iḥkīlak miyye bi-l-miyye, bass ṣār fī influence. Ṣāret il-aḫbār tūṣalna ġayr ʿan il-awwal, ʿašān neḥna ṭūl il-waʾet māskīn il-devices yalli fīha wuṣūle ʿalā il-internet. Biṣīr inno fi-raʾyī eḥna yaʿni we communicate, we give our opinions, ṣār

fī hayʾāt btismaʿ hayy hadōl iš-šabāb, tinʾul raʾyī iš-šabāb li-l-musayṭirīn yaʿni aw ḫallīna nʾūl yalli īdhum ʿalā s-sulṭa. Oh yes, ʿakasat. Ṣār fī šafāffiyye yes akīd bi-l-mawḍūʿ. Il-Process kīf inno eḥna lēš aḫadna hād il-qarār. Min nāḥiyet kamān il-internet fād leʾanno ṣār fī əza beddna mnəḥkī ʿan il-entrepreneurship w-il-economy, ṣār ktīr sahl la-ayy wāḥid yballiš l-business tabaʿo. Bkūn ğarret fikra yaʿni bedda ṣġīr budget, saḥḥ? Yes, akīd sāʿad.

Question 4

Ah yes akīd ḫaffaf il-wāsṭa. Əza ʿam teḥkī ʿan il-vacancies w-il-equal access la-l-vacancies hayy, āh yes; ḫaffaf ktīr. Yumken bass ḫāriğiyyan bi-nesbe əlna yaʿni kīf bʾəllak yāha – inno ana šāyif fī furṣa, fa-ʾaddem ʿalā hād il-vacancy. Bass hal il-manager faraḍan aw il-decision maker fī hay il-NGO aw company yfaḍḍlak ʿalayy laʾinno enta bteḥkī inglīzī ktīr aḥsan minnī faraḍan aw ana raḥ yfaḍḍəlnī leʾinno ʿašān ana female yfaḍḍəlnī – ma baʿref. Bass eẓ-ẓāhir inno yes, ṣār fī equal access.

Question 5

Akīd, akīd. Ana bḥiss miš mən il-ğamaʿāt; bḥess mən ṭullāb il-madāres w-enta šifᵊt yaʿni kīf ṣār fī ṭawʿiyye ilhum, mən hallaʾ bi-level əl-madāres ʿanğad yaʿni bitmannā arğaʿ ʿumrī sittaʿašr sənne yğīni hād il-awareness raising sessions ʿašān əza mā beddi lawwan miš ṭumūḥī innī āḫod šahāde li-ṭumūḥī ištiğil aw – law miš ṭumūḥī. Inno ʿa-s-sarīʿ aṭlaʿ aštiğil. Ḥāss inno ṣār fī wāʿī ʿand ṭullāb il-madāres aktar, miš min il-ğāmʿa. Hum yiṭlaʿu yaʿmlū mašariʿ mumken ykammlu dirasathum kamān. Fī sabab inno fī daʿm ktīr, w-il-akbar min hēk inno il-maʿnawiyye kbīre, aw min šaḫṣiyyāt maʿrūfe ktīr muhtamm bi-hād il-mawḍūʿ. Ğawāʾiz, ğāʾizet il-Malik ʿAbdallah, at-Tanmiyye, biğammʿu il-startups, byaʿṭūhum, biḥāfiẓūhum, māddiyyan yaʿni, so yes! Fī trend ʿandna mawğūde.

Question 6

Akīd. Absolutely. Hahaha šifit? Ana aktar miṭal ḥayy ʿalā at-taġyīr. Yes, ʿam titġayyar – ana bḥess inno fīha pros and cons. Il-iğābiyyāt inno fawāʾidha mnitʿallam ʿan il-ʿālam ʿan ṯaqāfat il-ʿālam ʿam mənġayyar šiġlitna… il-Urdun ʾabl ḫams snīn – miš ktīr ḫams snīn – miš maʿrūfe, bi-Amrīka ḫallīna nʾūl. […] Hayy awwal šī, al-infitāḥ ʿalā l-ʿālam. Ṣirna nšūf amṯile ktīre ʿalā startups ṣġīre, yumken wāḥid yaʿmilha re-adaptation la-l-society tabaʿo.

Min nāḥīye silbiyye bḥiss inno šwayy ʿam mniḫser luġatna, ʿam teḍʿaf luġitna, šwayy ṯaqāfitna yaʿni, tṣīr ṯaqāfe ġarbiyye yaʿni. Hiyye ḥelwe l-infitāḥ bass ʿam mniḫsir šwayy hawiyyətna il-ʿarabiyye. Il-ağyāl iğ-ğdīde ma byaʿrifuš šī ktāb. Byaʿrufu virtual books ma byaʿrfu l-ktāb yalli ana w-yāk mnaʿrifo, papers yaʿni.

Question 7

Mā baʿrif, mā beddi kūn ʿāṭifiyye; ballaš ʿaṣ-ṣaʿīd il-iqtiṣādī. Amalī inno l-iqtiṣād il-urdunī waʾif

ʿa-riǧlē. Baṭṭal fī maʿduniyye ʿāliyye ʿa-l-ġarm il-musāʿadāt; waʾif ʿa-riǧlēna. Nāḥiyye iǧtimāʿiyye bitmann yaʿni tḫallaṣ hiyye yumken murṭabta bi-s-suʾāl il-awwal – il-ahl. Mniḫloṣ min ṯaqāfat il-ʿēb, ʿēb innak mā tkammal ǧāmʿa, ʿēb ennak tištiġil ʿalā ġayr dirāstak, yaʿni inno nḫallaṣ min ṯaqāfat il-ʿēb. Maḫāfī – ktīre. Fī ktīr chaos bi-l-manṭiʾa. Aktar šī bḫāf minno inno nifqud il-amān, inta yumken laḥaẓt inno il-Urdun aktar balad fīha amān bi-l-Middle East.

6.2.9 Participant 9

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 26th, 2015	27	female	Graduate, Entrepreneur

Question 1

Bi-l-waʾt il-ḥāḍir bikūn iš-šeġl. W-lammā yḫallṣīn [iš-šabāb] mā bilāʾu šeġl ykammlu l-Masters biḥallṣu w-again mā bilāʾu šeġl, fa-ʿašān hēk ktīr mən il-graduates tabaʿna byiṭlaʿ ʿal-ḫalīǧ aw America, ʿam yiṭlaʿu mne-l-balad.

Question 2

Hallaʾ, ṣaḥḥ. Il-development wə-l-economy la-l-balad lāzem ykūn fī šarikāt nāšiʾa, ʿašān hadīk il-yōm kān fī research inno arbaʿīn min aṭ-ṭullāb yalli Byitḫarraǧu ʿam yiftaḥu šarikāt nāšiʾa ʿašan mā fī šeġl. W-bšūf kamān bi-l-madāres w-il-ǧāmaʿāt fī ʿindak muškəle mən əl-High School w-əl-University əza hiyye governmental mā fī enough seats. Fa biṣaffu ʿanǧad yḥāwlu ylāʾu šī. In-nās yiṭlaʿu min il-balad, fī ktīr šarikāt nāšiʾa ʿam bitsāʿid – naǧāḥ, miš kullhum byinǧaḥu. Yaʿni fī minhum baʿd tlāt ašhur byifšalu, fī minnon kamān bāʾidu sett sabʿa snīn w-ʿam baʿṭu li-l-government the taxes, bitsāʿid il-economy. W-ʿam biwaẓẓfu nās, bass miš kullhum.

[*Bi-l-buʿd il-baʿīd ʿašān yetʾaṯṯru*] beddha governmental support. Ḥamdellah ʿanda id-dawle ʿandna flexible maʿ il-startups, taxes et cetera, bass kamān beddha daʿm. ʿAšān ʿam mnəḥkī mənḥāwal mniqnaʿ ḥālna neḥna bi-t-technology for example w il-startups ʿam təftaḥ technology, bass əḥna balad miš mustaʿidde la-t-technology. Fa biṣaffu, pick up, Dubai. Pick up, go to Lebanon. Pick up, leave. W-ana min il-startups yalli daʿūnī yalli ana hayde naǧaḥto. Il-meškle hiyye il-culture, iṯ-ṯaqāfe, hiyye… laziness. Yfaḍḍlu it-telefon, ʾālo, yallah, do everything for me.

Question 3

La. Baʿṭī ʾuwwe, w-əḥna mən… bi-l-balad, il-ḥukūme beddha l-ittiṣṣāl w əl-internet. Yaʿni ʿindak id-Diwān il-Malakī, one of the top twenty influential Twitter accounts. Fa-ʿandna id-dawle btistaʿmal it-technology ʿašān iktašafat inno il-balad kullha btistaʿmal technology w-beddha titʾaṯṯer, beddha tūṣal la-l-šaʿb, əza Tweet, əza Message, online, hayy il-ašyāʾ.

Fī. Yaʿni ʿindak il-Amāne, il-municipality, tweet – biraddu ʿalē. Wala teḥkī telefon wala transfer, la, sent them a tweet, raddu ʿalēk. Ana ətfāǧaʾet inno: Okay, interesting! It's the easiest way, w-

əḥna nḥamdillah mumken we can accelerate more, bass to start with, as Jordans, its good.

Question 4

Il-wāsṭa mā bisāʿid? Hallaʾ hiyye šī miš iğābi. Inno miš kəll wāḥid ʿindo il-fair share tabaʿo. Bass – unfortunately, yaʿni – fī ktīr ašyāʾ. Ana birğaʿ biḥkī fī ktīr mən in-nās mā bilāʾu šeğl, w-ana mən in-nās yaʿni yalli volunteer bi-l-Mix and Match. I had a job a year ago. Bilāʾīha ashal. Il-application online: Yumken interview baʿd šahr, šahrēn; bass ana əza baʿrif l-mudīr, mumken he wants to see the CV, I mail it, btitlāʾī byitwazzaf aw fī muʾābale baʿd usbūʿ. […] Ana əza bidawwer ʿalā šeğl bi-ʿAmmān mā bifūtš ʿa-LinkedIn. Ǝza laʾēt fī job position, blāʾī ḥad. Byaʿrif ḥad bi-š-šarike, w-baḥkī maʿo. It is a wāsṭa to go faster – miš inno, you don't have to pay to get the job, bass ʿalā LinkedIn btitlāʾi ḫamsmīt CV mastūte, w-mītēn CV via e-mail, fa… yumken aktar šī yizbuṭ bi-Dubai, but a while ago I did a test. I applied to hundreds of jobs in my field, wala ḥada ḥaka maʿī. Yaʿni beddak ʿalā l-aqall fūt ʿalā l-website tabaʿon via e-mail maybe.

Question 5

Ah – fī. ʿAšān eğ-ğāmiʿāt ʿan eğ-ğdīd ʿam tiftaḥū mawḍūʿ il-startups. Yaʿni ana ʿandi "Girls and Tech", ana board member, əḥna, we empower, engage, and teach girls in technology, eṣ-ṣuʿūbe yalli bi-l-awwal lāʾētha inno ənfūt ʿalā l-ğāmiʿa! W-lammā nzilna la-Irbid ḥāwalna nišraḥlon inno əḥna okay, əḥna we do this for free, we are volunteers, beddna nsāʿid iṭ-ṭullāb! W-ʿandkon innovation lab, amazing ideas, ṭayyib why baḥḫ lamma graduate? Kānet ṣuʿūbe! Inno: La, la… Min eğ-ğāmiʿa! They are reluctant, inno – lē? Why? Šū?

Fa-baʿd usbūʿēn bi-Irbid bi-l-Innovation Lab we have fifty participants and we're going to select one. Because we want them to learn, once you are bi-l-ğāmiʿa əza ʿindak mašrūʿ bi-technology lammā ətkammel it-technology lā yaʿni inno bye bye, I found a job aw ətğawwazet. La, inno if you have an idea we can help you. Beddna eğ-ğāmiʿāt yṭawwəru hayy əš-šiğlāt bi-ṭ-ṭullāb.

W-fī Jordan Unversity, fī nās they support entrepreneurs… w fī Sumayya [*Princess Sumaya University for Technology*]. There, a guy hacked the university website and they kicked him out. We were like: No, you should find him a job!

Hallaʾ āḫir səntēn tlāte ṣār fī ktīr ašyāʾ. Accelerators, Funders, zayy Oasis500, zayy Wamḍa. ʿAm yḥāwilu yiṭlaʿu ʿalā l-ğāmiʿāt yfahhmu n-nās there is a world called entrepreneurship; you don't have to be rich, you don't have to be the smartest person; you have an innovation and you are passionate, you can have support. Fa-lessa beddha waʾet – bass inšallah! […]

Question 6

Il-luġa bi-l-ʿarabī w-il-inglīzī ʿam titġayyar. ʿAšān ʿindak il-dictionaries ʿam titġayyar, lammā tiktub it corrects you. Or it gives you the right writing. You want to spell a word mafrūḍ bi-l-English tinsa. Ana last time I had to check a word, ʿēb I am a Cambridge graduate! Oh my god!

Fa-šilt il-dictionary, šilto mnə-l-keyboard, the keyboard because its correcting my English, and I am forgetting how to type cause it is typing for you. Il-Arabic nafs ešī. I don't write Arabic unfortunately, bass fī Arabīzī, that's what I write.

Question 7

Amal? Fī hope for better organized nations, startups, humans – more organized in life. Ḫōf – the more there is freedom of speech the less freedom we get. Yaʿni: Lebanon. Lammā ṣāru yəḥkū, twa'ʾafu l-ḥakī. I tell you, you have freedom of speech, but when I practice it you say sorry, you can't say that, you can't go on the streets. Fa-hād ḫōfī inno we will be banned from our freedom.

6.2.10 Participant 10

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
August 29th, 2015	26	male	Graduate, Accountant, works in startup

Question 1

Bi-ṣarāḥa halla' akbar taḥaddiyyāt lə-š-šabāb bi-l-Urdun hiyye at-taḥarruǧ. Inno wāḥid ḫarraǧ mən il-ǧāmiʿa halla' ṣāret ṣaʿb ṣaʿb ṣaʿb inno ylā'ī waẓīfe. Inno lāzem ykūn ʿando mu'ahhilāt, ṣarāḥa, la-daraǧat bakeloreus ykūn 'alīle ilhum la-ylā'ū šeǧl muqaranatan bi-daraǧāt il-Master aw id-duktūra. Yaʿni: Awwal taḥaddī ṣuʿūbat iǧād ayy waẓīfe baʿd it-taḥarruǧ. Yaʿni raḥ yeḍṭarr aṭ-ṭālib yantaẓir ḥawālay ətlāt ašhur aw ḫams ašhur ḥatta ylā'i waẓīfe, wa-ar-rātib ykūn ǧiddan ǧiddan qalīl yaʿni inno taḥət il-ḥadd il-'adna marrāt. Hād bi-l-Urdun tlāt mīt Dīnār, fa-fī ṭullāb, ma ʿendon miškle yištiġlu bi-ḫams w-ʿišrīn Dinār, bass mā bikūnū jobless. Ahamm iš-šī waẓīfe. Hād mulāḥaze šaḥṣiyye, yaʿni əḫti maṭalan taḥarraǧat lessa mā lā'īt šeǧl, ʿendi aṣdiqā' lessa mā lā'ū šeǧl taḥarraǧu halla'.

Question 2

Ana bi-wiǧhat naẓarī aš-šarikāt an-nāši'a bitsāʿid ʿalā iǧād ḥulūl w-mutawaffera furaṣ ʿamal, Akīd.

Question 3

Ṭabaʿan sāʿad bi-šakl əkbīr. Ḫallīna neḥkī halla' ilā mnirǧaʿ ilā t̲awrāt ir-rabiʿ il-ʿarabī yaʿni ṣarāḥa iš-šabakāt at-tawāsul il-iǧtimāʿi kānet ṣarāḥa mutawāǧida bi-šakl əkbīr min ḫilāl tawt̲īq il-maʿlumāt aw tawt̲īq il-mutazāharāt, w-surʿat il-intišār kānet akbar min it-telefiziyūn la-ḫālo aw ir-rādio la-ḫālo. Fa-inno sāʿad bi-šakl kbīr. Halla' bi-nisbet tamarkuz il-qarārāt halla' šabakāt it-tawāsul il-iǧtimāʿi aw il-internet bi-šakl ʿām mumken yikūn wasīle raqābiyye. Kīf? Mumken tamm qarār min ǧiha ʿulia w-hāda qarār kān ṣarāḥatan ḫāti'.

Question 4

Halla' maʿak. Mawqiʿ zayy LinkedIn maṭalan marrāt raḥ ysāʿed inno il-wāḥid yūsal ʿalā l-Interview yallī beddo yāh, fa-hayy l-mawāqiʿa siwā in kān Bayt aw Aḫṭabūṭ aw LinkedIn

betwaffer overview ʿalā hayy opening yumken ayy wāḥid yrūḥ ʿalēha ʿala ṭarīq search, faqaṭ ʿāmel search ʿalā yallī bəddak yāh w-raḥ titlāʾī suggestions yaʿni ayy opening mumken enta bti'dir titlāʾīha. Kamān hənne bidawwarū ʿalā qualified candidates w-aḥūwī minhum, fa-birūḥu ʿalē fawran, iš-šarikāt yallī btitlāʾīk miš enta yallī btitlāʾihon bardo. Marrāt yumken enta btitdawwir ʿala šeġl mā btetlāʾi bass hinne btitlāʾūk. Fa-hāda ṣāret ṣarāḥa taġribe ğamila ğiddan.

Question 5

Ḫallīnī išraḥlak il-mawḍūʿ min wiğhat naẓarī. Since ana kunt ṭālib bi-ğ-ğamaʿa w baʿrif… šūf, eḥnā, hadafna lammā mnitḫarrağ, mnitḫarrağ w-ᵊndawwar ʿalā šeġl. Fī baʿḍ aṭ-ṭullāb ykūn maṯalan il-ḥāle il-maddiyye ilhum aḥsan min ġērhum maṯalan ahlon bikūn ʿindhum šarikāt already, fa mā ydawwerū ʿalā šeġl, ḫallaṣ iš-šeġl mawğūd. Fī nās bardo ykūn maʿhum maṣāri byiḥkū la-awlādhum ḫallaṣ eḥnā lammā btitḫarrağū mnəḥkī maʿ šarikāt, siwā in kān startup aw ġērhā min aš-šarikāt. Bass ana baʿṭīk tisʿīn bi-l-miyye min ṭullāb il-ğāmiʿāt yallī btitḫarrağū hadafhum ydawwrū ʿalā waẓīfe, ḥatta wa law kānet aqall min il-ḥadd il-ʾadna li-l-uğūr, leʾinno yballšū aw yibdaʾū inno bebnū il-experience, il-career. Ma bihemmon il-rātib; bištiġlū ʿalā l-asās inno yballšū maʿ l-experience. Fa-hād huwwe bi-nisbet la-illi ḥālet eṭ-ṭullāb bi-l-Urdun.

Question 6

Hallaʾ bi-nisbet la-illi ana biḥkī maʿk bi-l-luġa al-ʿarabiyye al-ʾān; mumken bi-l-lakne il-Urduniyye aw il-šarq il-awsaṭiyye aw bilād aš-šām bi-šakl ʿām. Bass ana mən eṭ-ṭullab yallī mumken yeḥkū fuṣḥa. Ana beḥki al-fuṣḥa bi-ṭalāqa al-ḥamdulillah mən ḫilāl il-mumārase. Bass le-sūʾ il-ḥazz ʿadam il-ihtimām bi-l-luġa, ṣarāḥa, yaʿni šūf: Ka-lakne, hallaʾ il-lakne bi-šakl ʿām fī ayy dawle fī ayy luġa bi-l-ʿālam btiṭṭawwar maʿ aṭ-ṭatawwur. Yaʿni wāḥid maṯalan il-lakne, il-lakne il-urduniyye mā kānet zayy hēk ʾabl tlātīn sene ʾabl arbaʿīn sene. Ṣār fī kalimāt yaʿni tamm iḫtiraʿihā aw tamm tabaddulha bēn in-nās ʿalā l-asās kān absaṭ w-mumken ənnha termuz la-ayy mawḍūʿ bi-šakl afḍal. Fa-hād šī ṭabīʿi inno il-ʿawlame bi-šakl ʿām hiyye la-yumken taġannubha. […] Fa-ana bedʿam il-luġa il-fuṣḥa, bass la-sūʾ – aw, ʿadam at-tamakkun baʿḍ il-ašḫāṣ min iṭqān il-luġa il-fuṣḥa, mumken ḫallīna mneḥki inno mən aṣ-ṣuʿūbe inno ytimm tabannī hād al-luġa ka-luġa rasmiyye bi-šakl ʿām.

Question 7

Kullayātna ka-bašar mindawwer ʿalā l-amn. Ṣaḥīḥ? Enta mā bitʿīš bi-dawle miš miṯʾammine, maẓbūṭ? Ṣarāḥatan ana ḥamdillah rabb al-ʿālamīn əza bitrūḥ ʿalā duwal tāniye maṯalan ṭalaʿ ʿalā ḥudūdna eḥnā maṯalan ka-l-Urdun mištaʿale w-ISIS bardo zuhūr hallaʾ it-tanẓīm yallī bi-ṣarāḥa mā baʿref ēš dīno ṣarāḥa yšakkil ḫaṭar. […] Had akbar ḫaṭar min Isrāʾīl, ana šaḫṣiyyan baʿtabir dawlat Isrāʾīl dawle ʿadū bi-nisbe illī. Bass hād it-tanẓīm ʿadū aktar bi-nisbe la-illī min Isrāʾīl leʾinno bistaḫdim dīnī, dīnī ana baʿrif šū dīnī, it-taḥqīq ḫātiʾa ktīr. Huwwe baʿīd kəll buʿd an id-

Dīn baʿref ēš dīnī [...].Ṭarīq qatl in-nās w-it-taʿāmul maʿ id-dyānāt il-uḫrā ka-l-māsiḥiyye maṯalan ṭarīqa ḫallīna neḥki mā iḫtalaf šī ʿan il-Nāziyye. Mā iḫtalaf šī ʿan in-Nāziyyīn, bi-nisbe illī nafs iš-šī. [...]

Bi-nisbe la-tafāʾulī la-l-waṭan il-ʿarabī... mā ʿindī tafāʾul ṣarāḥa, mā ʿindī tafāʾul. Ana ṣarāḥa pessimistic... leʾanno bittallaʿ ʿalā l-ḥāl, yṣīr aswaʾ. Ṭabʿan eḥnā ka-ʿarab mniḥlam inno mniḫsar il-ḥudūd ʿand id-dual il-ʿarabiyye minkūn dawle waḥde; hād ḫulumna eḥna. Akīd. ḥilimna inno mniḫsar Sykis-Picot. Hād yallī beddnā yāh ṣarāḥa, w-neḥna wāʿiyīn, šaʿb waʿy. [...] W-mā nkūn unṣuriyīn. Ana diḍḍ il-unṣuriyye bi-šakl ʿām; ana bedʿam il-coexistence. Aw ḫallīna mneḥki inno il-ʿayš il-muštarak bēn kull in-nās siwā in kānū muḫtalaf ad-diyānāt aw kānū muḫtalif il-uṣūl w-al-manābiḍ aw l-ʿirq. Fa-hād huwwe, inno menkūn dawle waḥde w-mā nkūn unṣuriyyīn.

6.2.11 Participant 11

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
September 9th, 2015	27	male	Graduate, Civil engineer, entrepreneur since 10 years

Question 1

Personally I think a big problem is il-wāṣṭa. Məškelet inno ktīr nās they get to positions miš leʾinno they deserve the position or they are qualified; bass leʾinno they know someone who knows someone who can put them there. Fa-hayy məškele. Il-məškele iṯ-ṯāniyye bi-nəsbe la-n-nās they try to build businesses, hiyye... il-lack of governmental regulations, ᵊtkūn wāḍḥa kifāye, innak tigdar taʿrif bi-ẓ-ẓabṭ how things are done. So if you wanna build a business you never know... especially when it comes to technology or businesses miš traditional businesses. Il-ḥukūme they are clueless; yaʿni ayy iši bi-t-technology bi ayy iši ḥatta bi-l-arts that as a concept bi-l-balad mā kān mawǧūd as a concept already when you come taʿmalo, you find a lot of push back okay mən certain sectors in society. And you find a lot of governmental sides giving you trouble, you're spending your time with their bureaucracy while you could build your business. Ana waḥde mən iš-šiġlāt yalli yaʿni ana I went through, when I attempted to register my business, ana bi-l-aṣl a Palestinian refugee in Jordan bass I do have a Jordanian passport fa-lammā iǧīt to register a business kānet awwal iši bəṭlubu minni inno ykūn ḫamsīn bi-l-miyye min il-capital tabaʿa l-business maḥṭūṭ bi-l-bank mǧammad, not being used. Bass as safety. W-il-minimum inno ykūn rās il-māl mīt-alf. So neḥna ʿam neḥkī ʿan ḫamsīn alf dinār Urduni ($70,500) ʾablmā btaʿmil ayy šī btištiġil ayy išī! Bass for you to actually get company registration innak tətballaš təštiġil! So this is one example of ktīr ktīr examples tāniye.

Question 2

Hallaʾ bi-nəsbe la-l-Urdun bi-ṣarāḥa I have to disagree. Fī ktīr nās ʿam yḥāwilu yaʿmalu positive change, fī nās biḥāwilu to push forward, bass il-effects tabaʿ šeġlum miš ʿam tətbayyan. Leʾinno

there is so little in comparison maʿ l-force yalli ğāye mən at-tiğğāh at-tāniye. So basically māni mutafāʾil.

Question 3

Bi-n-nihāye it's a tool. It can appear in a number of ways. Hallaʾ it does give transparency of sort, bass it gives transparency bass marrāt, hād šī, it backfires. Marrāt it sheds light ʿalā both positive and negatives bi-l-society and marrāt ktīr – it gives power to the masses, and marrāt the masses don't know what is best for them if you know what I mean. Yaʿni lets say a society is three to four to five percent who are liberal of some sort; ninety-five percent of people are not. Fa-lammā hadōl il-five percent biḥāwilu byaʿmilu išī, which personally I bšūfo as something positive, ktīr marrāt hāda išī yṣīr bi-l-media, through the internet, w a fuss is created out of nothing, w bi-l-aḫīr il-efforts tabaʿithom bətrūḥ. Biṣaffi inno mā ištiġilūš išī, l-šeġl tabaʿhum kullayātho rāḥ ʿalā l-fāḍi. Fa-ktīr marrāt il-effects la-l-internet bitkūn negative aktar min mā hiyye positive. Leʾinno hiyye bi-l-aḫīr it's a representation of the masses. W-əza l-masses nafsha fīhā miškele, əza l-society ʿalā scale kbīr šwayy fīha miškele, hayy l-miškele bardo it can be duplicated into the internet.

Question 4

Hallaʾ il-wāsṭa bətṣīr miš laʾinno employers mā ʿandhum miš ṭarīʾa aḥsan to get access to people. Il-mawḍūʿ simply because they choose minhum to do things in a certain way. Fa if you give them the internet, any tool, LinkedIn aw Aḫṭabūṭ, aw bayt aw ayy tool mumken btuʿṭyon yāha, they wouldn't use it unless they believe in it. So it doesn't really have an effect ʿalēha. Yaʿni iš-šaḫṣ yalli beddo yğīb ḥada w-yšiġġlo ʿando bi-l-wāsṭa raḥ yğībo bi-ġadd in-nazar fī internet aw mā fī.

Question 5

I think leʾinno fī focus ʿalā l-mawḍūʿ globally ḥatta – the amounts of funds yalli ʿam tinḥaṭṭ towards… yaʿni ḥatta bi-l-States. Fa-ktīr media establishments they try to show this as the way out, as the only way out. Inno instead of working in a company from nine to five, no, you go and found your own company. Which I completely understand. This is how you create jobs bi-l-aḫīr. But I don't think this is a way for everyone. I think here ʿam yiṣīr zayy replacement la-l-mentality yalli kānet min tlātīn sənne, lamma kān il-abāhāt yəḥku la-awlādhum beddi yāk teṭlaʿ doktōr aw muhandis, bass leʾinno they know this is a good way to make money. Hallaʾ ʿam yṣīr nafs išī. Inno la, you go start your own business. Mšān hēk ktīr businesses ʿam teṭlaʿ, they operate for a while, they fail and they shut down. Only people who have an apt for this, who were born to do this, are surviving. W-ktīr minhum li-l-asaf they are leaving the country aṣlan.

Ana miš mutafāʾil abadan. Ana to be honest min hōn la-sett təšhur I will be out of the country for good. Laʾinno I got to a point where I don't see it happening.

Question 6

Miyye bi-l-miyye. Bi-l-aḫīr kunna nəḥkī ʿan il-internet ʾabl šwayy w-əza inta teqraʾ bi-l-field ṭabaʿak, bi-l-business, bi-l-marketing, bi-ayy waḥde min hayy fields, enta ʿam teqraʾ bi-l-Inglīzī, ktīr min il-information yalli əḥna ʿam consuming bitkūn bi-l-inglīzī. Fa əl-luġa its seeping in our own language in a way, fa it gets to a point where wāḥid zayyī maṭalan kull ḥayāto bi-l-Urdun ʿam beḥki nuṣṣ kalāmi bi-l-ʿarabī nuṣṣ bitkūn bi-l-inglīzi. Fa definitevely it will have an effect kbīr, w-definetively ʿam tistadd il-ʿarabī bi-ktīr blād w-industries w-circles.

Question 7

I would say safety, this is the major concern, the number one priority. Lets go back to a place where you can actually go from one country to another without fearing for your life, baʿdēn we'll go back and focus on economic reform and business and kəll hayy l-umūr. Bass iš-šī il-major bi-l-manṭiʾa hallaʾ hiyye hallaʾ mawḍūʿ il-ḥrūb mawḍūʿ il-mašākel fī kəll il-makān. Enta ʿam based bi-Ləbnān ṣaḥḥ? I hope youre safe man maʿ l-umūr yalli yṣīr ʿandkon. […]

6.2.12 Participant 12

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
September 11th, 2015	23	male	Graduate, launched startup

Question 1

Ana bi-raʾyī l-baṭāle bidāyatan. Hiyye miškele šadīde ʿandna. Ṯānī šī bardo min il-mašākel er-rāʾisiyye mawḍūʿ il-muwāṣalāt. W-tālet šī mumken eḥkī inno kamān ġalāʾ al-maʿīše mumken bi-šakl aw bi-āḫer.

Question 2

Ṣaḥḥ, naʿm. Bwāfiq bi-šədde ʿalā l-mawḍūʿ. I ana kənt involved bi-šəġlet il-startups bi-l-Urdun w-atwaqqaʿ inno aṣlan hallaʾ dawlatēn yaʿni bi-hāda l-mawḍūʿ bi-l-waṭan il-ʿarabī yalli huwwe il-Urdun w-Lebnān. W-ḫallīna nəḥkī inno promising fīhum il-environmental daʿm la-l-startups fī l-waqt il-ḥālī. Yalli ana šāyfo bi-l-Urdun hiyye ḥarake ktīr kbīre la-startups šaġġāle, inno šabāb fī ḥāl inno mā lāʾu ayy waẓīfe aw hayy l-umūr ʿam byiḫtarʿu furaṣ li-waḥdhum as a freelancer or as an entrepreneur yiftaḥu šarike w-bi-l-muqābel kamān they can help employees tāniyyēn inno yištiġlu maʿhum w-hēk. Fa-ana baʾakkad ʿalā l-mawḍūʿ ǧiddan, w-fī ktīr amṯilē ʿalē. Bitwaqqaʿ l-waqt miš kāfīye wa-lākin hunālik al-kaṯīr min al-amṯile ʿalā l-mawḍūʿ.

Question 3

Naʿam naʿam. Huwwe biʾaṯṯir bi-ktīr aškāl. Yaʿni ʿam bisāʿid – lammā mnəḥki bi-l-mawḍūʿ is-siyāsa il-internet bisāʿid inno yṣīr fī yaʿni ḫallīna nəḥkī il-mašākel w-əl-ašyāʾ il-mawǧūde ʿandna tūṣal bi-šakl asraʿ la-l-masʾūlīn w-bisahhel kamān intiqād il-masʾūlīn fī ḥāl inno kān fī ʿindhum ayy mašākel, miš zayy zamān. Fa-hād ašī biʾaṯṯer iǧāban ʿalā l-ʿamaliyye is-siyāsiyye bi-šakl ʿām.

Inno ʿam ysāʿid inno il-kull halla' murāqab, fī nās mumken ennak təḥkī ʿalā l-mašākel yalli huwwe ʿam baʿmilha w bi-t-tālī yaʿni nawʿan mā ʿam biqill is-sulūqiyyāt il-ḫāṭiʾa yalli bitimm min ğihat il-masʾūlīn aw ḥatta min ğihat il-muwāṭinīn. […]

Question 4

Naʿm. Ana beddi rakkiz ʿalā mawḍūʿ halla', əza kān fī qiṭāʿ ḫāṣṣ, fa bi-ra'ī yaʿni il-ğuz il-ahamm min il-qiṭāʿ il-ḫāṣṣ w-ḫuṣūṣan inno əza kān mabniyyan ʿalā l-ibdaʿ w-il-adā' w əza kān fī tanāfussiyye ʿāliyye bi-s-sū', fa min hamm aṣḥāb il-ʿamal inno bikūn tawẓīf in-nās yalli ḫallīna nəḥki akfīyā' la-yišğil hayy l-waẓīfe. W bi-t-tālī yaʿni biqallel hād iš-šī min il-wāsṭa inno… ḥatta ana ra'īs ʿamal, l-wāsṭa ḥatta idīno, beddi l-business tabaʿī fa-ana mā bi'ābel bi-hāda l-išī, beddi nās akfīyā', nās qualified that fill the gap yalli ana ʿindī yāh bi-š-šarike. Fa il-internet portals somehow it meets this gap, btitḥāwil btuʿṭūni in-nās yalli qualified, kəll wāḥid ʿindo il-resumee already mawğūde, ana bigdar aṭallaʿ fa-aṣaff in-nās bināyan ʿalā hād il-asās iḫtār minhum in-nās il-afḍal išī […]

Question 5

Ana baʿtaʾid ʿam yitġayyir, bass bi-ra'ī inno hād išī kamān raḥ ykūn awḍaḥ baʿd sənne aw səntēn. Le'inno yaʿni halla' its grooming, ktīr infrastructure ytimm, tidʿam hadōl in-nās, fa-bi-ra'yī inno is-sənne iğ-ğāye aw is-sənne yalli baʿdha raḥ ykūn ktīr wāḍiḥ. Ḫuṣūṣan bi-mağāl il-IT, le'inno muʿzam il-startups yalli ʿam tištiğil ʿandna bi-mağāl il-IT. Yaʿni it can be build on a low budget aw ḥatta zero budget, w-fī already incubators, w-nās muhtammīn ʿam yidʿamu hadōl in-nās, ka-investors or ka-accelerators aw ġērha. I got incubated by Oasis500, bi-mağāl il-IT, fa somehow inno iš-šī il-ktīr wāḍiḥ inno in-nās ʿam titağğih inno, ēh, li-l-assaf maḥṣūr fī baʿḍ il-taḫaṣṣuṣāt ilā l-ʾān, hiyye ʿalā l-aġlab il-IT aw baʿḍ mağālāt il-handase. W-lākin yalli mnitmannā inno yitwassaʿ ʿalā kəll il-mağālāt yalli fīha baṭāle. Aw ḥatta yaʿni inno yṣīr fī solutions la… yaʿni tidʿam ḫallīna nəḥkī il-mağālāt il-insāniyye, aw il-mağālāt iṭ-ṭibbiyye… yalli aqall fīhā ṯaqāfet il-startups.

Question 6

Halla' hād ašī bigdar aḥkī inno yaʿni halla' il-luġa il-inglīziyye ana bi-ra'ī it is essential; lāzem yitkūn ʿand in-nās ʿalā l-aqall maʿrife fīha aw il-qudra inno byitʿāmalu fīha. Its an international language; w wuğūd il-internet ʿam yifruḍ ʿalā n-nās inno yitʿāmalu bi-hayy l-luġa. Ḫuṣūṣṣan əza mā fī content professional bi-l-ʿarabī n-nās yballšu yigra'u bi-l-inglīzī. Wa-lākin maʿ hēk, il-waḍʿa šwayy ġayr bi-l-Urdun. Yaʿni fī ʿindna ktīr ḥarakāt ḫilāl is-sentēn yalli fātū ʿam tedʿam il-waṭan il-ʿarabī ʿam tedʿam našr il-content il-ʿarabī w-tidʿam, yaʿni btitwaffar la-n-nās il-content yalli henne btiḥtāğo bi-l-ʿarabī. Zayy mumken nəḥkī Wamḍa miṯāl ʿalā had ašī inno btitwaffar content li-l-entrepreneurs bi-l-ʿarabī. Ana already fī ʿindī mawqiʿa ismo Techno Eco Net ʿam

bisāʿid bardo il-entrepreneur bi-muḥtawā technology w-tikanī bi-l-internet, w-baʿmel bardo barnāmiǧ ʿalā Youtube bi-hād il-mawḍūʿ. [...] Ṣār aḥsan bi-ktīr bi-l-Urdun. Zamān kān ḫallīna n'ūl tisʿīn bi-l-miyye mən in-nās byiḥkū ʿarabīzī, bass halla' hum aqall, yumken tlātīn bi-l-miyye. In-nās ṣāru byiḥku yā inglīzi yā ʿarabī.

Question 7

Akbar ḫōf inno ḫallīna nəḥkī il-waḍʿa is-syāsī taʿa duwal tāniye w bi-t-tāli...w kamān ahamm ʿāmil min awāmil it-taṭawwur il-iqtiṣādī which is il-amn. Yaʿni lāzem ykūn il-amn mawǧūd bi-ayy balad bi-l-ʿālam ʿalā asās annha tigdar taṭawwar w-tibdaʿ w ykūn fīha infrastructure la-l-entrepreneurs. Hād il-ḫōf tabaʿī... Il-Amal bšūfha bi-š-šabāb, bi-n-nās yalli beddhon yġayyru, yalli mawǧūdīn bi-wāqiʿa miš ʿāǧebhum, bi'aṯṯru, beddon yġayyruh fīh... w-ʿam biǧdum ṭāqithum bi hād il-mawḍūʿ. W-bardo yaʿni ʿam yḥāwlu bišakl aw bi-āḫar yinsū ayy furuqāt bēnhum faqaṭ la-hadaf wāḥid, sāmiʿ yalli huwwe ʿindhum ʿalā l-aqall yartiqu l-waṭan il-ʿarabī bi n-nās yalli mawǧūde ʿalā iḫtilāf l-aṭyāf tabaʿithum. W-ana bi-ra'ī hād il-amal, had yalli bit'ammel fī inno yṣīr inšallah.

6.2.13 Participant 13

Conducted	Age	Gender	Background
September 19th, 2015	28	female	Entrepreneur

Question 1

Awwal šī ḥaǧm is-sū', le'anno mətlmā btaʿrif ḥaǧm is-sū' il-Urduni ṣġīr w-nās ʿašān btiṣrufu ʿalā ašiyā muḫtalifa w-ḫāṣṣatan ʿalā l-ašiyā iǧ-ǧdīde yalli beddo yidḫul fīha. Fa š-šābb ʿašān yenǧaḥ fi-l-āḫer beddo yiṭlaʿ ʿalā s-sū' il-regional ʿalā d-duwal il-muǧāwira. Fa-hād beddo ḫebra – huwwe yaʿni lāzem yenǧaḥ fi l-Urdun ʿašān yiṭlaʿ barra.

Question 2

Fī ibdāʿ, fī afkār ǧdīde ʿam teṭlaʿ... ʿašān tinǧaḥ hayy l-afkār, lāzem kūn fī market kwayyis ʿašān yidfaʿ. Le'anno yistawʿib hayy l-afkār, ʿašān yāḫod is-service iǧ-ǧdīd aw il-product iǧ-dīd. Sa'altnī ʿan it-taḥaddiyyāt, w-ana šāyfe 'inno iš-šabāb ʿandhum afkār, bass lamma beddo yibda'u ywāǧih taḥaddī. Mawḍūʿ inno il-lack of support, w it-tāni inno l-market ṣġīr ktīr ʿašān yistawʿib afkārhum hayy. Fa-lāzem beddhum yiṭlaʿu... Kamān iš-šabāb yalli dāḫlīn ktīr bi-mawḍūʿ il-internet w-šāyif šū ṣāyer barra w-šū l-businesses yalli bitṣīr barra hadōl ʿam yaʿmalu ʿam yibnu mašārīʿ ǧdīde bidaḫḫil šī muḫtalif – taṭwīr il-muǧtamaʿ w-taṭwīr ḥatta iḥtiyaǧāthu w-ṭarīqat tafkīrha. Miš bass yaʿni – okay, ʿam mnəḥkī ʿan mawḍūʿ il-environment w il-renewable energy, w ġayra; hayy kullha specifics. Bass law ḥakēna šwayy broad, generally, hayy l-afkār btitṭawwar il-muǧtamaʿ. Fa-hād yalli ʿam bšūfo il-impact el more broad, yalli ʿam byaʿmilha iš-šarikāt in-nāši'a yalli btibnā min iš-šabāb, miš mən il-ašḫāṣ li-kbār. Hiyye šarikāt miš taqlidiyye, ašya

ğdīde, btitsaffi la-taṭwīr il-muğtamaʿ w-ḫalq iḥtiyāğāt ğdīde w ᵊtsāʿid il-muğtamaʿ inno yuwāqib il-muğtamaʿāt l-ʿālam il-awwal bi-šakl akbar.

Question 3

Ana mumken mā ykūn ana l-insān is-ṣaḥīḥ, ṣīrt hōn min sene. Bass bi-l-muğtamaʿāt l-ʿarabiyye bi-šakl ʿām w-tağribti bi-Libya bi-šakl ḫāṣṣ, məṭlmā ḥakēt enta, inno wuğūd il-internet w is-social media ḫaffif miš bass il-ḥukm kamān il-media, ḫallāha more horiziontal. Mā ʿādat inno btinšir maʿlūme w-ḫallaṣ, intahā l-mawḍūʿ. Fī source of information tāni. Fa aṣbaḥ mawḍūʿ il-maʿrife w-il-ʿilm bi-l-iʿlām w-syāsa muṭāḥ la-l-ğamīʿ. W-kull ḥada byiʾdar inno yintaqid maṯalan, yitḥammil masʾuliyyat intiqādo, baʿdēn yintaqid bi-l-public. Byiʾder yʾaṯṯur fī n-nās bi afkāro, in public. Yalli beddo byaʿmil tawʿiyye ʿalā šī muʿayyan, siwā in kān politics aw ġēro, fa-kān is-social media fataḥtlo il-maṣāḥa, yʿabber ʿan arāʾo w-ḫalli illo mutābaʿīn, w-nās btiqbal arāʾo w-yitaṯṯar; btismaʿ minno w-ykūn il-source il-awwal illak aḥyānan.

Question 4

Ṣaḥḥ, maẓbūṭ, maẓbūṭ ktīr. Zamān kān il-insān yalli kān beddo yitwaẓẓaf aw il-šaḫṣ yalli beddo waẓẓif byisʾal in-nās yalli ḥawalē, yumken miš ʿāref iš-šaḫṣ il-kwayyis. Hallaʾ wāḥid yumken yḥuṭṭ post ʿa-LinkedIn, ʿa-Bayt aw Aḫṭabūṭ. W-ḥatta Facebook, w-nās ğāyīn w-biʾaddimu, yumken yiḫtār. Fa-l-internet ʾaddā ila taqlīl ḥağm il-wāṣṭa aw ḫalaq nawʿ tāni min il-wāṣṭa. Hallaʾ l-wāḥid yalli beddo byaʿmel ayy šī – inno maššī muʿāmale, yumken yisʾal, ḥatta fi l-Facebook min aṣḥābo min il-friendlist tabaʿo inno mīn mumken ysāʿidnī fi-l-mawḍūʿ l-fūlāni.

Question 5

Fi trend. Bi-šakl ḫāṣṣ id-dawle aw il-ḥukūme btaʿmilha trend, yšağğaʿu l-entrepreneurship. Bi duwal tāniye la, lessa l-entrepreneurship biḫawwif. Hallaʾ ʿandna fī Libya maṯalan, iḍṭarr in-nās, mā ʿād fī ḥukūme tadfaʿ rawātib, mā ʿād fī ayy šī. Il-Urdun muḫtalif il-mawḍūʿ, fi l-Urdun in-nās ʿam yiftaḥu businesses leʾanno šāfu inno yiḥṣalu ʿalā musāʿade, fī kurshāt w yaʿni. Fa il-entrepreneurship miš bass maṣāri, kamān furaṣ la n-networking w ġēra.

Question 6

Ana šāyfe inno bi-ṣiffa ʿāma inno yalli beddo ayy šī ʿindo ʿalāʾa maʿ il-internet ʿan it-teknologiya, lāzem istiḫdām professionel il-awwal ykūn il-luġa l-ingliziyya miš il-ʿarabiyya. Il-luġa l-ʿarabiyye ṣāret yiṭawwar yumken ana bəḥkī maʿk bi-l-ʿarabī bass fī terms inglīzi. W ṣār fī community yalli hiyye il-muḫtalat ktīr, aw aṣlan mā btəḥki ʿarabī. Hād loss kbīr ʿala l-luġa l-ʿarabiyye leʾanno miš bitwāqib it-taṭawwur il-ʿilmi yalli ṣāyir bi-l-ʿālam. W-min aṣ-ṣaʿb inno… yaʿni il-luġa biṭṭawwar lammā in-nās yalli min ʿandha hum yalli yibdaʿdīn it-technology; it-tiknoloğiya mafrūḍ ykūn bi-luġat ahlha.

Question 7

Akbar amal: Ma ʿād yṣīr mətlmā ḥakēna zamān, inno il-ḥudūd yalli šayfīna hallaʾ. At-taʿaṣṣub la-maṣāḥa ǧeografiyya, la-ḥudūd muʿayyana, la-waṭan bi-šakl ʿām. Nās, yumken law beddha titʿaṣṣab titʿaṣṣab la-fikr, titʿaṣṣab – miš la-lawn bašra aw hayy l-ašyia! Al-amal yalli ʿandi inno hayy l-ḥudūd btinšāl tamāman, w inno n-nās itṣīr itšūfu la-baʿḍha ka-insān; mā tšūf diyānto aw luġato aw šaklo aw il-ethnicity aw libso aw hēk, la. Tšūf il-insān min ǧuwwa, fikrto. W-baʿdēn kəll il-ašya tṣāl [ʔ]. W-hād bitmanna la-l-ʿālam miš bass la-l-ʿālam il-ʿarabī.

Abstract (English)

Throughout the Middle East and North Africa a wave of entrepreneurship is gaining momentum. This thesis investigates the question as to whether a silent revolution takes place, led by entrepreneurs and supported the widespread availability of the internet. To understand the potential economic, political and social implications of entrepreneurship for the region, key demands of the Arab uprisings 2010/11 are revisited. Assessing cultural, historical and institutional features that lie behind the current challenges of the Arab world it is argued that the tech-empowered digital generation is indeed about to overcome key obstacles that held the Arab world back.

This is partially supported by field research in Amman, Jordan. Events, interviews and a look into the change of the spoken language all support the notion of profound changes taking place. Yet entrepreneurship does not happen outside of the economic, legal and social reality. The future has to show whether the observations discussed here marked the beginning of a successful revolution. The degree to which the "youth bulge" will prove to be a curse or a blessing depends largely on the opportunities provided to the youth to unleash their potential. If MENA manages to move forward, entrepreneurship will play a central role both as driver and beneficiary of progress. Being of such importance, entrepreneurship in the region should receive increased attention by observers, researchers and policy makers.

Abstract (German)

Unternehmertum im Nahen Osten und Nordafrika nimmt an Fahrt auf. Die vorliegende Arbeit geht der Frage nach ob eine stille Revolution stattfindet, angetrieben von Unternehmensgründern und unterstützt von der weitverbreiteten Verfügbarkeit des Internet. Um die möglichen wirtschaftlichen, politischen und gesellschaftlichen Bedeutungen des Unternehmertums für die Region besser zu verstehen werden die zentralen Forderungen der Aufstände 2010/11 noch einmal betrachtet. Kulturelle, historische und institutionelle Besonderheiten die verantwortlich sind für die gegenwärtigen Herausforderungen der arabischen Welt werden sodann beurteilt. Darauf aufbauend wird argumentiert dass die „Generation Internet" von Technologie in die Lage versetzt wird die Lösung von Kernproblemen in Angriff zu nehmen welche die arabische Welt zurückgehalten haben.

Dies deckt sich zumindest teilweise mit den Ergebnissen einer Feldforschung in Amman, Jordanien. Veranstaltungen, Interviews und ein Blick auf die Veränderung der gesprochenen Sprache stützen alle die Annahme das grundlegende Veränderungen stattfinden. Entrepreneurship findet jedoch nicht außerhalb der ökonomischen, rechtlichen und sozialen Realität statt. Und so kann nur die Zukunft zeigen inwiefern die hier behandelten Beobachtungen den Beginn einer erfolgreichen Revolution darstellen. Ob der „Jugendüberschuss" sich als Fluch oder Segen herausstellt hängt maßgeblich davon ab wie weit der Jugend Möglichkeiten eingeräumt werden ihr Potential zu entfalten. Wenn es Nahost und Nordafrika gelingt voranzukommen wird Unternehmertum eine Schlüsselrolle zukommen, sowohl als treibende Kraft als auch Nutznießer von Veränderung und Fortschritt. Aufgrund seiner großen Bedeutung ist es Beobachtern, Forschern und Entscheidungsträgern angeraten dem Thema Entrepreneurship in der Region künftig noch mehr Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken.

Curriculum vitae

About myself

Passionate about the past and the future of the Arab world.

Drawing on my extensive training in both **Middle Eastern Studies** (history, society, politics) and **International Business Administration** (strategy, research, emerging markets) I became interested in **private sector development** and **entrepreneurship ecosystem analysis**. I believe in the potential of building inclusive knowledge-based societies in MENA.

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Work experience

Since 09/2015	**Research Associate** Wamda Research Lab (WRL) | Beirut – Amman – Dubai
03/2015-06/2015	**Research Analyst** (Internship) Wamda Research Lab (WRL) | Amman (Jordan)

Education

10/2013-02/2016	Master of Arts: **Arabic Studies** University of Vienna | Vienna (Austria)
10/2012-12/2015	Individual Bachelor: **International Business Administration** in consideration of Middle Eastern Studies Vienna University of Economics and Business | Vienna (Austria)
10/2010-09/2013	Bachelor of Arts: **Oriental Studies** University of Vienna| Vienna (Austria)

Studies abroad

07/2015-08/2015	**International Summer University** Copenhagen Business School | Copenhagen (Denmark)
02/2015-06/2016	**Arabic for Speakers of other languages** University of Jordan | Amman (Jordan)
09/2014	**International Summer University** Institute for International Business Vienna | Budva (Montenegro)
08/2012	**Arabic Language Program** International Language School | Cairo (Egypt)

Social involvement

09/2009-08/2010	**Voluntary social year** Caritas e.V., Kurklinik Stella Maris | Kühlungsborn (Germany)

Languages German, English, Standard Arabic, Dialect of the Levant