The division of the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) to make the "Watch report on economic and social rights in the Arab countries" centered on informal labor was a major challenge to which the team had to be faced after the events of the «Arab Spring». Tarek el-Taiby, Mohammed Bouazizi, who ignited it, was not unemployed. He was a street hawker in the peripheral area of the Tunisian state. He neither benefited from any form of development that guaranteed his human dignity, nor was he a wage earner in the labor force, and committing suicide by burning himself was a result of suppression precisely because he was «informal» and should be subject to the laws in force, those of the state and the «law» of subsistence. It is thus clear that addressing this challenge is at the heart of addressing development issues in the Arab countries.

The present report highlights the factors that have led to the expansion of informal labor in Arab countries outside the agricultural labor. It puts the reasons in the context of «open» and neo-liberal and human rights, which began in the 1970s, coinciding with many phenomena, the «youth wave» of migration, the growth of large waves of emigration to many Arab countries, labor migration or asylum migration. Therefore, the growth rates of the urban labor force were lower than the overall population growth rates have declined significantly.

In many countries, a «youth tsunami» requires consistent voluntary social policies to create legally linked to labor rights, but also to development, especially to the urbanization of «atmosphere» in suburbs and cities, and peripheral areas of the country where informal labor has spread. The report monitors some of the overall data according to United Nations organizations. The population of Arab countries exceeds 380 million in 2015, and demographic growth rates have declined significantly in recent years. However, the population of Gulf countries has doubled, thanks to migrant labor, while the Gulf population represented now 1/4 of the total population of the Arab countries against 1/6 in 1950. Also, all Arab countries were not aware of the «youth wave» during the first Gulf War. They reached the peak of the youth wave in 1975 during its civil war, while countries such as Yemen, Syria and Jordan are currently witnessing it. Residents of many countries have also completed their urban relocation in the cities (Gulf States, Lebanon), while rural exodus to the cities accelerate in other countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Syria and Yemen) and is accelerating in Egypt and Sudan. In all these latter cases, the urban population is growing at a much higher rate than the demographic growth rate.

In spite of the general weakness of women’s participation to the economy, the Arab labor force is increasing annually by 3 million, down from a peak of 4 million due to current crises. Most of this increase is not due to economic participation. The largest increase is seen in Gulf countries, while the labor force has now accounts rate 9/12 compared to only 9/12 in 1990. Of course, most of this increase is composed of migrant labor. In contrast, some countries are experiencing a decrease in economic participation, especially for women, as a result of rural exodus to cities. Here, attention must be given to the impact of migrant refugees on reducing the participation rate, especially women, and the impact of migrant labor, as in Gulf countries, on increasing this measurement. Women themselves are less likely to be involved in any demographic data, but on comparing the number of new annual arrivals to the labor force (3 million Arabs) with the number and quality of the labor force. Data provided by the International Labor Organization (IL) showed that the proportion of self-employment out of the total labor force, which is often 12% to 20% in the Arab World, as well as in Jordan and Egypt, while it rises in Sudan and Mauritania to about 40%. The general trend seems to be towards an increase in self-employment, especially in informal labor is declining in many countries. However, the trend has risen again in Syria and Yemen; both countries plunged into civil war and conflict, Morocco, a country witnessing significant proportions (35 to 50%) of contributing family labor. In all cases, many Arab countries are experiencing high rates of migration, that is, men and women, witnessing significant proportions (35 to 44%) in Egypt. The report therefore relies on the absence of social coverage, particularly health insurance, as a standard for measuring the informal economy and informal workers. In Gulf countries, data on this coverage remain fragmented and non-periodic, requiring special effort in this report. Attention is also directed to child labor, with UNICEF monitoring significant rates in many Arab countries (between 1/2 % and 1/2 % in most of these countries, 1/2 % in Mauritania, 1/2 % in Yemen and 1/2 % in Sudan for population of less than 15 years).

Based on national and regional reports, the report examines informal working conditions in 13 Arab countries, showing the procedures and statistics of labor, social coverage, particularly health insurance, as a standard for measuring the informal economy and informal workers. In Gulf countries, data on this coverage remain fragmented and non-periodic, requiring special effort in this report. Attention is also directed to child labor, with UNICEF monitoring significant rates in many Arab countries (between 1/2 % and 1/2 % in most of these countries, 1/2 % in Mauritania, 1/2 % in Yemen and 1/2 % in Sudan for population of less than 15 years).

The present report highlights the factors that have led to the expansion of informal labor in Arab countries outside the agricultural labor. It puts the reasons in the context of «open» and neo-liberal and human rights, which began in the 1970s, coinciding with many phenomena, the «youth wave» of migration, the growth of large waves of emigration to many Arab countries, labor migration or asylum migration. Therefore, the growth rates of the urban labor force were lower than the overall population growth rates have declined significantly. In many countries, a «youth tsunami» requires consistent voluntary social policies to create legally linked to labor rights, but also to development, especially to the urbanization of «atmosphere» in suburbs and cities, and peripheral areas of the country where informal labor has spread. First, the report monitors some of the overall data according to United Nations organizations. The population of Arab countries exceeds 380 million in 2015, and demographic growth rates have declined significantly in recent years.

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informal labor is essentially an option. Many young people have no choice but to engage in any type of labor that provides for living, even if it is vulnerable or temporary. Employers benefit from their work through the informal labor market to evade formality. Thus, all reference studies monitor the higher ratios of informal labor among young people, women, and children. In the Gaza Strip, it is estimated that 80% of workers are in the informal sector, with the highest share of women (as well as male domestic workers), wage labor also plays in the case of females, which sheds a special light on the cultural perspective of women’s labor participation to the labor force. With permission from such participation, in the informal sector because their waged labor is unprotected? And because the labor market is full of male workers and is characterized by a higher and higher rate of informal labor (as well as child labor) in Arab countries. This contradicts one of the stereotypes Arab countries under study are higher than those mentioned family labor and child labor issues were also highlighted. The female workers (as well as male domestic workers), waged some migrants without a residence permit. Some traditional administrations (workplace). Small-scale workshops, often in urban settings. The workplace is a fundamental issue of the informal sector. With more than 90% of the total number of newcomers to the labor force was nearly 280,000, also distributed between self-employment, a sector (IS IT INEVITABLE?)

1 In relation to the increase of oil prices after the 1973 war, and the significant increase of Arab Watch Report on Economic and Social Rights

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The United Nations has raised the issue of informal labor, particularly through ILO, and has been included in Sustainable Development goals. 2 The objective is to «reduce income inequality within and among countries». The United Nations organizations rely on statistical data, provided by most countries, to measure the trend towards Sustainable Development goals. In this chapter, we will review informal labor in the Arab countries.

1. INFORMAL LABOR: IS IT INEVITABLE?

Arab societies did not witness the industrial revolution that Europe witnessed in the nineteenth century, which had laid down the working relations between the «owners» of this labor or the «employers» who own the means of production, and the workers who only have «labor force» to sell. Then, labor struggles came to gain these workers’ rights to «wage labor».

Arab societies have known this type of labor relations since ancient times, especially in the commercial field which was historically rooted in cities and in rural areas through forced labor, without clear rights for workers. Then the independence period emerged in the middle of the 20th century. There was a great rush to create State institutions and to engage in the industrial process, which would allow them, as well as to regulate agricultural relations (agrarian reform). This went hand in hand with a widespread dissemination of employment relations. The transition occurred in peri-urban areas. In line with all these frameworks, we have evolved to regulate labor relations and to grant workers, especially of the civil service, a set of personal, social, and political rights, especially that ILO, which had emerged after the First World War, had set up rules, conventions and recommendations that are to be observed by States and introduced in their own laws.

However, none of the Arab countries could create an industrial development revolution, except under the globalization, and information and communications technology. In the 1970s, the policies of opening up trade increased. The Arab countries are committed to what they call «deconstructed» state, privatized many government enterprises, especially those that provide public services, and continue to advocate for policies of outsourcing or protectionism recommended by the International Monetary Fund, i.e. decreasing investment and current budgets. Contrary to the slogans behind openness, the domestic and foreign private sector did not make investments so that the contraction of governments, Arab economies have turned into rental spaces, especially around natural resources and real estate. These policies were accompanied by policies that researchers call «structural reforms», or the «marketization» era with two phenomena. The first phenomenon was demographic; the population growth witnessed by Arab countries, especially after 2000, has had a significant influence on productive capacity. The second is the «youth wave». In other words, the proportion of young people in university-age and in the labor force has become greater proportion of the population. The same happened in Europe when a baby boom took place after World War II in the 1940s and led to May 1948 in the «Population explosion» in MENA. GCC countries have not really experienced this «youth wave» as much as they have seen the recruitment of migrant workers on demand, in exchange for governments, to gradually become the majority of the population. The second phenomenon was socio-economic, with the appearance of the growing middle class and the emergence of informal sector. Small farm holdings were no longer able secure the livelihood of the second or third generation of their dependent family members, as a result, they entered the market of the world, agricultural industries and modern technologies, with great neglect of the development of rural areas, and the «youth» is the period of independence. The youth wave has become a «youth tsunami», with urban population growth rates well above overall demographic growth rates.

This urban «youth tsunami» was not met by a suitable size of «decent» employment opportunities, neither in the public sector nor in the private sector, in accordance with the frameworks established since independence. The majority of young people, and many older people, engaged in waged or unpaid labor or the informal sector, outside the frameworks of formal labor relations. This is precisely the urban «unstructured employment», also called «informal», which represents now an important share of the labor force in the Arab countries, especially if we exclude social service and agricultural labor (the latter is also a traditional and informal labor). This will be tackled in details in the following chapters. The so-called «labor market» has been divided into two parts, sometimes separated by an abyss: formal and informal employment. The main reason for the gap between the annual employment requirements of the «youth tsunami» and the number of«decent» annual available employment opportunities, including access to social and economic rights, is minimal. But this is not the only reason. Modern technologies reduce the need for labor, especially the skilled ones, and have destructive effects on«decent» jobs often absent from the literature of modernization, development and innovation. On the other hand, informal workers are concentrated in a urban setting that has also grown rapidly and informally, in slums that surpassed the potential of states and local authorities in terms of urban and regional regulation. Therefore, «informal employment» cannot be addressed without taking into consideration all these phenomena, with «unstructured urbanization», i.e. random urbanization, and gaps that have expanded significantly between peri-urban and urban areas.

It is remarkable that the uprisings of the «Arab Spring» are largely due to the outbreak of structural instability. Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto pointed out that what is happening in the Middle East is the revolution of the informal, those who have become outside the codified system and want to work in the private sector. It is allowed that a large number of young people can integrate them. However, this system has not yet been designed. 2 De Soto had a role in making some Arab policies on informal labor before the «Arab Spring», and major economic research centers in the Arab countries, as well as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, did not all express concern about the impact of the informal labor on the Arab countries.

2. ARAB INFORMAL LABOR AS WATCHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has raised the issue of informal labor, particularly through ILO, and has been included in Sustainable Development goals. 2 The objective is to «reduce income inequality within and among countries». The United Nations organizations rely on statistical data, provided by most countries, to measure the trend towards Sustainable Development goals. In this chapter, we will review informal labor in the Arab countries.

Arab Watch Report on Economic and Social Rights
0.1 Population and demographic growth

In 1950, the total population of the Arab countries was 70 million (i.e. 12.8% of the world population). It reached 380 million in 2015, and the United Nations expects this number to exceed 630 million in 2050 (2.5% of the world's population), almost the entire population of the European continent. By 2025, the total population of the Arab countries will be 396 million, and it is expected to reach around 438 million by 2030. The majority of Arab countries witnessed a rapid increase in their population, most notably in the Gulf Arab States, as the population increased from 5.5 million in 1970 to 27 million in 2015. The UAE witnessed a second wave at the beginning of the third millennium. Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia experienced the rapid increase in population (8% of the world's population). It reached 63 million in 2015, and the United Nations expects this number to exceed 630 million in 2050 (2.5% of the world's population) almost the entire population of the European continent. By 2025, the total population of the Arab countries will be 396 million, and it is expected to reach around 438 million by 2030. The majority of Arab countries witnessed a rapid increase in their population, most notably in the Gulf Arab States, as the population increased from 5.5 million in 1970 to 27 million in 2015. The UAE witnessed a second wave at the beginning of the third millennium. Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia experienced the rapid increase in population (8% of the world's population). It reached 63 million in 2015, and the United Nations expects this number to exceed 630 million in 2050 (2.5% of the world's population).

2.2 Youth wave

Demographic growth resulted in baby boom jumps that later turned into youth waves. But the Arab countries did not know this youth wave in the same circumstances and periods. Between 1950 and 2015, the population of some Arab countries grew considerably, but this growth was accelerating especially in the Gulf countries (Figure 1). The UAE population has doubled (30 times, Qatar 89 times, Kuwait 25 times, Bahrain 12 times and Saudi Arabia and Oman 10 times). Thus, the distribution of population among the Arab countries changed (Figure 2).

Most of this population increase resulted from emigration from other Arab countries, but even more so after the 1970s from non-Arab countries, especially Asian ones. It is worth noting that the concept of population includes not only residing nationals but all residents. The migrations of citizens abroad, as well as the waves of immigration to the concerned country are taken into account, whether it is a migration of refugees or of labor.

Thus, demographic and social comparisons cannot be conducted in the same way between Gulf States and Levant, Nile Valley and Maghreb countries. Only Jordan witnessed a demographic acceleration similar to that of Gulf countries with the influx of large numbers of Palestinian refugees (17 times between 1952 and 2015) who represent now a major part of the population. The present report will therefore make a distinction in the analysis between The Levant, Nile Valley and Maghreb countries on one hand and Gulf States on the other hand.

Figure 2.3 Youth evolution (24-15) out of the active population (64-15) in Arab countries Source: Population Division - United Nations

Gulf States witnessed it early in the 1970s and its effects disappeared in recent decades, with the exception of Oman which witnessed a second wave at the beginning of the third millennium. Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia experienced the peak of this wave in the late 1970s, when the proportion of youth aged 24-15 years out of the working age population (64-15 years) reached more than 24%. Sudan and Libya saw the peak only in the early 1990s with levels reaching 16%. Between them, the peak of Egypt in the early 1980s was only 15% (Figure 2.3). The wave of youth in Levant countries is more acute and late: Palestine 85% (1985-1994), Iraq (1990-1994), Jordan (1990-1994), and Syria (1995-1997) (45% the longest period). Only Lebanon peaked earlier (1975 at the beginning of its civil war) with a slightly weaker peak of 16%. Yemen has reached a peak of 16% in the period 2000-2005. This means that since 1990, Arab countries have seen an increase in the number of young people (24-15 years) exceeding one million per year (640,000 for Gulf States and 890,000 for Levant and Maghreb countries). If rehabilitated and integrated into the labor force, they would have been an asset for these countries, knowing that this percentage will turn significantly after 2030.

2.3 Rural exodus to cities and urban population growth

Gulf States had the fastest growing population in cities (Figure 2.4). Only Oman, the country with the largest agricultural sector among them, is currently witnessing rural exodus to cities. In the Maghreb, Libya and Western Sahara witnessed developments similar to the Gulf, while other countries are now experiencing accelerated rural exodus to the cities as a result of social and economic changes. Lebanon and Jordan were unique among Levant countries in terms of early population concentration in cities. The first country saw its exodus transform itself during its civil war, and the second saw the concentration of Palestinian refugees in camps that turned into urban cities. Iraq has stopped its development with the wars it has known since 1980, while rural exodus to cities continued to accelerate in Syria and Yemen. In contrast, Egypt and Sudan are expected to see an accelerated migration in the coming decades. Thus, most of the Arab countries experienced between 2005 and 2015 high population growth, in many cases surpassing overall population growth rates.

2.4 Labor force evolution

According to ILO data and its future estimates, the labor force in the Arab countries in 2015 reached 127 million (Figure 2.5) and is expected to reach 141 million in 2020. The total annual increase reached 3.9 million in Libya, but dropped to 2.9 million in 2015 and this rate is expected to remain the same in the next decade. The largest increase is witnessed in Gulf countries, the same as for the population. Their labor force represented 12% of the total Arab labor force in 1990, but reached 17% in 2010 and 19% in 2015. The Maghrebs share of the total labor force declined from 29% to 24% between 1990 and 2015 (Figure 2.6). Therefore, Arab countries witnessed an average annual increase in the labor force of 3.4 million between 2006 and 2010 (Figure 6), including 24% for women. But this annual average increase fell to 2.9 million between 2011 and 2015, including 14% for women, especially since Syria and Libya have lost a significant part of their labor force, and the increase rate has diminished in countries like Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, which can clearly be linked to the ramifications of the «Arab Spring». Even Gulf countries, which account for one-third of the overall growth of the Arab labor force, have been relatively slow to grow their labor force, from 16.5% in 2006 to 3.6% in 2015-2016 for Qatar, and from 12.8 to 11.5 for the UAE, and from 19.8 to 10.8 for Bahura...

While the share of women in the labor force has improved in many Arab countries, many countries are seeing a drop (such as Egypt, Sudan, Syria and Oman), with the overall share of women in the Arab labor force almost constant for more than two decades (Figure 2.7). It should be noted that the development of the labor force follows many variables. Rural exodus to cities, if accelerated, may reduce the overall labor force of a country, as a part of the agricultural labor force moves to cities and remains away from economic participation. This phenomenon affects women significantly. Internal conflicts, embargos and wars can take out large parts of the population from the labor force, both due to reduced opportunities of economic participation or displacement and emigration. It is worth noting that in the latter case, women would come out of the population of the country of origin and appear within the population of the host country. On the other hand, it should be noted that the high rate of participation of women in the labor force in some Arab countries results from the employment of migrant women. The majority of non-refugee migrant women are in the working age and is effectively working. Thus, despite the slowdown in the growth of the labor force in recent years as a result of the repercussions of the «Arab Spring», Arab countries today need to create about 3 million jobs annually to keep unemployment at existing levels, including nearly one million jobs in the Gulf and 500 thousand in Maghreb countries.

2.5 Workers and unemployment in Arab countries

The number of workers in Arab countries in 2010 reached 101 million, or 19% of the total population. Women constitute 31% of workers. In other words, the overall unemployment rate increased from 10.1% to 11.7% between these two years (Figure 2.8), while it declined for women from 14% to 12% although they already had high unemployment rates (Figure 2.9).

11. This expression will be used in the report to refer to non-GCC Levant countries.
12. Maghreb countries include Algeria, Morocco, Western Sahara, Tunisia, Mauritania, & Libya.
13. The recent estimations are for 2015 and 2016, go to http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/}
14. ILO data will include seasonal and circular labor migrants. For example, the Syrian workers who come to Lebanon to work in one season and return to Lebanon. This will affect the size of the active labor force moves to cities and remains away from economic participation. This phenomenon affects women significantly. Internal conflicts, embargos and wars can take out large parts of the population from the labor force, both due to reduced opportunities of economic participation or displacement and emigration. It is worth noting that in the latter case, women would come out of the population of the country of origin and appear within the population of the host country. On the other hand, it should be noted that the high rate of participation of women in the labor force in some Arab countries results from the employment of migrant women. The majority of non-refugee migrant women are in the working age and is effectively working. Thus, despite the slowdown in the growth of the labor force in recent years as a result of the repercussions of the «Arab Spring», Arab countries today need to create about 3 million jobs annually to keep unemployment at existing levels, including nearly one million jobs in the Gulf and 500 thousand in Maghreb countries.

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opportunities, i.e. 700,000 less new arrivals. In the Gulf, job opportunities were almost equivalent to those of expatriates, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Oman. It is worth mentioning that the majority of expatriates in the Gulf are workers who are recruited from abroad. Other Arab countries are experiencing a gap between the numbers of newcomers and created jobs.

2.6 Informal labor and own account employment

ILO does not provide accurate statistics and expectations for informal labor in Arab countries, especially since most of these countries do not conduct surveys and do not publish data in this regard.[15] In addition, the measurement of the size of own account workers can give an initial idea of informal labor (in developing countries, it is about half of the informal labor, and the second half is for the

to those of Gulf States. In general, there is a decline in own account employment especially with the declining share of agricultural labor), with the exception of countries such as Syria, Yemen and Libya, which are going through a war, as well as Morocco and Egypt – relatively.

In addition, data show a large size of contributing family workers in Morocco, equal to that of those who work for their own account. The same applies to Egypt and Iraq, but to a lesser degree.

Own account women are more numerous than men in most Arab countries (figure 2.12), especially in Egypt. Women are also characterized by a large proportion of family contributing workers (unwaged in general); this is noticeable in Egypt, Iraq, Morocco and Libya, and outperforms that of women working for their own account.

Based on these partial data which include agricultural labor and employment in the government sector, a preliminary reading shows two parts of informal labor (i.e. own account and contributing family labor) that represent in non-GCC Arab countries between one quarter and half of male workers, and often half of female workers. The question remains about whether waged workers in general, and migrant workers in Gulf States, should be classified as formal or informal in terms of obtaining their rights.

2.7 Labor and poverty

ILO classifies poverty data at work for most Arab countries into two categories: extreme poverty (less than $1.9 per day in purchasing power parity) and average poverty (between $1.9 and $3.1 per day in purchasing power parity) knowing that the figure is linked to the worker’s income and not the family

he supports, and which can be large. According to this data (figures 2.13 and 2.14), the total proportion of both categories does not exceed 420 in GCC countries, with the highest percentage in Bahrain, where the proportion of poor workers reached 11% in 2015, but is declining now. In Kuwait and Oman, the proportion remains 41%. Since 1990, the percentage of poor workers in Maghreb countries declined by less than 22% or even 11% in 2015, from 32% in Morocco, 30% in Mauritania, 24% in Algeria and 92% in Tunisia.

The situation of workers in the Levant is getting worse. In Egypt, for example, the proportion of poor workers was 5.6% in 1990 but dropped to only 4.4% in 2015. Also in Sudan, which has lived a long civil war, the proportion of poor workers decreased from 47.9% in 1990 to 16% in 2015 (contrary to the perceived reality of informal workers who represent the majority of workers). Iraq had almost the same suffering, due to embargo and war. Yemen has witnessed a relative improvement until 1997, but then the situation worsened considerably before the war, and especially during it, and the proportion of poor workers reached 91% in 2015. Data for that year show that only 24% of workers in Syria are poor. Overall, working women are poorer than men, except for Egypt and Mauritania.

Of course, the informality of labor and the lack of access to rights are linked to poverty, and data about poverty at work indicate that the size of informal labor in all Arab countries is much larger than that of own account employment alone.

2.8 Informal labor and health coverage

ILO also observed the large size of both coverage gap, that is, the proportion of people without access to health insurance or free healthcare in hospitals (without gender details). These data are also not documented for countries for only one year[20] – the most recent in 2010 (figure

18. The Economic Research Forum (http://erf.org.eg/index.php) launched an initiative for the open part of the ILO international labor force surveys file is open to access and expanded surveys and other surveys. However, making these data available to the public is un

19. 3.3 quit their jobs for the first time in their life. 20. The documentation year per country is shown in the figure.
In Gulf countries, healthcare covers the whole population; however, it is unclear how foreign migrant workers and their families benefit from this coverage. Only Saudi Arabia has documented that 97% of the population (97.1% of the urban population) is not covered by health insurance. This figure far exceeds the proportion of migrant residents in the country and indicates a large size of informal labor, because workers in the public and private sectors are covered by health insurance. In the Maghreb, Mauritania and Morocco are characterized by high rates of no coverage, reaching more than 50% of the urban population. In Algeria and Tunisia, such proportions are low, particularly for rural areas (and therefore agricultural workers), while before the revolution and the war, Libya enjoyed full health coverage. In Levant and Nile Valley countries, Sudan, Yemen and Lebanon are characterized by a lack of health coverage for more than half of their population. Egypt and Syria are far more underdeveloped in their areas, although the two countries have a widespread free health system since the 1960s. In the remaining part of the report, the lack of health coverage may well be considered as a basic criterion to measure the size of informal labor in Arab countries.

2.9 Child labor
UNICEF considers that child labor is between 5 and 15 years. Thus, the highest percentages (average 2015-2019) among Arab countries are in Sudan (925) followed by Yemen (825) and Mauritania (925). The percentage of child labor in other countries ranges between 7% and 97 (the highest in Egypt). In the Levant, Lebanon and the Nile Valley, these statistics suggest that the rate of child labor is zero. UNICEF also links child labor to the child marriage (percentage of girls married at an age of 15 years). The marriage rates that rise between 9.2% and 15.3% in Mauritania, Sudan and Yemen, but still above 10% in Iraq, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine and Syria.

Figure 7.1 Child labor and child marriage in the Arab countries ([pre-conflict]).

3. THE REALITY OF INFORMAL LABOR IN ARAB COUNTRIES (ACCORDING TO WATCH REPORTS AND OTHER REPORTS)

The watch report relies on studies and reports developed by experts and civil society activists on informal labor conditions in a number of Arab countries: Bahrain from GCC, Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia from the Maghreb; Egypt and Sudan from the Nile Valley; Lebanon and Palestine, Jordan and Yemen from the Levant. A common methodology21 has been used for these national reports. The preparation of the watch report also included regional reports on some key themes covering all countries. This general regional report was complemented by other data drawn from the most recent published results of labor force surveys.

3.1 Informal labor in GCC, Bahrain example
Bahrain’s report underscores the gap between the legalities of Gulf countries in comparison with other Arab countries. The population growth is very high as a result of migration (some of the highest in the Maghreb). Nevertheless, Bahrain does not experience the youth tsunami that many Arab countries are witnessing because most of the workers are over 25 years of age. The number of non-Bahraini males aged 25-39 is five times that of Bahraini males of the same age. Another feature that distinguishes the labor force participation rate is high compared with the average of Arab countries, not only for men but also for women because most of the expatriates are in the formal sector. The phenomenon of encouraging the employment of nationals, especially in government jobs (more than half of Bahraini female workers are in the public sector)22, compared with about one-third of men who are in the formal sector (of men for women in comparison with the average of Arab countries). However, a peculiarity of Bahrain is that the female participation rate is high compared with the participation of men, because the majority of those expatriates are for male workers, and their female relatives or wives work in the formal sector.

In Bahrain, 21% of the total female migrant workers (60% of the total female migrant workers). However, the report did not detect informal waged Bahraini workers in the private sector, but detected productive Bahraini families working informally. Thus, all these informal groups made up between 2% and 12% of the labor force in Bahrain.

On the other hand, Bahrain’s report documented the phenomenon of ‘‘raita’’ employment, which is the problem of resort to the informal economy, which is the resort of those who are concerned with this case are working women in nurseries and kindergartens. However, the report did not detect informal waged Bahraini workers in the private sector, but detected productive Bahraini families working informally. Thus, all these informal groups made up between 2% and 12% of the labor force in Bahrain.

From this report, it is clear that the phenomenon of ‘‘raita’’ employment, which is the problem of resort to the informal economy, which is the resort of those who are concerned with this case are working women in nurseries and kindergartens. However, the report did not detect informal waged Bahraini workers in the private sector, but detected productive Bahraini families working informally. Thus, all these informal groups made up between 2% and 12% of the labor force in Bahrain.

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21. GCC does not provide any data about Palestine.
In 1999, Bahrain ratified Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. However, it does not publish statistics on child labor and how to combat it. But UNICEF reports that 14.6% of children (14-5 years old) work (16.3% for males and 13.5% for females). In all cases, the watch report analysis through the example of Bahrain suggests that informal labor in GCC countries is much broader than what is observed in ILO data and has specificities distinguishing it from the rest of the Arab countries, especially for the national population, and particularly migrant workers who are more numerous than nationals and inflate informal economic participation, and whose rights remain problematic.

The national watch reports included Morocco (including Western Sahara), Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania, without Libya. The population growth rates were much weaker than those of Gulf countries (recently between 3.1% and 4.1% in Morocco, 1.6% and 1.9% in Algeria, 1.0% and 1.1% in Tunisia, and between 1.5% and 5.04% in Libya), and the highest was in Mauritania (2.5% to 2.6%).

In 2010 to 2014, the number of created jobs increased by 14% (i.e. 10.9% of the total waged labor) for women, while the number of created jobs increased by 20% (i.e. 16.7% of the total waged labor) for men. This likely means that part of the waged work in the government sector (thus structured, and in the case of Algeria, 66% of waged labor) is also non-permanent! The available data do not allow measuring it, especially that they do not document well the informal sector institutions.

However, available data sheds some light on the quality of non-permanent employment in the past decade in Algeria, where the number of created jobs increased by 14% over the number of newcomers in 2010-2006 (an increase of only 14% for women), and then was 20% less than the number of newcomers in 2015-2011 according to ILO.

On the other hand, UNICEF detected a high level of child labor in Mauritania (11% for those who are between 5 and 14 years) and in Morocco (1%). And in Mauritania, this is particularly applicable to women, unlike men. Remarkably, child labor is higher in Bahrain than it is in Tunisia, and even for males in Algeria (Figure 3.6).

The case of Algeria

Most of the demand for employment in Maghreb countries is now from Algeria, where the number of workers in 2015 reached 10.6 million, 10% of whom are waged workers (9.2% for women) and 0.2% work for their own account. 9% are employers (8% only for women) and 1% are contributing family workers. This is due to the contraction of agricultural work. The total number of informal workers is not declared in the social security accounts for %19 and %29 in 2005 (46) of all workers (or %33 of those who are not working in agriculture). In other words, informal labor in Algeria accounts for %39 of the total workforce. The official data do not show the contribution of distributions to social security between men and women. However, a report based on 2010 official data showed that 45.8% of female workers are not registered in social security, which represents a significant increase in comparison with %38 in 2005. The overall informal labor rate in Algeria declined between 2005 and 2015. However, this is mainly due to the decline in agricultural labor and family work and to increased employment in the government sector, of all of them significantly, and to a lesser extent to employment support policies. Thus, these informal labor rates if applied to those who do not work in the official data showed that %39 of the total waged labor in 2015 (i.e. 10.6% of the total waged labor) is also non-permanent! The available data do not allow measuring it, especially that they do not document well the informal sector institutions.

For women, informal labor is concentrated in female employers who own %41 of commercial registers and to a lesser degree in own account employment. Informal labor accounts for 52% of Bahmani working females, less than the total for Bahmani males. However, the percentage would be %56 if the government sector is excluded, while %64 of migrant women work informally. Informality is concentrated in domestic labor, and female domestic workers represent %42 of the total number of female migrant workers. Unlike men, their number is less in the waged informal labor, where %61 of female workers also have less than one year in Bahran. Thus, the overall proportion of women’s informal labor reaches %65, or %60 excluding the government sector (table 3.3).

The population growth rate was greatly affected by migration, which was more than 10% annually, before it stopped in some Maghreb countries or changed unevenly (Figure 3.1). Otherwise, the demographic pressure would be greater in Algeria, where urbanization has exceeded 95% of the total population since the early 1980s. The participation of men in the labor force in Mauritania remains lower than Mauritania’s average. The level of women’s participation has improved significantly in the past two decades, but remains weak in Algeria and has recently declined in Morocco and Libya. Therefore, the total annual number of newcomers to the labor force in the Maghreb reached 472 thousand in 2010-2005, rising to 504 thousand in 2005-2010 despite the decline in the size of the labor force in Libya as a result of the war and the diminishing growth in Tunisia after the revolution (figures 3.4 and 3.5).

The overall rate of unemployment has declined, but has increased significantly for young people and those with higher qualifications, especially for women. The National Employment Survey also showed that %39 of the active population never worked (%7). In the job opportunities created by the National Employment Agency from 163 thousand in 2010 to 380 thousand in 2014, the difference may be that ILO’s data are for job opportunities, i.e. being those who have their jobs for a relevant period of time for the end of their period of employment. In this context, subsidized labor contracts, in which the government obligates employers, do not constitute 5% of the unemployed opportunities.
employed versus 19 million, while 19 million Moroccan women are in agriculture compared to only 0.9 million Algerian women). Thousands of illegal African workers were also present in Morocco (especially as the government began to settle their situation in 2014, and counted in that year alone 24,000 settlement requests.

Thus, Morocco’s informal labor is more concentrated in agricultural work of those who work in the (public) government sector), and 18% of working women are informal (90% of non-government female workers). Almost two thirds of waged workers do not have employment contracts, especially in the private sector (70%). Thus, the approximate general picture of informal labor in Morocco is described as a phenomenon that job opportunities created in Morocco have also exceeded the demand in 2010-2016 by 15% and then declined below the demand for employment by 10%.

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3. Informal labor in Nile Valley countries

Nile Valley countries were covered by two watch reports on Egypt and Sudan (North). The total population of these two countries is 6.2 and 20 million, respectively. The labor population growth rates are close (1.2% per year), while growth is expected to decline in Egypt and increase in Sudan, precisely because the levels of employment from the agriculture sector are high levels, 10.4% per year, to normal levels prevailing in Egypt, 4.05. The migrations greatly affected the characteristics of labor in Sudan in the early days of the civil war and after the separation from South Sudan.

The characteristics of the youth boom differ between the two countries, for example, in the Arab countries, Egypt has witnessed it for several decades (from the 1960s until 2010). In Sudan, it was more acute and for a longer period than in Egypt (24-15 years to 64-15 years, still 9.5% in Sudan). This decline is due to Egypt, while the number of newcomers in Sudan increased by 3.4. UNICEF detected the level of child labor (14-5 years) at 17% in Egypt and 42% in Sudan. The total annual number of newcomers to the labor force in the two countries reached 19,000 in 2010-2006, and then fell to 861,000 in the following days, especially for primary workers (25% for Egypt and 42% for Sudan). However, the participation of Sudanese men has declined since 1990 (from 14% to 7% in 2010).

The case of Egypt

The demand for job opportunities in Egypt almost met demand in 2010-2006, and then declined to less than half of the demand in 2015-2011, despite the shrinking demand for more than 2% overall and 5% for women. This is due to course to the repercussions of the Egyptian revolution and the developments that followed. The total monthly demand for labor has remained at the level of population growth over the past decade, at 2.3% per year in total, but has increased to 3.9% per year for women and for the proportion of women aged 64-15 years reaches 47% (only 1% women). Thus, the number of male workers in Egypt in 2012 reached about 24 million, while there were only about 4 million female workers. Estimates of the share of the informal sector of GDP in Egypt are highly variable, and range between 35% and 68%.

It is difficult to have a clear view of the size of the informal sector, despite the existence of important research centers. 87. With the exception of Morocco, where it is not clear if the waged labor is included in the contributing family labor (see Morocco’s paragraph above) and the fact that the number of workers engaged in self-employment or unemployment is not even provided in the household structural surveys, for most of the countries there is a lack of knowledge for the entire informal sector, and for those sharing the same limitations such as Egypt, the percentage of those who work without a contract is higher than the share of workers with a contract.

88. Based on the household survey conducted in 2010. The country analysis of the informal labor force in Egypt and Sudan is based on the result of those who were engaged in self-employment or unemployment. It is done for all those who do not work, or those who work in the informal sector.

The case of Sudan

Sudan lived a long civil war between 1983 and 2005 when a peace agreement was signed ending the conflict. The country is still in the midst of the youth wave with the acceleration of population growth towards the expected 14% of the population is between 15 and 64 years (only 35% of women). Remarkable employment opportunities for women have doubled both between 2011 and 2015 in comparison with the previous period, but the demand for women’s labor has also doubled and the women’s opportunities remained unmet. The last labor force survey conducted in 2011 estimated that 14% of those who did or did not work had no social security, 9% had no social security, and 20% had no protection against work hazards, while women in the government and public sector accounted for 43% of the total workforce in agriculture, forestry and public works. The survey also provided data on the distribution of informal labor in Sudan, with the most severe conditions in South Darfur and the best in Khartoim. Thus, the overall picture of informal labor in Sudan, as seen in figure 3.11, shows an informal labor rate of 18% (17% outside the government sector).

32.5% 35% for women compared to 35.5% for men 82, table 3.8), of whom 14/6 are waged workers. It is worth noting the huge lack of social security in the agricultural sector, reaching 63. More than 60% of men younger than 40 years and 44% of women work in an informal manner 83. Thus, the proportion of unwaged workers outside the government and the public sector is 64%, and is 93% outside agriculture, government and public sector. The approximate general picture of informal labor in Tunisia 84 (as a percentage of total labor) is as in the following table. However, as in the case of Morocco and Latin America, the share of migrants in informal labor and their working conditions are not documented. The size of the informal economy in Tunisia in 2013 was estimated at 53.8% of GDP 85, up from 53.4 before the revolution.
The survey also showed that 130 workers live below the poverty line\[3] and that 93% of workers in fragile and instability situations (6% working women). 333 of children aged 14-15 are also in the labor force, especially those who belong to the nomadic tribes or live in the periphery, i.e. 230 thousand and children at these ages work (especially males). The 2008 survey\[4] showed that children account for 7% of the labor force in Sudan, about 800,000 workers, in rural businesses, often as domestic workers.

Overview of Nile Valley countries

Informal labor rate similar to those of Morocco (figure 3.10), with a greater role for own account employment and less for unwaged family labor. Egypt is characterized by a weak share of women informal labor, but with significant disparities with Tunisia, where women’s economic participation rates are high.

3.4 Informal Labor in the Levant

With 69 million people in 2015, Levant countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen) account for 3% of the world’s population. Levant countries, except for Lebanon, have recently experienced active demographic growth, between 12.5 and 2.8 annually. Then the invasion of Iraq threw hundreds of thousands of immigrants in Syria and Jordan, and displaced a large part of the population in Iraq. This was followed by the volatilities of the Arab Spring and wars in which hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries (about a quarter of the population), emptying most of the Syrian countryside. This came in addition to the devastation caused by these wars and the inability of other countries to absorb the large numbers of refugees. Yemen also experienced a war but most of its internal migrations accelerated with wars and rural areas were emptied in many areas. Migration from these countries has also accelerated outside the region, not only to work in Gulf States, but also in the form of massive influx of refugees to Tunisia in particular. Thus, the wave of Syrian emigration to Europe brought attention to its very large size in 2015 and its repercussions, without mentioning the less continuous waves from Yemen, Iraq, Palestine (especially the Gaza Strip) and even from Lebanon.

The analysis of informal labor in Levant countries allows for following up on the effects of war, major fluctuations, and labor-intensive migrations on labor and informal labor, as well as some necessary ad hoc studies to explore the more effective ways of recentralizing the reconstruction of the economic activity and the labor force.

The case of Iraq:

Iraq has known successive bloody wars since the late 1960s. Among Levant countries, its economy is based on oil revenues, which in 2013 accounted for 4% of GDP and 91% of the government budget. Agriculture has declined significantly in Iraq, with its share of GDP declining from 18% in the 1960s to 15% today, and its workers from 53% to 61% of the total workers (58% for women). Today, less than 20% of the population lives in rural areas. Iraq also suffered from large internal displacement waves, especially during the civil war in 2006 and 2007, which was later exacerbated by the emergence of ISIS.

The Iraqi private sector, with all its components, contributes only to 2% of GDP, meaning that the other three quarters of GDP and therefore the productive ways of reconstruction are mostly informal. This was accompanied by an increase in the share of informal labor for youth groups, 9% for 15-19 years (with an economic participation rate of 18%) and 48% for those between 19 and 24 (with an economic participation rate of 44%), informal labor increases in the governorates of Najaf (3%), Nineveh (47%), Kirkubi (43%) and Muthanna (43%), but remains low in the governorates of Baghdad (4%) and Erbil (6%). Thus, the general picture of informal labor in Iraq is shown in figure 3.15, with a total of 14% of the labor force being informal, mainly from Iraqis, which is still below the level of 33% of the total labor force.

In this context, formal workers represent 47% of waged workers (74% of total workers), 70% of own account workers (99% of total employers), 3.5% of total workers, and all contributing family workers (4%). As for women alone, the overall picture of their informal labor is as reflected in figure 3.15, with a total of 14% and 19% outside the government sector.

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Survey\[5\] show numbers of newcomers that are higher than those observed in ILO for 243, 2010-2006 thousand per year versus 21 thousand and less for 279 in 2007-2011 thousand versus 32 thousand), although this period saw the displacement of Syrians to Iraq, especially from northern Syria, knowing the many men who were employed in the labor force\[6\]. But available surveys do not monitor this migrant labor. In the case of women, the minimum estimate of newcomers in the period (46 thousand per year) converge, which means a decrease of female participation for the next period (4 thousand newcomers versus 63 thousand expected by the ILO). Estimates of the number of jobs created are also closer among exporters. However, these numbers did not meet the demand for -2006 2011 and remained at its level in the following period. The estimates show that in all cases, 3% of the new jobs created were informal.

The phenomenon of child labor\[7\] is also prevalent in Iraq, where the percentage of workers is between 0.6% for 8-year-old children and 1.6% for 14-year-old children. This phenomenon covers males (e.g., 1.2% of those aged 14 years) more than females (2.4% of those aged 14). The governorates of Babylon (7%), Kirkuk (5.6%), Maysan (5.3%) and Wasit (5.2%) were the highest. In Iraq, the percentage of child labor between 6 and 14 years show a percentage of (2%) compared to 5% monitored by UNICEF, for males and 4% for females, mostly in rural areas.

The case of Jordan:

Jordan has witnessed successive waves of asylum and migration from Palestine as a result of the occupation, from Iraq after its invasion and during its civil war, and from Syria since the outbreak of the events there. All of these migrations formed a significant part of Jordanian population. Non-Palestinianized Palestinians constituted more than 10% of Jordanian population, and 4% of the population were registered as refugees at UNRWA. Iraqi and Syrian refugees came in similar numbers in 2007 and 2013-2012 respectively.

According to the latest demographic studies, Jordanian informal labor, especially since the introduction of the labor force surveys and the annual statistical books only included, even before the recent migration waves of Iraqis and Syrians, doubled compared to Jordanian workers. These do not make clarifications according to informal labor criteria. Moreover, these data do not clarify the size of the Jordanian informal labor in the formal sector (table 3.16). Surveys only specify the labor size of migrants in comparison with the total labor force (equal to 12% in 2014), and the share of the informal labor force (equal to 37% for Egyptians and 6% for Syrians, the majority of whom are males). Paradoxically, surveys also show that the number of work permits granted to non-Jordanian informal sector workers have increased for 2014.

In 2012, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Council and other international organizations, conducted a comprehensive economic survey on informal labor based on the 2010 Labor Force Survey\[8\]. This study showed that to 567.2 thousand workers in Jordan are not covered by health insurance, which allows to monitor the informal labor. The same study indicates that the proportion of informal labor reaches 44% of the total workforce 1% of working males and 15% of working females are informal, in
%73 of Jordanian males and %93 of Jordanian females were employed in the formal public and private sectors! The share of the informal sector in the economy was estimated between %20 and %30. This share is the result of the discrepancies between these figures (in one report) and the absence of any reference to non-Jordanian workers (Palestinians, Iraqis and Egyptians) at the time! This was due to the difficulties of the size and classification of informal labor in a year ago, a statistician in the Department of Statistics criticized the way in which women's economic participation and their informal labor were being curtailed.

In 2015, ILD conducted a study to analyze the impact of the large numbers of Syrian refugees and the influx of migrants on the informal labor market. The study indicated that 9% of Syrians and %50 of Jordanians are informal. Employment has increased in Jordan from 14% in 2011 to 23% in 2014, yet it had already risen since the economic crisis of 2010-2008. The study showed that Syrian migrant workers compete with Jordanians in particular in informal sectors where the labor informality in the Jordanian economy (%50) can be translated into a widespread non-respect of the minimum wage, thus eliminating the effect of the National Minimum Wage Law. It is therefore still in the midst of the 'youth urbanization', with the urbanization of the population almost complete. The population aged 24-15 exceeds 39% of those aged 14-65, while more than %75 of Jordanians live in cities. Unemployment rates in Jordan are much higher than the rates in general and %36 for females. This is despite the fact that the participation rate of labor force remains low, %18.3 in West Bank and %19.7 in Gaza Strip (%27.2 and %20, respectively, for males). Women's participation has increased in the last few years. The share of women in this growth is remarkable, and the overall picture of female labor participation is still low, indicating the importance of the phenomenon.

The case of Palestine

In spite of occupation, fragmentation and dependency, Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip) is characterized by periodic and organized immigration (refugees (between the two regions) according to international standards, so that data published by the Palestinian Authority and by international organizations are often inconsistent. Thus, it is true in the construction sector. However, the retail sector, which is a large employer, has not witnessed a decline in the proportion of Jordanian labor, and new job opportunities have been created with the arrival of new Syrian expatriates as a result of investments by Syrian businessmen in Jordan. The study also shows that only %10 of Syrians have work permits, without explaining the size of this employment compared to the Jordanian labor force and non-Syrian migrant workers.

Based on these data, it is possible to draw a rough picture of the fact that informal labor constitutes %50 of the Jordanian total labor force (without considering the %67.2 who are not covered by health insurance), that %55 of Jordanian workers and non-Syrian migrants (%2) in the private sector are informal, and that 80% of Syrian migrants constitute 2% of the total labor force. Thus, the overall picture of informal labor in Jordan comes as a percentage of the total labor force in the informal sector in the table.

The total informal labor in Jordan constitutes %57 of the total number of workers (%18 outside the government sector amounting to %23 of the total workforce) that does not take into account, for example, refugee contributing workers.

It is worth noting that all reports confirm that the rate of informal labor for women (%26.7) is much higher than for men, with women's labor participation between %12 and %14, the lowest among Arab countries and their preference for the government sector (%62% of female workers) over the formal private sector. If the government sector is excluded, the proportion of informal female workers will be %55. In most cases, it has increased slightly with female Syrian refugee workers. The other factors for UNICEF only detects %2 of working children between 6 and 14 years of age. Jordan's watch report pointed out that the Department of Statistics had estimated the percentage of working children in 2010 at %33, indicating that the estimates of civil society organizations reached 50 thousand children. Child labor has increased significantly with the Syrian refugee crisis, with reports indicating that 64% of Syrian refugee families depend on the income of children.

Other estimates indicate that between 100 and 100 thousand Syrian children from Gaza are employed in Israel and in the settlements (particularly – West Bank) . These rates take into account the international periodic and organized surveys and statistics, most of them.

In addition, the Department of Statistics had estimated 39 thousand newcomers in the next period, indicating the importance of the phenomenon.

On the other hand, the official survey estimates that the informal sector contributes to GDP by %16 (mostly in construction and agriculture), while other estimates range between %17 and %18. It is also remarkable that child labor is particularly common in agriculture and informal sectors, and that the survey showed that the majority of informal workers work in the informal sector in Gaza is shown in table 3.18. The rate of informal labor in Gaza Strip has increased from 45.4% in 2014 survey. The survey also shows that the majority of informal workers work in the informal sector and that this phenomenon affects West Bank as well. The study estimates that %70 of workers in West Bank (%76 working men) and women in Gaza Strip (%55.5 of working men). Notably, the survey showed a decrease in the number of Syrian refugees in 2014 survey. The results of the survey show the role played by labor in Israel and the settlements. No more accurate analysis is allowed, especially since the percentage of informality is equal in Palestine between women and men! Hence, the overall picture of informal labor in Palestine is shown in table 3.18. The rate of informal labor in the West Bank has increased by %82 of the total informal labor, while its employees constitute %53 of the total employed workers, while the rate of working women) and women in Gaza Strip (%57 because of their share of the informal sector is greater (%30 versus %22 for males).

In contrast, the core of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is characterized by periodic and organized immigration (refugees (between the two regions) according to international standards, so that data published by the Palestinian Authority and by international organizations are often inconsistent. Thus, it is true in the construction sector. However, the retail sector, which is a large employer, has not witnessed a decline in the proportion of Jordanian labor, and new job opportunities have been created with the arrival of new Syrian expatriates as a result of investments by Syrian businessmen in Jordan. The study also shows that only %10 of Syrians have work permits, without explaining the size of this employment compared to the Jordanian labor force and non-Syrian migrant workers.

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In addition, the Department of Statistics had estimated 39 thousand newcomers in the next period, indicating the importance of the phenomenon.

On the other hand, the official survey estimates that the informal sector contributes to GDP by %16 (mostly in construction and agriculture), while other estimates range between %17 and %18. It is also remarkable that child labor is particularly common in agriculture and informal sectors, and that the survey showed that the majority of informal workers work in the informal sector in Gaza is shown in table 3.18. The rate of informal labor in the West Bank has increased by %82 of the total informal labor, while its employees constitute %53 of the total employed workers, while the rate of working women) and women in Gaza Strip (%57 because of their share of the informal sector is greater (%30 versus %22 for males).

In contrast, the core of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is characterized by periodic and organized immigration (refugees (between the two regions) according to international standards, so that data published by the Palestinian Authority and by international organizations are often inconsistent. Thus, it is true in the construction sector. However, the retail sector, which is a large employer, has not witnessed a decline in the proportion of Jordanian labor, and new job opportunities have been created with the arrival of new Syrian expatriates as a result of investments by Syrian businessmen in Jordan. The study also shows that only %10 of Syrians have work permits, without explaining the size of this employment compared to the Jordanian labor force and non-Syrian migrant workers.

Based on these data, it is possible to draw a rough picture of the fact that informal labor constitutes %50 of the Jordanian total labor force (without considering the %67.2 who are not covered by health insurance), that %55 of Jordanian workers and non-Syrian migrants (%2) in the private sector are informal, and that 80% of Syrian migrants constitute 2% of the total labor force. Thus, the overall picture of informal labor in Jordan comes as a percentage of the total labor force in the informal sector in the table. The total informal labor in Jordan constitutes %57 of the total number of workers (%18 outside the government sector amounting to %23 of the total workforce) that does not take into account, for example, refugee contributing workers.

It is worth noting that all reports confirm that the rate of informal labor for women (%26.7) is much higher than for men, with women's labor participation between %12 and %14, the lowest among Arab countries and their preference for the government sector (%62% of female workers) over the formal private sector. If the government sector is
Palestinians\(^{151}\) to 18% for Syrians\(^{131}\). These data were reviewed with the Lebanese researcher Kamar Naimi who showed that the percentage of Syrian workers in Lebanon is not reduced significantly from that of Lebanese. However, the source of these data is not clear; UNESCO adopted a similar figure, where the number of unemployment increased by more than three times\(^{152}\) (figure 3.12). Thus, a large proportion of Syrian workers rely on informal activities very poor, and depend on international aid. Many people from all conflicting parties have engaged in illegal acts linked to the economic situation. However, many Syrian workers are engaged in armed groups, selling stolen goods, oil refining and trade, cross-border smuggling of goods and humans, drug production and dealing, etc.) acquire a total of 10% of all workers. All of this had disastrous effects on women’s and children’s labor.

### The Case of Yemen

Yemen also lived a popular revolution in 2011 that in 2014 turned into a violent conflict which has not yet ended. Its population is close to the population of Syria (24.6 million in 2010 and approximately 26.8 million in 2015) with a demographic growth rate recently reduced to 12.5% annually. It is also at the peak of its youth eruption, with young people (24-15 years out of 64-15 years) still exceeding 14%. However, the proportion of the urban population remains very low (77% compared with 56% in 2010), although the country is experiencing a phenomenon of rural exodus\(^{153}\), where the urban population is growing at a rate of more than 4% annually. However, many Yemenis witnessed a large wave of migration, especially to Gulf countries, until the mid-1970s, when migration accounted for about 1% of the population annually. But the current phase of migration turned after the Gulf War in 1990. Currently, surveys only detect 103 thousand workers, mostly male, who make up only 1.2% of the labor force, and less than 1% of the total labor force remains weak in Yemen, 13.6% overall, and only 1% for women (the lowest among countries covered by this study). However, the proportion of women in the labor force remains at the level of other Arab countries, with male participation rate also at 16.5%. UNESCO noted that the number of job opportunities to be created annually in 2012 reached more than 250 thousand per year in 2010-2006, has not increased, and has increased slightly since the revolution to some 200 thousand workers. Women contribute 4.7%, indicating a trend towards women’s increasing participation. A report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)\(^{154}\) stated that the number of job opportunities to be created annually in 2012 was estimated to maintain a stable unemployment rate reached in 2004 around 188 thousand, 12 thousand for men and 76 thousand for women, which increased annually in 2012, in part, a study by the Yemeni Ministry of Planning\(^{155}\) indicated that the number of newcomers reached 207 thousand in 2009 and that the number of unemployed in 2010 reached 209 thousand, the overall unemployment rate was estimated at 12% (3.3% for males and 26.1% for women). However, the comparison between the two studies shows that there are significant differences, and thus the link between the socio-economic situation and the conflict’s developments can also be demonstrated in Yemen.

### The Case of Syria

Syrians have become the victims of the conflict’s developments can also be demonstrated in Syria. The approximate picture of women’s informal labor in 2010 is shown in table 3.24, and does not exceed 18% of the total female labor because 11% of working women are in the government and the public sector. Women’s informal labor is divided between waged labor, own account, and contributing labor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unpaid family labor</th>
<th>Waged informal labor</th>
<th>Total informal labor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that the highest percentage of informal labor is in the governorates of Aleppo (especially its countryside), followed by Damascus, all of which have experienced major social developments during the conflict in Syria\(^{156}\).

The approximate picture of women’s informal labor in 2010 is shown in table 3.24, and does not exceed 18% of the total female labor because 11% of working women are in the government and the public sector. Women’s informal labor is divided between waged labor, own account, and contributing labor. Only 13% of total workers are covered by social security. However, social security has become hardly effective as the conditions of benefitting from health insurance\(^{157}\) have been gradually modified and the return on pensions was reduced\(^{158}\). Therefore, 33% of workers and their families were reported to be extremely poor (as a minimum), and this severe poverty also affected formal workers, although it is higher for informal ones. Half of the workers are below the poverty line, and 56.5% are informal workers.

UNESCO also noted that 14% of children between 6 and 14 years do work, however, paid labor spread significantly among Syrian workers, especially in Lebanon, where the economic situation is striking and effects of the global crisis have been mitigated by the fact that about 110% of the Syrian labor force was a circular informal labor force for Lebanon (seasonal work, construction, etc.). But these wages do not exceed the poverty line, and does not exceed 18% of the total number of workers. The image of informal labor in Syria prior to the outbreak of the uprising and the conflict is shown in table 3.23\(^{159}\), with a total of 16.5% or 6% of private sector workers, knowing that informal labor in the private sector amounts to 18%.

131. These data were reviewed with the Lebanese researcher Khbara Hadi who showed that the percentage of Syrian workers in Lebanon is not reduced significantly from that of Lebanese. However, the source of these data is not clear; UNESCO adopted a similar figure, where the number of unemployment increased by more than three times (figure 3.12). Thus, a large proportion of Syrian workers rely on informal activities very poor, and depend on international aid. Many people from all conflicting parties have engaged in illegal acts linked to the economic situation. However, many Syrian workers are engaged in armed groups, selling stolen goods, oil refining and trade, cross-border smuggling of goods and humans, drug production and dealing, etc.) acquire a total of 10% of all workers. All of this had disastrous effects on women’s and children’s labor.

132. According to UNESCO 2012-a, this is the result for Palestinians of the non-reciprocity in the working conditions for workers and refugees. Nonetheless, the number of unemployed increased by more than three times (figure 3.12). Thus, a large proportion of Syrian workers rely on informal activities very poor, and depend on international aid. Many people from all conflicting parties have engaged in illegal acts linked to the economic situation. However, many Syrian workers are engaged in armed groups, selling stolen goods, oil refining and trade, cross-border smuggling of goods and humans, drug production and dealing, etc.) acquire a total of 10% of all workers. All of this had disastrous effects on women’s and children’s labor.

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152. In the absence of detailed data, this estimate shows that all workers in the government sector are covered by full social security and 50% of own account workers. However, this estimate often reduces the informal labor.

153. According to UNESCO 2012-a, this is the result for Palestinians of the non-reciprocity in the working conditions for workers and refugees. Nonetheless, the number of unemployed increased by more than three times (figure 3.12). Thus, a large proportion of Syrian workers rely on informal activities very poor, and depend on international aid. Many people from all conflicting parties have engaged in illegal acts linked to the economic situation. However, many Syrian workers are engaged in armed groups, selling stolen goods, oil refining and trade, cross-border smuggling of goods and humans, drug production and dealing, etc.) acquire a total of 10% of all workers. All of this had disastrous effects on women’s and children’s labor.

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and Maareb have unemployment rates of up to twice the national average. According to the Labor Force Survey for 2014-2015 (181), 93% of Yemeni workers were informal (informal of women), against 71% for young people between 15 and 24 years. The proportion of workers in the informal sector is 73% (71%) of women, and here the youth also account for 83%.

A significant proportion of workers in the formal sector are informal, even in the government sector, with only 30.6% of the total workers in the government and public sector, and 13.7% in government and defense jobs, and 10% who are informal.

Informal labor in agriculture accounts for only 13.5% of the total informal labor (about half of them engaged in income-generating khat commerce), while trade accounts for 20% of informal labor, in addition to 10% for transportation and 7% for construction. The proportion of own account workers in Yemen rose from 204 in 2004 to 331 in 2013, which was offset by a sharp decline in the number of waged workers from 161 to 160, including 160 who work in government institutions and the public sector. The percentage of people who are informal is 25.7% (27.3%) of total population (27.7%) in Yemen and 46% in Saudi Arabia (46.9%).

In Yemen, most informal workers are in the informal sector, especially in the informal agricultural labor market (26.3% of all working people). In contrast, the informal sector of formal workers in the country is UNICEF (24), which noted that 25% of Yemeni children aged between 5 and 14 were working, and that the phenomenon concerns females more than males. This means that child labor constitutes a significant part of Yemenis' labor force, especially for women (22). In other words, working male children account for about 20% of all male workers, while female children make up 28% of all female workers.

In all cases, Yemenis working and living conditions worsened as its revolution turned into a war since 2014, to the extent that we compare it with the repercussions of the war in Syria, it turns out to be a real humanitarian disaster.

3.5 Overview of informal labor in the countries under study

In most of the studied countries, the proportion of informal labor exceeds the total employment. Only Tunisia has a percentage of 34%, followed by Algeria with 39%. The picture remains medium for Iraq (52%), Jordan (57%), Egypt (59%) and Bahrain (59%). While in other countries, it rises more than 68% with a peak of 85% for Mauritania (Figure 3.4).

But the situation is different if we exclude formal government labor. Tunisias percentage of informal labor goes up to 54%, while Algeria has 46%. This change results from the fact that the ratio of public sector employment is 19% in Tunisia and 43% in Algeria. With this exception, Iraq reaches 48%, Jordan 58%, Egypt 47% and Bahrain 57%.

Yemen, Syria, Sudan and Mauritania stand out with high rates of self-employment (between 30% and 40% of the total employment). The percentage of this type of informal labor remains very limited (less than 20%) in Egypt, Sudan and Jordan. 57% in Saudi Arabia (57.3%) and 33% for and 30% for the United Arab Emirates (Table 3.2).

The share of informal labor in the informal market reached 46% in 2014 (2015) in Yemen, 46% in Sudan, 59% in Saudi Arabia, 60% in Algeria, 65% in Yemen, 74% in Saudi Arabia, 51% in women (74%).

In Yemen, the share of informal workers is the highest in Bahrain (55% of the total employment) and in Lebanon (56%). In both cases, migrant labor is more concerned. Percentages in Tunisia (41%) and Jordan (46%) are dropping to 31% for many reasons, including the relative quality of the health and social security system in Tunisia, the government employment capacity in Algeria (noting that part of this employment is not as formal as in other countries), and weak waged jobs opportunities in Mauritania.

According to the surveys in Morocco, there is a large proportion of unwaged family labor (22%), while the proportion of unemployed is significant in Sudan (12%), Yemen (11%), Palestine (9%) and Egypt. Surveys also monitor the proportion of informal employers (25%).

In all cases, the results of this analysis differ significantly from the known data on informal labor in the MENA countries, which accounts for 14.7% for the informal non-agricultural labor. This percentage rises to 17.4% in Yemen and Mauritania, 5.7% in Lebanon, 8.7% in Morocco in 2013, 15.6% in Syria, 59% in Sudan, 75% in Palestine and Morocco, 50% in Egypt and 57% in Algeria. Here also, there is a unique proportion (50%), the same as Syria (52%), Egypt (52%), Jordan (52%) and Iraq (52%). However, in the latter cases, women prefer to work in the government sector (see Figure 3.5).

All this shows that policies and services for rights must differ among Arab countries due to different economic and social conditions. The same tools cannot be used to achieve waged informal labor rights, especially in the case of family waged labor, promote and grant rights to self-employment, as well as to women labor, female family or informal employment. There is also a difference between agricultural and urban labor. Of course, these policies and strategies are supposed to be particularly concerned with women labor.

4. Description of informal labor in the Arab countries

The previous chapter highlighted the fact that informal labor constitutes the majority of labor relations in the Arab countries, especially outside agriculture and the governmental sector. Watch reports have presented case studies, with the overall score covering most of informal labor types.

This chapter presents these cases and types to illustrate:

192. ILO Report. 2024.

The proportion of unwaged family contributing women reaches 46% of all women labor in Morocco, 39% in Yemen, 33% in Sudan and 53% in Palestine, 48% in Egypt (9%), Iraq (13%) and Syria (12%) see significant percentages. Mauritania also has a high proportion of informal female employers (33%).

These results are also different from those known on women's informal labor in the MENA countries, which account for 3% of women's informal non-agricultural labor. The proportion in Mauritania is 56.6% in Yemen and Lebanon, 64% in Bahrain, 59.5% in Sudan, 51% in Palestine and Morocco, 50% in Egypt and 57% in Algeria. Here also, there is a unique proportion (39%), the same as Syria (52%), Egypt (52%), Jordan (52%) and Iraq (52%). However, in the latter cases, women prefer to work in the government sector (see Figure 3.7).
their characteristics and differences, precisely because the mechanisms for defending the rights of their workers and the policies to secure these rights and livelihoods can vary greatly.

4.1 Self-employment

Street vendors

Morocco watch report focuses on street vendors, a case that dominated labor relations in the Arab countries after Bouazizi suicide in Tunisia in 2010. In 2016, Morocco witnessed the suicide of ‘the seller of Baghreem May Fatih’ (Moroccan pancake consumed during the month of Ramadan) in the same way of self-burning and for the same reasons, which shook the society and authorities. Moroccans use the term ‘ubaddabtr’ to describe self-employed workers.

The report shows that there are three dimensions of labor relations for this type of informal labor: the workplace and the means of work (i.e. the chariot that displays the goods), an intermediate step to increase the possibilities of selling the goods (a public square or near a bus station, a train station or near a mosque) to increase the possibilities of selling the goods and the mechanism for obtaining them. The report focuses on all these aspects, as well as the mechanisms for obtaining the goods (Box 4.3).

In Khartoum that 48% of them were displaced, but not mainly because of conflict or drought (10% of cases), but for economic (54%) and social reasons (31%). Most of them work for more than 8 hours a day. This is their only career, and almost half of them are unmarried who are responsible for looking after their families. Here, the main case of labor relations arise first with visa dealers in their country. The worker borrows money to pay the high price of the visa. Second, they are arbitrarily subjected to campaigns by the police and any illegal activities. Finally, the employer registers based on which workers are brought for a typical year of work, although the law prohibits this practice. Thus, there is a problem with traders who provide them with the goods they sell. The problem is that these traders are not in conflict with government authorities, allowing traders and ‘sponsors’ to exploit the loopholes of law or leniency, while the conditions of work for these workers are terrible. The report noted that in 2013 alone, 22,000 workers were dismissed among migrant workers in 2012 compared to 22 cases in 2011.

Box 4.2 A young Palestinian man, Assem Ziah, did not expect to be one of those sitting on the street and referred to as bulk labor. But four months without salary in his company put him in an unexpected situation. Ziah had an official paper stating that he was asking for the work he worked for him. He stopped working for it and is currently without legal work to provide for his school fees and those of his family in Pakistan. So his only way to find work was this way, which was imposed on him and that he did not choose. He could only describe his situation by saying the following: “We are looking for work, but we don’t want to be on the streets every day waiting for customers who may or may not come.” This indicates the limited number of customers, and for those who are working without wages, “isolation, which is a form of social security benefit for wage workers only.”

Box 4.1 “The problem now is getting seed and tools,” says Hawsaa

The problem now is getting seed and tools, says Hawsaa (Box 1). The problem now is getting seed and tools, says Hawsaa (Box 1), who is a smallholder farmer in Jordan and has been involved in a project to increase her productivity. Hawsaa is a smallholder farmer in Jordan and has been involved in a project to increase her productivity. She has worked with the World Bank and is now looking towards a better livelihood.

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Iranian watch report highlights another aspect through the analysis of the Al-Aghbani industry, a traditional embroidery of a special type using silk threads and perforations. The basic working relationship is with “Al-Aghbani” merchant who looks after the work of the women who can work by piece or by the embroidered fabric meter most of the time. The trader is the one who supplies fabric and embroidery threads that are not sold to the women (except for the product, for example), so that the commodity is sold in the market at a price that is 7 times higher than the value of embroidery labor, while labor is the main part of the production cost. Six thousand women working in this profession in Damascus countryside were detected with 64 registered merchants in the Chamber of Commerce.

The profession has been severely affected by the war, and producers have had many restrictions on the availability of raw materials, market shrinkage due to the decline in tourism and the participation in foreign exhibitions, security instability, and the rise of competition from other foreign products. Jordan’s report also referred to two cases of family self-employment, one of them is the case of “Malak” a Jordanian who graduated with a political science degree and did not find work. From her house, she launched the activity of selling clothes, perfumes and cosmetics. It refers to how to use the “interest of her husband” to start a business and make some profit, and to some extent it is a disaster for women workers. The inclusion of this kind of labor in social security is hindered by the obstacles in the laws that restrict social security benefits to waged workers only.

neither Saudi Arabian nor of Jordanian nationality, and is Now making a good income she could not get from a waged labor. She uses modern social media for marketing. She cannot be a form of self-employment, which is high and her family does not want to help her. She also fears that men will not accept this work in case she wants to get married. This is one of the many cases of women who cannot start working from their homes. 182. ILO Yemen 2015. 183. IFAD 2010. 185. Gov Yemen 2007. 189. 190. 191,189 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. Aita 2016. 197. 198. 200. 203. 204. 205.
Arab Watch Report on Economic and Social Rights

4.2 Waged informal labor

Informal labor in the informal sector

Lebanon’s informal labor market is unique in the region due to the presence of both civil and military administration and educational institutions. Approximately 30% of the Lebanese workforce is employed in the informal sector, which covers a wide range of activities including construction, transport, and retail trade. The informal sector is characterized by low wages, lack of social benefits, and limited legal protection. The majority of workers in the informal sector are young and unskilled, often working long hours for low pay. The informal sector is particularly prevalent in the urban areas of Lebanon, where the demand for labor is high.

Waged formal labor in the informal sector

Regarding the amendment of the labor legislation, the Minister of Labor, Jibril Hamdan, stated: “We have an international problem in this regard; we are under great pressure from countries with similar characteristics to Lebanon. We are negotiating internationally and set a minimum wage that may outweigh the citizens’ abilities. They want to give domestic workers the same privileges as other workers.” He stressed the need to adopt the governmental office’s model, which is almost equal to the wage-earning part, excluding civil servants and agricultural labor. However, he noted that the number of workers in the informal sector is still in the need to support workers on the labor market and secure infrastructure for them. Labor laws in Arab countries are more applicable to the institutional world, which considers that the expansion of informal labor is related to the development of the structure of global capitalism and its production relationship. In fact, the informal labor outside the agricultural sector was more widespread in the Arab countries in the post-1970s, starting with the Arab countries’ transition from semi-feudal and “cultural openness” broadly. However, rent seeking dominates Arab economies, whether from natural resources (oil) or non-oil rents, and productive capitalism is not local but global. It noted that the proportion of private investments in GDP did not increase with privatization policies the same as the decline in the proportion of public investment.

5. POLICIES REGARDING INFORMAL LABOR AND STRUGGLES FOR THEIR RIGHTS

5.1 Informal labor in the Arab countries and relevant theoretical debate

The previous chapters have shown that informal labor is the main reality in the nature of labor in the Arab countries, especially in the informal sector. The lack of transparency and the problems faced by migrant workers have been highlighted. The problematic conditions often experienced by domestic workers, but is it the working reality of a large proportion of workers, which is almost equal to the wage-earning part, excluding civil servants and agricultural labor. However, the number of workers in the informal sector is still in the need to support workers on the labor market and secure infrastructure for them. Labor laws in Arab countries are more applicable to the institutional world, which considers that the expansion of informal labor is related to the development of the structure of global capitalism and its production relationship. In fact, the informal labor outside the agricultural sector was more widespread in the Arab countries in the post-1970s, starting with the Arab countries’ transition from semi-feudal and “cultural openness” broadly. However, rent seeking dominates Arab economies, whether from natural resources (oil) or non-oil rents, and productive capitalism is not local but global. It noted that the proportion of private investments in GDP did not increase with privatization policies the same as the decline in the proportion of public investment.

It is useful first to present the results of informal labor data for countries in the Arab regions. Bahrain’s report mentioned that Bahrain’s Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) reported 1,038 escape cases of migrant workers from the private sector between the first and ninth months of 2015 (Box 4.3). This phenomenon is the result of the conditions often experienced by domestic workers, but also due to human rights violations. The LMRA also refers to the phenomenon of a worker in a butchery (meat shop) who receives a fixed wage and another one for the services he provides to clients, knowing that he works for 11 hours a day.

Informal labor in the family sector

The phenomenon of domestic workers, whose majority are women, has been a concern in the Arab countries. Bahrain’s report mentioned that Bahrain’s Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) reported 1,038 escape cases of migrant workers from the private sector between the first and ninth months of 2015 (Box 4.3). This phenomenon is the result of the conditions often experienced by domestic workers, but also due to human rights violations. The LMRA also refers to the phenomenon of a worker in a butchery (meat shop) who receives a fixed wage and another one for the services he provides to clients, knowing that he works for 11 hours a day.

Lebanon’s report also addresses the situation of Palestinian women who work in the informal labor market, selling clothes and embroidery. The report highlights the lack of legal protection and social benefits for these workers.

Jordanyan report also describes the case of ‘Hanan’, a Syrian refugee whose husband died in the war and is now supporting an additional domestic worker who is required to accompany her.

3. Working children

Jordanyan report refers to the case of ‘Muhammad’, 13, who helps carrying customers’ goods at the vegetable market in Lebanon, and American dilemma won the Pulitzer Prize for a number of families, including his four younger brothers, after his father became disabled due to an injury. Despite his hard work, he prefers it more than his previous job where he was subjected to physical and sexual assault. ‘The market is full of children; the child must be strong and have an interest when he goes to work, and something will happen,’ he says. Another case is that of a child of that age, but with special needs, as he moves in a wheelchair. He works as seller of ‘Mukhlyah and she is asked to do everything, a car porter who earns the wage paid by the worker, who works as a guard in a company, is not enough to cover the family’s living.

In Jordan, child labor is also linked to jobs such as guard work, transportation work by donkey carts, selling dried dates, napkins, textiles and toys, as well as fishing, especially in the Gulf. In the countryside, they are grazing, hunting and collecting and cattle and food for clothing.

In Sudan, it was pointed out that 18% of child laborers were employed in shoe polishing, car washing, and small craft workshops; whereas female child workers as domestic workers and cleaners, all in difficult and sometimes inhumane conditions. The householdness phenomenon has overshadowed the parents because of drought and civil wars.

6. Policies regarding informal labor and struggles for their rights

The previous chapters have shown that informal labor is the main reality in the nature of labor in the Arab countries, especially in the informal sector. The lack of transparency and the problems faced by migrant workers have been highlighted. The problematic conditions often experienced by domestic workers, but it is the working reality of a large proportion of workers, which is almost equal to the wage-earning part, excluding civil servants and agricultural labor. However, the number of workers in the informal sector is still in the need to support workers on the labor market and secure infrastructure for them. Labor laws in Arab countries are more applicable to the institutional world, which considers that the expansion of informal labor is related to the development of the structure of global capitalism and its production relationship. In fact, the informal labor outside the agricultural sector was more widespread in the Arab countries in the post-1970s, starting with the Arab countries’ transition from semi-feudal and “cultural openness” broadly. However, rent seeking dominates Arab economies, whether from natural resources (oil) or non-oil rents, and productive capitalism is not local but global. It noted that the proportion of private investments in GDP did not increase with privatization policies the same as the decline in the proportion of public investment. However, the schools-recommendations maintain that reform governments account for tackling this informal imbalance and regulating labor relations. But it also requires the organization of other labor relations, i.e., for companies and employers, through collective bargaining agreements to expand the domestically produced value-added base.

The legalist school blames bureaucracy, the complex laws and regulations, and the complicity of governments with commercial interests for curtailing the ambitions of employers and workers. But it is true that bureaucracy is too heavy.
and slow in triggering change in some Arab countries such as Syria and Egypt, and this does not apply to other countries such as Bahrain or Lebanon. Indeed, labor laws in all Arab countries need to address some issues as legislation on entrepreneurship. But does this change the conditions of productive investments and working conditions substantially, especially when dealing with labor disputes? And fail to address the most serious problems such as social problems (as accelerated rural to urban exodus to the city)? An analysis of similar Arab situations in terms of the prevalence of these issues and the large variation in legislation, shows that the problem is deeper. This school recommends facilitating the registration of productive units and the development of property laws to transfer the assets of these units to capital assets. But the question is about the value of these assets, the especially, the unstructured, if the majority of productive activities lie in trade and services. And also what precedes what? Providing services to citizens, including social security, or collecting taxes, fees and social deductions for the public sector? Finally, the data of the Arab countries contradict the basic premise of the voluntarist school, which believes that most of the informal workers are self-employed and do not pay taxes and fees, and balance costs and benefits. This is precisely because the majority of informal workers have no other choice, especially young people and women, with the large gap between the numbers of newcomers to the labor force and the number of opportunities created, including informal ones. The policies cannot be put in place and carried on, especially when carried on informal labor cannot be developed solely based on market orientation and enterprises formality or informality. The waged formal labor is formal in essential terms and occupies a significant part of the overall employment in many Arab countries. The optimal approach is to start by the issues of social and economic policy, especially social and health insurance, and formulate policies and present all relevant problems simultaneously. Thus, the issues lie within the context of all the enterprises themselves, but in seeing workers granted their rights regardless of the type of their informal labor, whether they are nationals or foreign workers, brought from abroad or refugees.

5.2 Governmental policies relevant to informal labor

Governmental policies towards informal labor are twofold, and the second is often neglected. The first part concerns the frameworks and legislations, i.e., institutions, laws and coercive decisions, as well as administrative policies, such as granting loans to expand business. The second part concerns labor market institutions in an integrated sense. These institutions are divided into two main categories, labor offices, but include all institutions concerned with control in the workplace (the same as the control of the pharmaceutical or food industry) and social security by formalizing the utilization and expenditure on the expansion of social security systems, while there are real pressures, especially from the World Bank and IMF, to reduce social expenditures (social services, and oil derivatives) and to increase taxes and indirect charges (VAT), in light of the low direct tax revenues and the low taxes on property and wealth. There are risks of succumbing to this pressure, not only in terms of inequity but also in increasing the share of informal labor and diminishing revenues, leading to mass bankruptcies and unemployment. Also, beyond the questions about the imperatives of whether or not formalizing informal labor, a fundamental question is raised. Of course, the idea of formalizing informal labor is almost a measure, implemented by their youth, i.e. the proportion of the young population is high within the working-age population, which prevents the establishment of a balanced and quality economy in which revenues include the informal labor that affects young people in particular and which expenses protect especially the elderly group. The fact that the abolished taxes, duties, and insurance deductions) for a certain period (five years in the case of Turkey) so that enterprises can reach a normal financial balance in the economic market. Moreover, (as in the case of Turkey) the manipulations of some entrepreneurs and the closure of their enterprises after five years are resolved by allowing them to start new enterprises to continue to benefit from the incentives. There are many studies on the impact of these policies, but their results are very limited (a few thousand beneficiaries instead of tens or even hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs). And these actions are often associated with the most experienced and effective labor market institutions, either directly from the State or through civil institutions.

In fact, in these policies, a fundamental issue in labor relations is absent, i.e. the place. It is not possible to deal the same way with a company that has a permanent enterprise in the public place, a person who works from home, and street vendors. The issue of the location of the enterprise (workplace) is in some way ignored in the process of planning and management. A permanent enterprise requires providing economic activities in the urban space, (leasing premises and controlling the quality of the environment, controlling food hygiene). It is therefore a partially formal enterprise without social and economic rights. This only applies if the enterprise is working outside the home or in the case of informal labor is the same in the case of working from home, but there is a problem in the mixing of things between home’s sanctity and the economic activity. In the case of street vendors, the partial structuring lies in the management of public space, especially by municipalities. Thus, the Bouazzizi incident does not represent the sense of officially registering the enterprise and not including the seller in social security, as it highlighted the problem of public space management in municipalities, the development, and the gap between the major urban centers and peripheral areas and slums.

It is estimated that the informal market will move into busy squares or in high traffic places to expand their customer base. The fundamental contradiction here is within the government policies, which consider informal labor as an urban problem, and attempt to keep keep passers-by comfortable, or should self-employment be encouraged to earn a living? The main responsibility for resolving this contradiction lies with the governmental and municipal administration in urbanization, by providing suitable places for sale facilitating the movement of popular businesses and the ease of movement of passers-by on the other. It is also possible to ask who is responsible for placing a large shopping center near crowded areas or in the peripheries, where informal labor is often the largest? Who is making policies that take advantage of the characteristics of these areas, including the existence of a distinctive craftsmanship, and linking them to infrastructure and transport in the central regions? It is clearly obvious that stimulating entrepreneurship require far beyond typical «incubators» and even Active Labor Market Policies, which mainly include economic policies that companies that compete with others. They are mainly based on providing support for a minimal investment is low in the face of declining government investment since independence and address crises resulting from «economic openness» and technical jumps and large economic and social gaps between urban centers and parties, including slums. The greatest risk is that in the absence of these integrated
policies, the social unrest that has exploded with the Arab Spring will continue without stability. How can it be possible to recover stability if the 3 million newcomers to the labor force in the Arab countries are without adequate work and without rights and representation of their interests in slums and places? No, Arab economies were on the right track and the Arab countries remained without “decent” work and in informal situations, especially as the main challenge is social security, which is essentially a policy of distribution among those who have enough and those who are in need, and does not theoretically constitute a real problem in a country with a majority of young population.

Egypt

The Egyptian experience is similar to Moroccos one in focusing government policies on microcredit to cope with the economic and social difficulties of unemployment. However, another aspect of the policy has been towards waged informal labor which accounts for the vast majority of informal labor. The official figures of 2.2 million is not a correct reflection due to the lack of social protection and the lack of occupational safety. Among the Arab countries, it established the National Committee for Employment and in its 2016 report, the Egyptian experience is similar to Morocco’s one in particular with an increase in employment through microcredit.

Other cases

In Algeria, informal labor does not seem to be the focus of government policies and trade union struggles, specifically due to public sector inflation, and the overall low proportion of informal labor (15% of total workers). Policies are focused on the “microcredit” to provide vocational training and microfinance to support enterprises recruiting young people and to young entrepreneurial initiatives. However, the rate of informal labor, especially self-employed women in agriculture, has not reached alarming levels (46%), which raises questions about the sustainability of current policies.

In the case of Mauritania, there are no distinct policies towards...
informal labor away from the countries primary effort to combat poverty⁴⁰ and to create opportunities for young people to earn a living. Every labor outside the government is rarely formal. Thus, in countries where informal workers are presented only in terms of basic human rights, including first equality, not only between women and men, but also social groups of populations in Arab countries, due to the scarcity of periodic surveys of the labor force and not adhering to ILO standards, the situation is not so different in Sudan and Yemen where the priority of government policies is to fight poverty and create jobs for young people. So health insurance can only come through health services that the government and civil associations are trying to secure on a large scale. This is despite the fact that the social security law provides for the contribution of employers and workers, even by one worker⁴¹. For its part, Jordan recently launched, in April 2015, A "National Framework for the Informal Sector" in cooperation with ILO, which includes an integrated methodology to formalize the informal sector⁴². This was the result of a consultation between the Ministry of Labor and the Jordan Chamber of Industry, the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, the Department of Statistics, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Social Security Corporation.

Moreover, the Iraqi Ministry of Labor has prepared a new draft of the labor law so that the social security includes self-employed and informal workers⁴³, pending its endorsement by the Parliament. Social Security Protection 2019-2015, including the inclusion of the "informal sector in social security," has been developed, and unions and civil society organizations have joined in these efforts and efforts that have led to these public policies. In Iraq, like Jordan, there are micro-credit programs and other programs to support young entrepreneurs.

Even this minimal policy effort towards informal labor does not exist in Lebanon which is generally considered an area of political crisis. Sectarian bodies replace the State to provide minimal social protection, often under the guise of civil organizations. UNHRC is doing this role for Palestinian refugees, UNHCR and other national organizations for Syrians. This policy effort is also absent in Palestine. Even the new law amending social security regulations adopted in January 2016 enabled the possibility of including informal workers, unless the worker and the employer pay their contribution together⁴⁴. This is in spite of the efforts made by the National Labour Council and trade unions, and in spite of a national campaign and extensive community debate. However, this trade union and community effort has led to significant improvements. The “Palestinian Fund for Employment and Dignity”, which was aimed at stopping Palestinian labor in Israeli settlements, was also aborted. The fund appeared in 2003 and simply disappeared. Finally, it is necessary to mention the case of the “Anti-Unequality Alliance” established in 2004 in Syria with a capital of 8 billion and that quickly expanded in micro-loans after the crisis of large rural exodus to cities in 2004-2005. It was abruptly suspended in 2006 and replaced by the project "Capital for Development"⁴⁵. run by the wife of the President.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This regional report, as well as other national and regional social and economic reviews, highlights some of the problems of informal labor in Arab countries. It confirms that the availability of accurate information on informal labor is limited in Arab countries due to the scarcity of periodic surveys of the labor force and not adhering to ILO standards. It is true that these surveys need the commitment of the state to systematically collect them, but the results of many other surveys on GDP, financial flows, and so forth are periodically issued. This raises questions about the reasons for this weakness in labor force surveys.

The report also highlights that the proportion of informal labor in the Arab region is much higher than that the country is characterized by a large informal sector, in other sources, if social and health coverage is taken as a key criterion. In most Arab countries, it ranges between 50% and 75%⁴⁶ of the working-age population, and the proportion of the size of migrant workers in the Gulf, the size of migrant workers that remain largely informal in some countries such as Lebanon and Morocco. Thus, many countries such as Algeria, Morocco, and many other details that are not clearly reflected in labor force surveys. This is in addition to the fact that the unites that followed the “Arab Spring” and wars have erased informal employment in recent years and has not been monitored by the surveys so far. Of course, the importance of the (largely informal) agricultural labor affects the differences between countries in terms of informal employment, but the proportion of informal labor remains high in the Arab region, and the size of informal labor outside agriculture and public sector in most Arab countries exceeds 50%⁴⁷, which makes informal labor the basic reality of urban labor in the private sector.

The situation is different for females whose economic participation is below the levels of other regions of the world. The proportion of informal labor of the total female labor is often lower than male labor. There are notable exceptions, such as the Gulf countries where women are involved in civil service and in the public sector, precisely in order to obtain social and economic rights that they do not receive in any other type of labor. Thus, the statistics of informal employment in the Arab region are temporarily. However, the share of informal labor increases if civil service is excluded (and sometimes multiplied) by a lot more than agricultural work.

These findings contradict one of the stereotypes of informal labor, and this effort was made by the National Labour Council and trade unions, and in spite of a national campaign and extensive community debate. However, this trade union and community effort has led to significant improvements. The “Palestinian Fund for Employment and Dignity”, which was aimed at stopping Palestinian labor in Israeli settlements, was also aborted. This fund appeared in 2003 and simply disappeared. Finally, it is necessary to mention the case of the “Anti-Unequality Alliance” established in 2004 in Syria with a capital of 8 billion and that quickly expanded in micro-loans after the crisis of large rural exodus to cities in 2004-2005. It was abruptly suspended in 2006 and replaced by the project “Capital for Development”. run by the wife of the President.

Recomendations

These recommendations focus on issues related to Arab civil society organizations and trade unions, campaigns, and dialogues with their governments and international organizations.

Struggles

• Civil society organizations and Arab unions should intensify their awareness campaigns, both internally and externally, on the questions of rights and protection of labor relations and labor abuses prevailing in Arab countries, so that governments and international organizations consider the rights of these male and female workers in the policies and priorities. This awareness should shed light on informal relations and the development gap between urban centers and peripheral areas.

• Awareness of the strong link between economic and social rights is human rights that are binding on all States and include the entire population, both citizens and migrants. These awareness campaigns include highlighting the situation of informal workers, especially the most vulnerable, and defending key causes. This includes a focus on the concepts of public rights, public services and public space.

• Arab civil society organizations should encourage the establishment of independent trade unions to represent the interests of the informal labor groups, encourage the involvement of their workers, encourage cooperation and exchange of experiences between these unions in all regions, and represent them in independent federations to engage in dialogues with other unions and in negotiations with municipal and national councils. This includes promoting the trade union organization of migrant workers, whether those who came to work or refugees.

• Arab civil society organizations should encourage the creation of women’s associations and trade unions to stimulate the economic participation of women and defend their key causes. This includes associations and trade unions that represent domestic workers, female citizens or migrant women, as well as those who defend the rights of unwaged contributing female labor.

• Arab civil society organizations and unions should prioritize the inclusion of labor rights for migrant workers and contributing family workers in social security. These include health and medical care, sickness compensation, maternity care, work accidents, disability, old age and pensions, the care, work accidents, disability, old age and pensions, the care, transition to retirement, and rights during the transition period, and the death of a family member and unemployment.

• In its dialogues with governments and international financial organizations, Arab civil society organizations should be prepared to propose, in addition to the introduction of social services and the collection of its revenues. There is a prevailing Tunisian experience in this area. A strong trade union federation which is striving to expand the coverage of social insurance benefits plays a great role. The other major category of informal labor in Arab countries consists of self-employed and employers, who make up a significant proportion of the population in Sudan, Yemen and Morocco. Female informal labor is less than male labor, with the exception of Mauritania. The issue here is clearly of economic content and revival and development of their productivity, in addition to the inclusion of social rights and security for the owners of these enterprises and their employees. The key criterion of employment can be simplified, as evidenced by the high incomes of some of its employees compared with the income of waged informal workers. However, this type involves many poor street vendors who earn their living from this activity to a minimum, such as the Bouazizi case in Tunisia. Labor relations also take a specific character, in terms of employment and labor relations, in the context of women employment and in negotiations with municipal and national councils. This includesبدة the creation of women’s associations and trade unions to stimulate the economic participation of women and defend their key causes. This includes associations and trade unions that represent domestic workers, female citizens or migrant women, as well as those who defend the rights of unwaged contributing female labor.

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