

# THE FRUSTRATED GENERATION

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The exclusion of young people in Arab Mediterranean countries from decent employment and long-term life perspectives

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Researching  
Arab Mediterranean Youth:  
**Towards a New Social Contract**  
[www.sahwa.eu](http://www.sahwa.eu)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 613174.

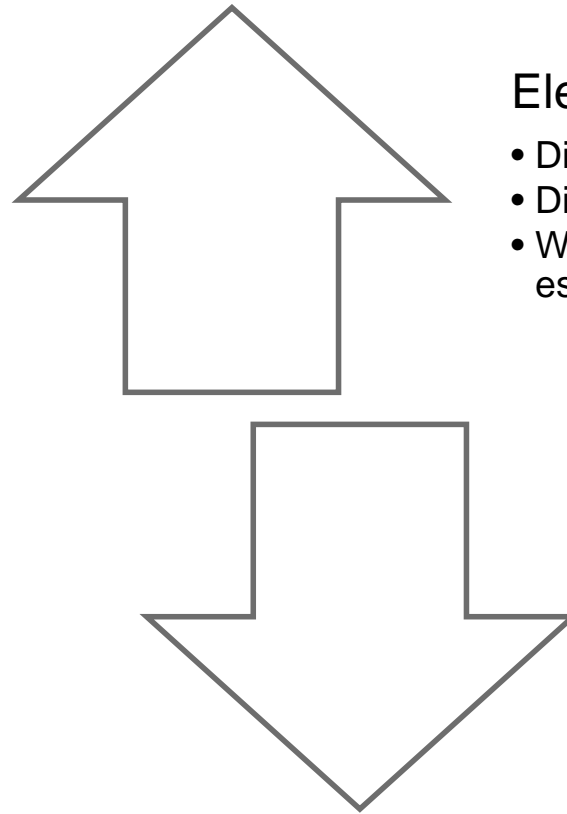
## The challenges of adolescence in the AMCs

### Question

Who are these young people being pushed towards the margins of society?

### Hypothesis

The risk of social exclusion is not distributed equally among young people but it is determined by various factors, such as education, employment, location, and social background.



### Elements of traditional societies

- Dichotomy of ages
- Differences between men and women
- Work, marriage, starting a family, and establishing independent households

### Recent developments

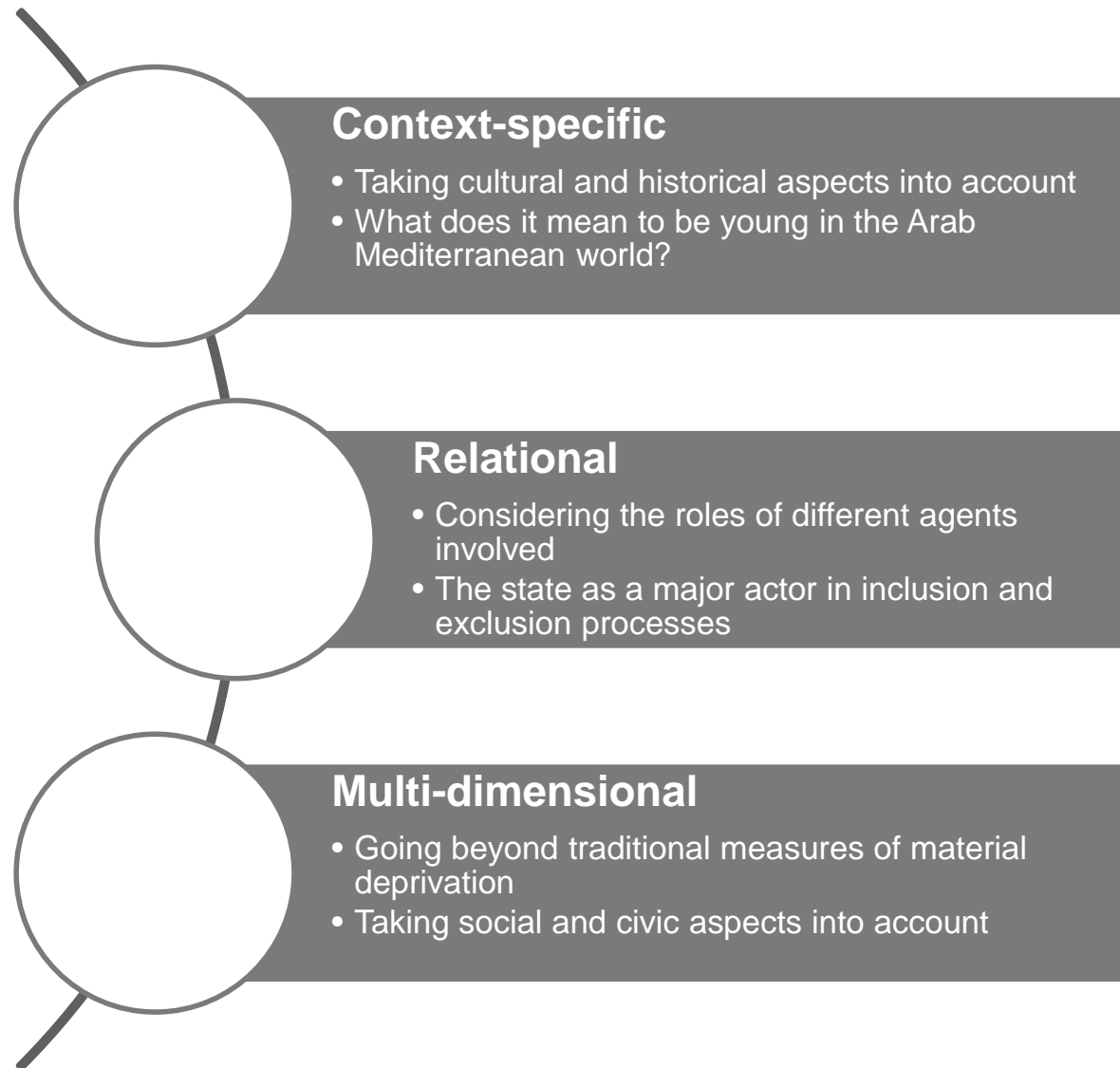
- “Youth bulge”
  - Improvements in educational attainment but lack of jobs and economic opportunities
  - Delayed marriage and lack of independence
- Uncertainties about the future have kept young people from becoming independent and fully participating in society.
  - A process commonly referred to as *social exclusion*.

## Conceptualising social exclusion

### Definition

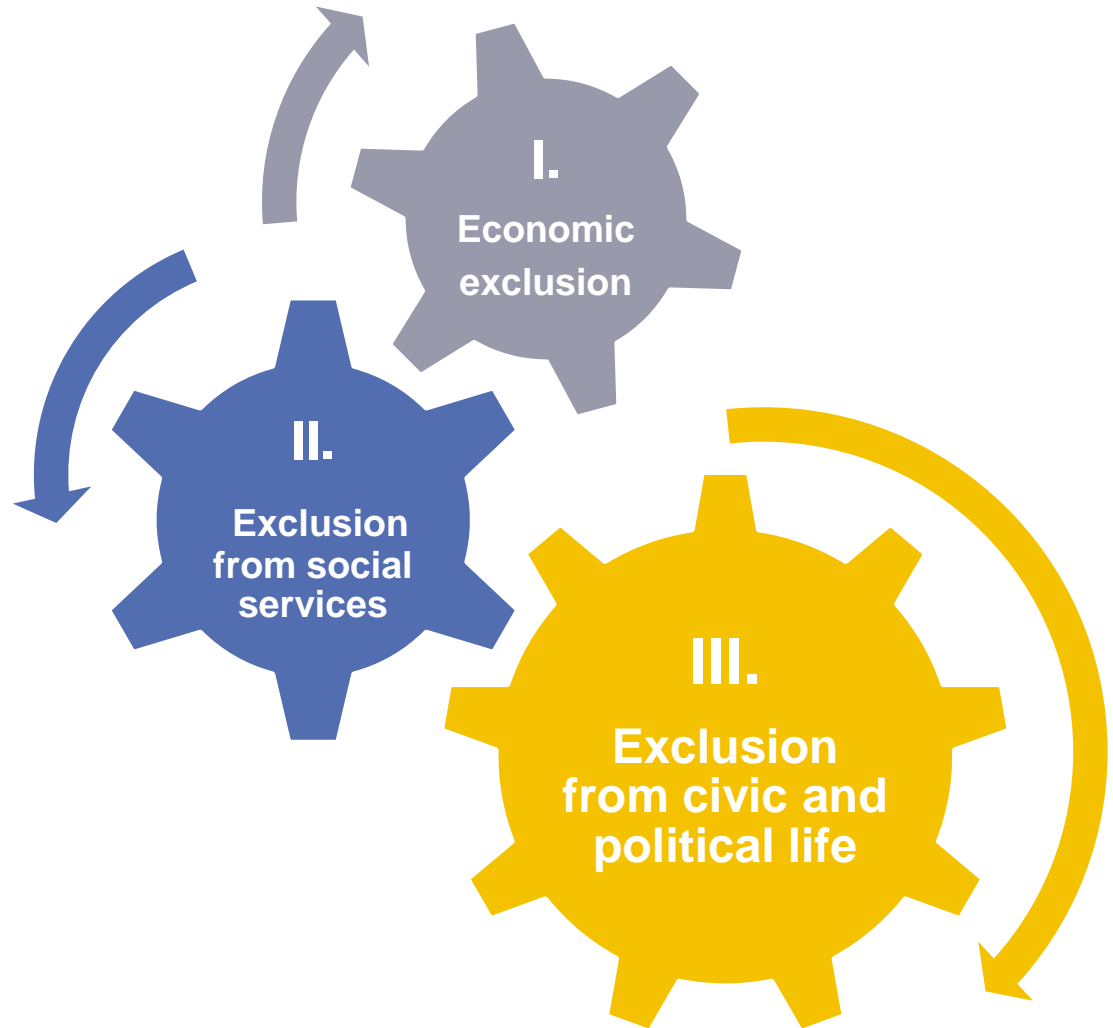
“Whatever the content and criteria of social membership, socially excluded groups and individuals lack capacity or access to social opportunity. [...] The theoretical orientation of social exclusion [...] considers trajectories of group relations as well as relations between individuals, and examines not only those excluded, but also the excluding institutions and individuals that benefit from the process.”

(Silver 2007: 5)



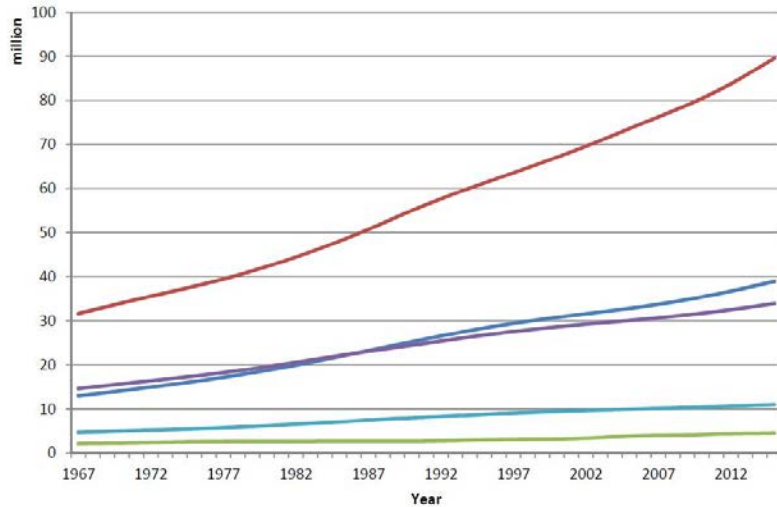
## Dimensions of youth exclusion

- Social exclusion is not to be equated with unemployment, poverty, or other measures of material deprivation.
- In our analysis, we consider **three dimensions** of social exclusion in the AMCs, as suggested by the UNDP (2011).

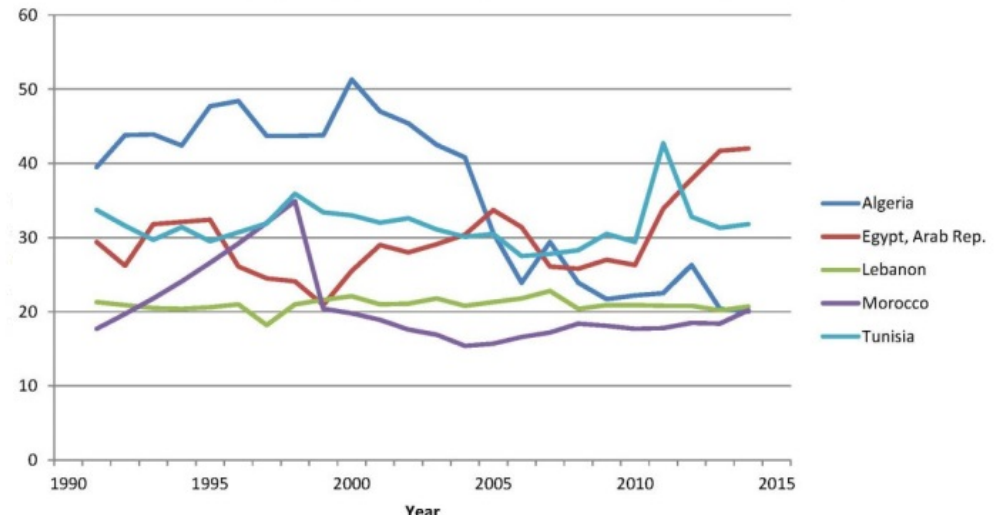


# I. Economic exclusion

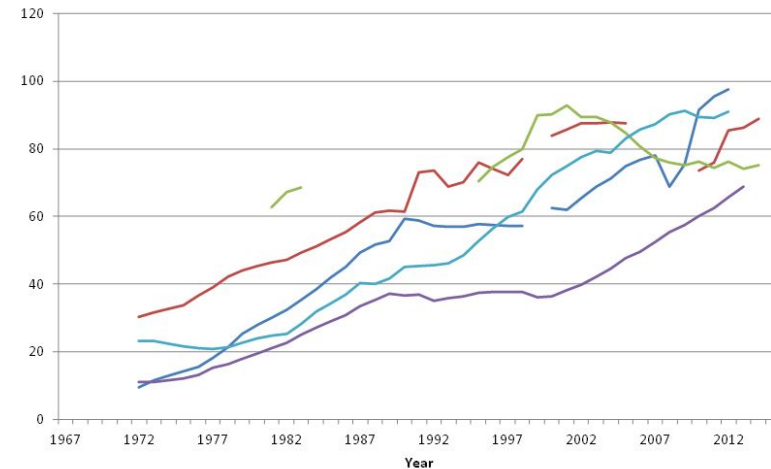
**Total Population**



**Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24)**



**Gross enrolment ratio, secondary school, both sexes (%)**

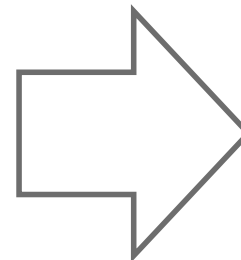


The jobs available do neither fit the demographic nor the educational characteristics of the countries.

Data source: World Bank (2016)

# I. Economic exclusion

- Popularity of public sector employment
  - Dominant role of the state as provider of jobs, but positions are held by seniors
  - Young people as labour market outsiders are denied access to jobs
  - In response, many young people switch to the informal sector
- Significant role of the informal sector
  - Many young people are in vulnerable employment
  - Does not offer any social security
  - The informal sector is the mother of invention, but it does not train young people – no engineers are emerging from it
- High female unemployment rates
  - Result of strictly segmented labour markets
  - Unwillingness of companies to compensate for maternity leave
  - Limited mobility
- The state has failed to...
  1. initiate structural adjustments and promote private sector development
  2. provide students with the skills needed in a modern economy



A generation lost in  
the transition from  
school to work

## II. Exclusion from social services

- The educational level has experienced an increase, but the educational depth has remained a problem
  - Although education is free, access to higher education is unequal
  - Private schools or private tutoring are often necessary to pass the universities' selection processes
  - Education policies have contributed little to individual's chance of social advancement
- Welfare regimes: Insufficient coverage of social security
  - Social security was traditionally provided by the family, not the state
  - Rural exodus and disruption of families pose a major challenge to the traditional model
  - Extensive rural-urban migration (as it is happening in the AMCs) requires a shift towards a protection system provided by the state

## III. Exclusion from civic & political life

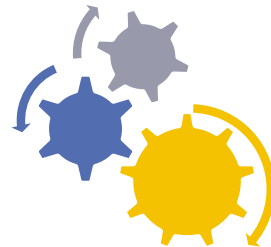
- Most regional policy regimes are characterized by
  - Corruption
  - A weak judiciary
  - Powerful security apparatus
  - Limited opportunities to influence political decision making
- Special case: Tunisia has undergone a positive development in regard to the implementation of rights
- Women's rights are anchored in most countries constitutions, but their implementation is lagging behind



## How to measure social exclusion?

In line with the suggestions made by the UNDP (2011), our index is constructed as follows:

- Three dimensions: economic, social, political
- Each dimension consists of 8 indicators – 24 in total – which are weighted equally.
- A person is considered “socially excluded” if he or she is deprived in at least 8 of the 24 categories.
- Choosing the same indicators and the same threshold for all countries allows for cross-country comparisons.



## Social Exclusion Index

### I. Economic Exclusion

1. House amenities
2. Telephone and internet connection
3. Overcrowding
4. Reason for not working
5. Type of contract
6. Satisfaction with job
7. Perceived position in society
8. Reason for not wanting getting married

### II. Exclusion from social services

1. Access to fresh water
2. Availability of light and electricity
3. Likelihood that the aspired educational goal will be reached
4. Reason for leaving school
5. Perceived educational quality
6. Insurance coverage
7. Availability of government programs
8. Protection from violence

### III. Exclusion from civic and political life

1. Trust towards parents
2. Trust towards friends
3. Usage of information channels
4. Following political news
5. Participation in groups
6. Political participation
7. Voting behaviour
8. Trust in government

# Evidence from SAHWA

## About the project

- SAHWA addresses multiple issues related to youth in Arab Mediterranean countries by combining economic, political, sociological, and cultural approaches.
- 1 January 2014 - 31 December 2016
- 10,000 young people questioned in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia



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## Method

1. **Multi-country youth survey**
  - Carried out amongst 10,000 young people (age: 15-29) in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia
  - A comparative dataset for the region covering aspects relating to employment, education, youth culture and values, migration, and political participation
2. **Fieldwork in local context**
  - Explores the youth conditions and values in different socio-economic contexts within each country and across countries
  - Life stories, focused ethnographies, focus groups, and narrative interviews

# Comparative case study

## Tunisia

- Regime change - Arab Spring was followed by democratisation
- Very high levels of youth unemployment (especially among those who have attended university)
- One of the few Arab Mediterranean countries that has a larger industrial than agricultural sector

## Lebanon

- No regime change
- Education level above average (high tertiary enrolment rates), but high level of educational segregation
  - Public and private schools
  - Variety of languages: English, French, and Arab
- Attracted a lot of foreign direct investment in the past

# Which groups are prone to exclusion?

In the following we will be discussing the differences between **Lebanon** and **Tunisia**, with special consideration of the following questions:

- Is the risk of social exclusion higher for women than for men?
- Does age matter?
- How about the location (rural, urban)?
- Are only low educated young people socially excluded?
- Does the social background matter?
- Is employment a catalyst for social inclusion?
- Are socially excluded more interested in migration than people who actively participate in society?



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<p><b>Tunisia</b> 2,000 respondents</p>	<p><b>Lebanon</b> 2,000 respondents</p>
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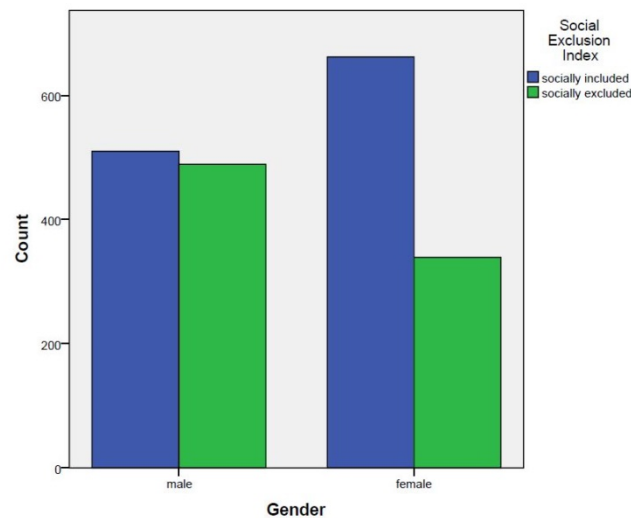
<p>Excluded 828 (41,4%)</p>	<p>Included 1,172 (58,6%)</p>	<p>Excluded 608 (30,4%)</p>	<p>Included 1,392 (69,6%)</p>
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\* For comparative data on social exclusion, please consider the report by the UNDP (2011) which discusses social exclusion in transformation societies in Europe and Central Asia.

## Gender

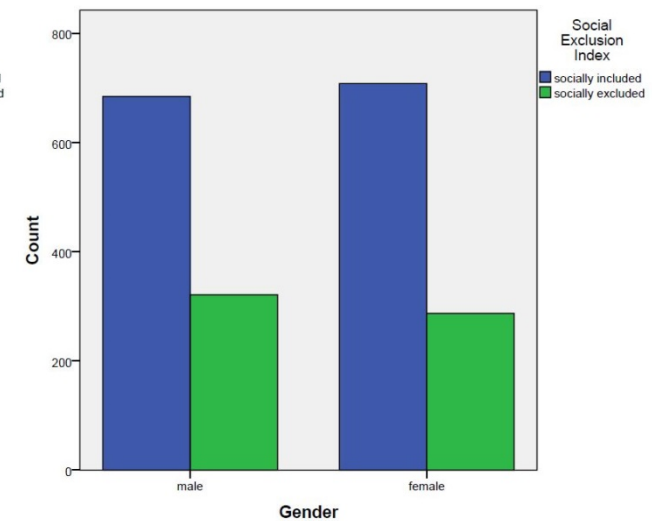
- Lebanon: Exclusion ratio is balanced
  - Tunisia: More men than women are socially excluded
- Men in Tunisia might not be able to fulfil their traditional role as the families' breadwinners.

### Tunisia



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Gender	male	510	489	999
	female	662	339	1001
Total		1172	828	2000

### Lebanon

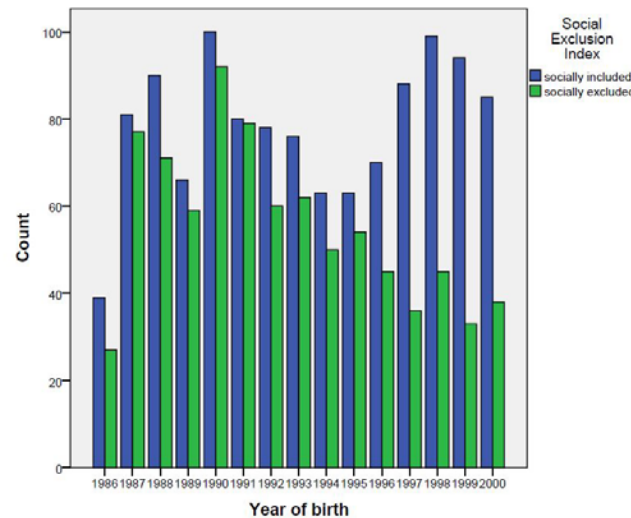


		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Gender	male	684	321	1005
	female	708	287	995
Total		1392	608	2000

## Age

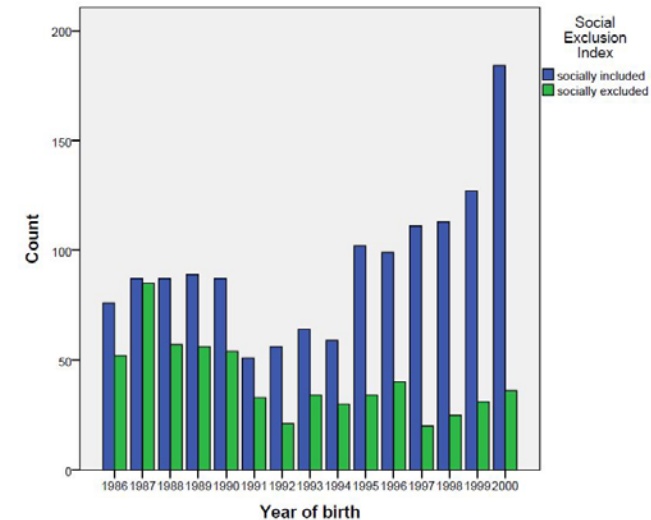
- Both figures show that younger people are less affected by social exclusion.
  - Higher enrolment rates among young people
  - Central role of educational institutions in the context of social inclusion
- The results strongly indicate that transitions from school to work are largely unsuccessful.

### Tunisia



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Year of birth	1986	39	27	66
	1987	81	77	158
	1988	90	71	161
	1989	66	59	125
	1990	100	92	192
	1991	80	79	159
	1992	78	60	138
	1993	76	62	138
	1994	63	50	113
	1995	63	54	117
	1996	70	45	115
	1997	88	36	124
	1998	99	45	144
	1999	94	33	127
	2000	85	38	123
Total		1172	828	2000

### Lebanon

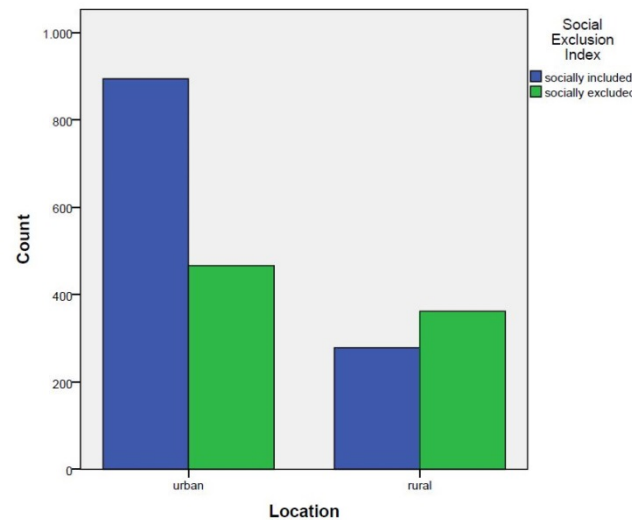


		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Year of birth	1986	76	52	128
	1987	87	85	172
	1988	87	57	144
	1989	89	56	145
	1990	87	54	141
	1991	51	33	84
	1992	56	21	77
	1993	64	34	98
	1994	59	30	89
	1995	102	34	136
	1996	99	40	139
	1997	111	20	131
	1998	113	25	138
	1999	127	31	158
	2000	184	36	220
Total		1392	608	2000

## Location

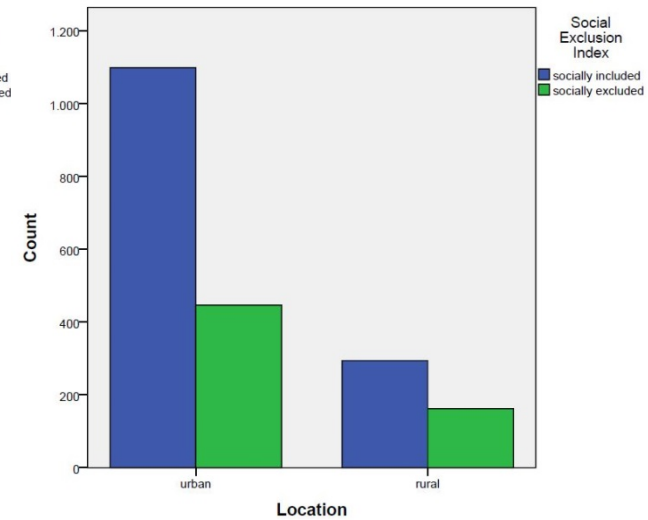
- The exclusion ratio is higher for rural than for urban areas.
  - In Tunisia, the total number of socially excluded young people even exceeds the number of socially included.
- High rates of rural-urban migration are likely to be a result of the high risk of social exclusion in rural areas.

### Tunisia



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Location	urban	894	466	1360
	rural	278	362	640
Total		1172	828	2000

### Lebanon

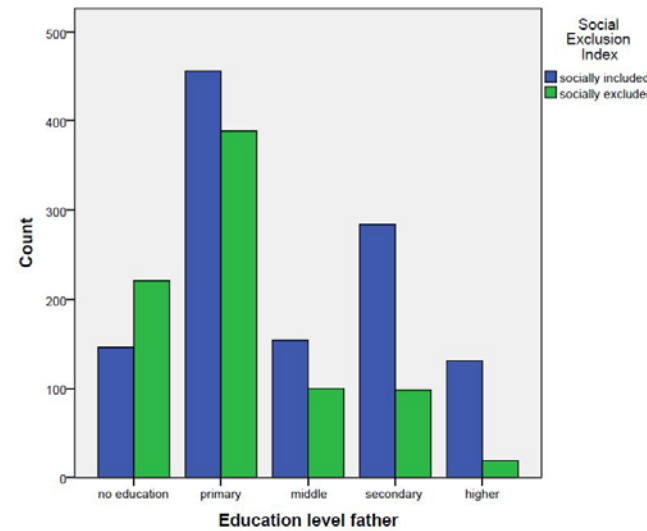


		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Location	urban	1098	446	1544
	rural	294	162	456
Total		1392	608	2000

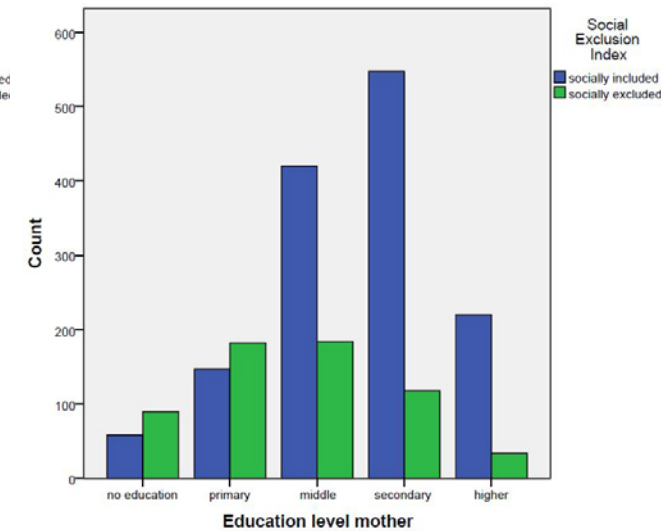
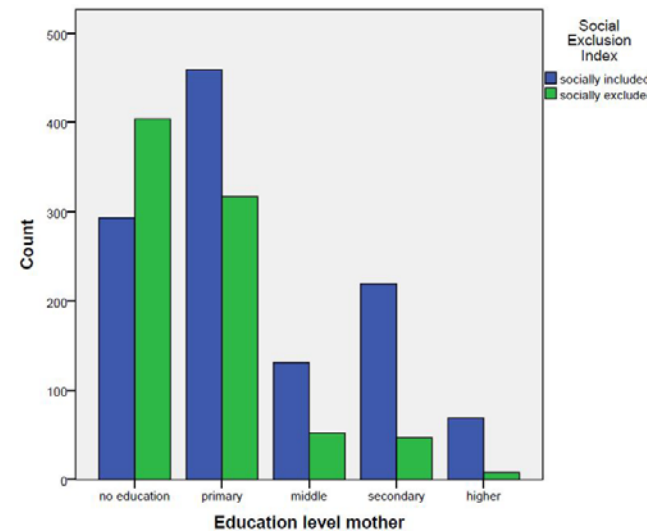
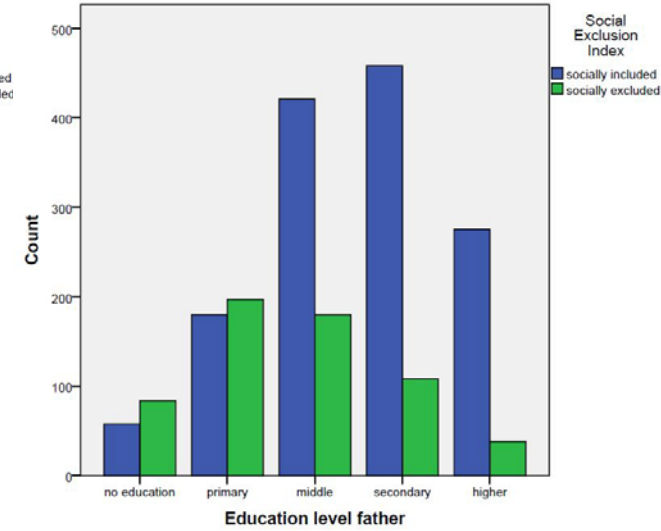
## Social background

- **Cut-off:**  
Respondents whose parents have no education or a low level of education are more likely to be excluded.
  - **Correlation between the mother's and father's educational level:** In many cases social contacts and marriage are limited to the social class a person is born into.
- Low social mobility!

### Tunisia



### Lebanon

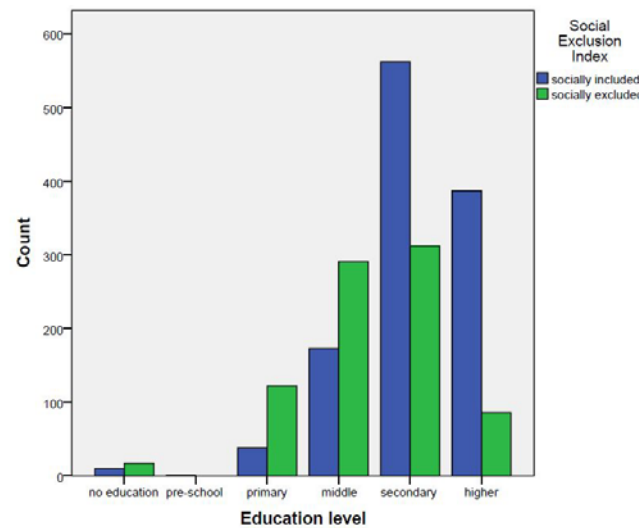




## Education

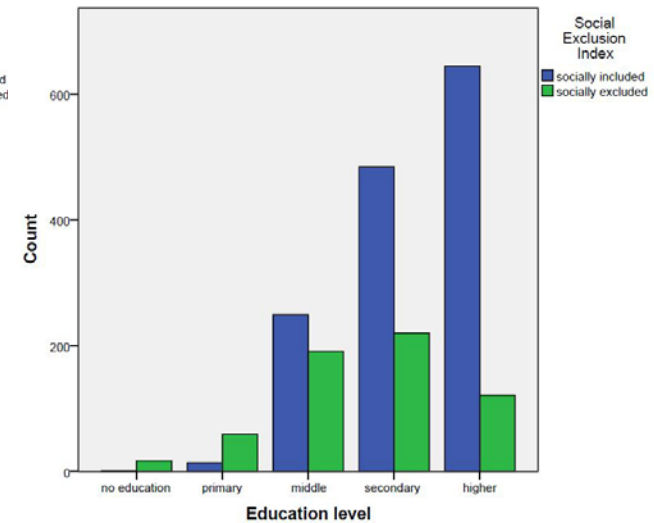
- In both countries, social inclusion seems to be positively correlated with the level of education.
- Education as a catalyst for social inclusion
- *But* what about the fact that many highly educated young people cannot find reasonable jobs?

### Tunisia



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Education level	no education	10	17	27
	pre-school	1	0	1
	primary	38	122	160
	middle	173	291	464
	secondary	562	312	874
	higher	387	86	473
Total		1171	828	1999

### Lebanon

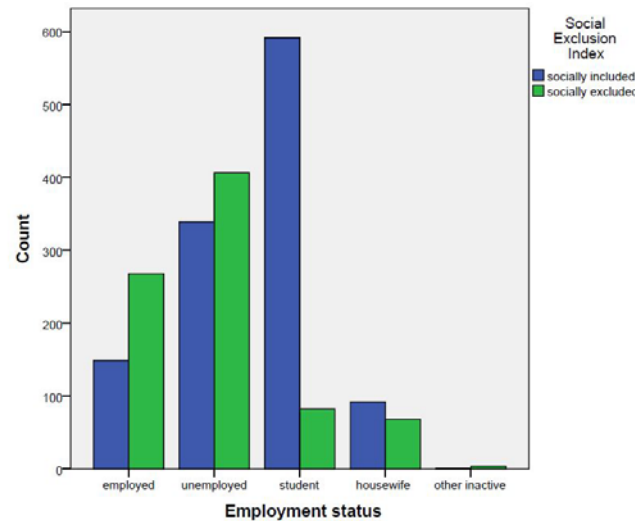


		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Education level	no education	1	17	18
	primary	14	59	73
	middle	249	191	440
	secondary	484	220	704
	higher	644	121	765
Total		1392	608	2000

## Employment

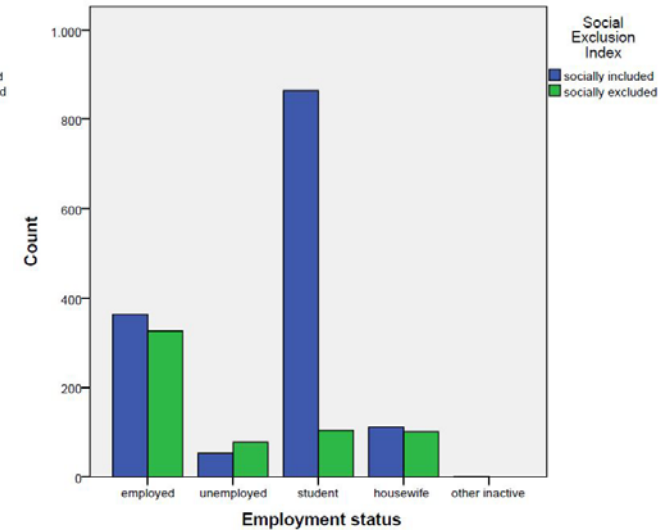
- In both countries, students are significantly less affected by social exclusion than any other group.
  - Especially in Tunisia, both employed and unemployed are highly likely to be socially excluded.
- The results indicate that also bad working conditions (e.g. dominance of informal sector) contribute to high levels of social exclusion.

### Tunisia



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Employment status	employed	149	268	417
	unemployed	339	406	745
	student	591	82	673
	housewife	92	68	160
	other inactive	1	4	5
Total		1172	828	2000

### Lebanon

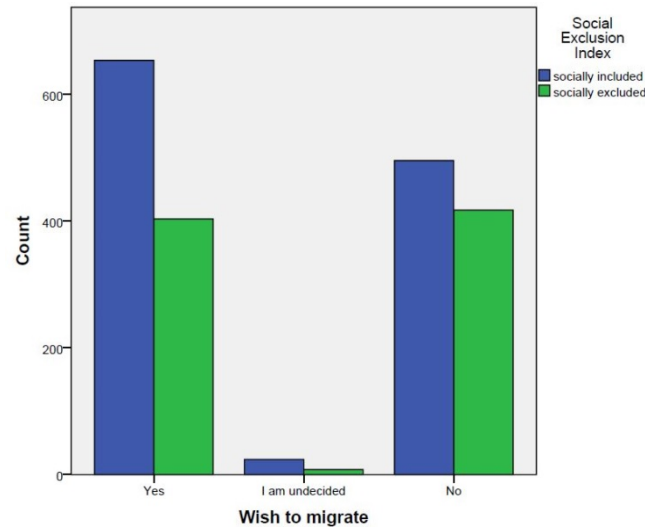


		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Employment status	employed	363	326	689
	unemployed	53	77	130
	student	864	104	968
	housewife	111	101	212
	other inactive	1	0	1
Total		1392	608	2000

## Migration

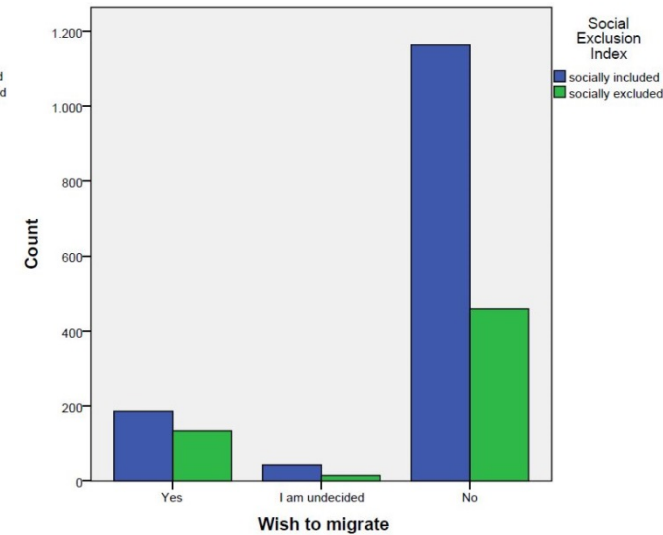
- About 50% of the Tunisian youth but only 15% of the Lebanese youth would like to migrate.
- Overall discontent with living situation seems to be much higher in Tunisia.
- However, only in Lebanon social exclusion might have a direct effect on the individual's aspiration to migrate.

### Tunisia



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Wish to migrate	Yes	653	403	1056
	I am undecided	24	8	32
	No	495	417	912
Total		1172	828	2000

### Lebanon



		Social Exclusion Index		Total
		socially included	socially excluded	
Wish to migrate	Yes	186	134	320
	I am undecided	43	15	58
	No	1163	459	1622
Total		1392	608	2000

# Conclusions

- Social exclusion largely affects young people whose educational level is low and whose parents educational level is low
- In the AMCs, processes of social mobility are primarily shaped by the system of „WASTA“ (= connections)
  - low social and intergenerational mobility!
- Attending an educational institution lowers the risk of social exclusion.
- Correlation between unsuccessful school-to-work transitions and social exclusion.
- Differences between countries:
  - In Tunisia, significantly more men than women are socially excluded.
  - In Tunisia, not only unemployed but especially people in employment are socially excluded
    - bad working conditions, large informal sector
- Although Tunisia has undergone several changes in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, social exclusion remains on a very high level!

# Discussion

- Has the Arab Spring intensified social exclusion?
  - Hopes and expectations of the Arab uprisings in 2010/11 have largely remained unfulfilled
  - A frustrated generation: Large parts of the population, especially young people, have low confidence not only in the government but also in their own capabilities and perspectives
- Similarities to other (former) transformation societies?
  - In Arab transformation societies, basic consensus is missing on how to organize public administration, economy and society as well as on the role of religion
  - Distinctive differences to the transformation processes in CEE countries at the end of the 1980s (there was broad agreement on the goals: pro-Western orientation, market economy, liberal democracy)
- *But* there is more than one path of transformation, which Eisenstadt (2000) refers to as “multiple modernities”.

# Thank you for your attention!

## References

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