



Academic Paper

# Arab Ranking in Global Indices and Its Projected Impacts



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**November 2021**



**Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations**

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## Arab Ranking in Global Indices and Its Projected Impacts

Prof. Dr. Walid ‘Abd al-Hay\*

### Introduction

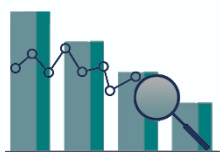
One of the problems of evaluating the achievements of any country, political region, or international organization, is the defining of the criteria on the basis of which countries are compared and ranked. There is difference between the “impression” one has about a particular country, which often dominates the public opinion, locally, regionally or internationally, and the evaluation and comparison that are based on certain quantified indicators that are more realistic. It is known that strategic planning of any country, region or international body are based on realistic evaluation rather than on mere impressions.

### Index Measurement Methodology

Most researchers in the field of quantification of various social phenomena consider the positivism of the French philosopher Auguste Comte the first step in this context. He called for dealing with social issues in a manner similar to the subjects of natural sciences. His call was well-received by the French thinker Pierre Guillaume Frédéric Le Play (19th century), who is credited with establishing what has become the modern-day social survey. Then, in the 1950s and 1960s, other scales appeared especially in psychological studies, and then they were found in almost all branches of social sciences, including political science and international relations.<sup>1</sup>

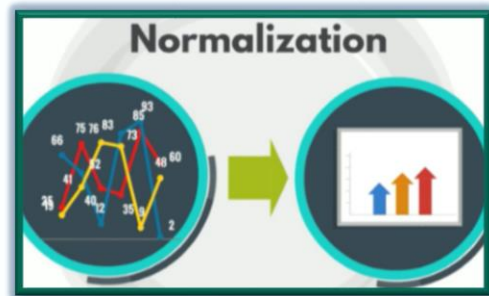


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The indices to measure the economic, social and political dimensions are constructed by following a number of steps, they are:<sup>2</sup>

- ▶ 1. An index is elaborated, which is based on sub-indices, and a simple index is constructed based on a subset of indicators.
- ▶ 2. The sub-indices have weights, which are averaged to give way to the index. These weights are determined based on mathematical rules and social theories. Through comparing, we found out that the differences between the weights of the same index in the different models was small. Therefore, in most cases, the sum of differences in weights does not affect the country's ranking or the general level of its achievement. Each sub-index is based on data gathered from the state, research institutions, regional or international organizations or academic studies (or the media when necessary). Sometimes normalization<sup>3</sup> is used to standardize the indices of different weights.



- ▶ 3. The weight of the index is based on the Cross-Impact Matrix, where the correlation coefficient between each sub-index and the rest of the indices is measured to know its effect (positive or negative), and accordingly weights are distributed over the indices. The indices with highest impact (positively or negatively) are given the highest weights, then the weights of the rest of the indicators are arranged on this basis.
- ▶ 4. The ranking of a state is based on the total points it obtained in the sum of the sub-indices of each major index, then in the sum of all indices. It is important to point out that some main indices (such as Political Stability) contain a large number of sub-indices, some of them have been classified as a main index in other models. For example, the GINI index which measures the equality in income distribution, is found in some models a main index, and in others a sub-index, thus to be more accurate, it is required to be calculated once.
- ▶ 5. Some models are based on the comparison between countries, either at the global or regional level. Furthermore, depending on the social or political index to be measured, the comparison would be done in most cases on the basis of the general average of a number of years rather than one year.



## The Study Indices

For the ranking of Arab countries, we relied on ten indices that have 413 sub-indices, where their weights are based on the aforementioned rule. When we made measurements based on a number of measurement models, we did not find any statistically significant differences. The following table displays the indices we used, their weights and their sub-indices:<sup>4</sup>

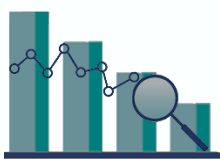
**Table 1: Indices and Weights**

Index	Sub-Indices	Relative weight
Democracy	60	5
Political Stability	305 <sup>5</sup>	5
Gini	2	4
Militarization	5	4
Globalization	24	3
Research and development (R&D) expenditure	1	2
Crime	4	2
Poverty	10	2
Health expenditure	1	2
Literacy	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>31</b>

## Measurement Results of Arab Countries

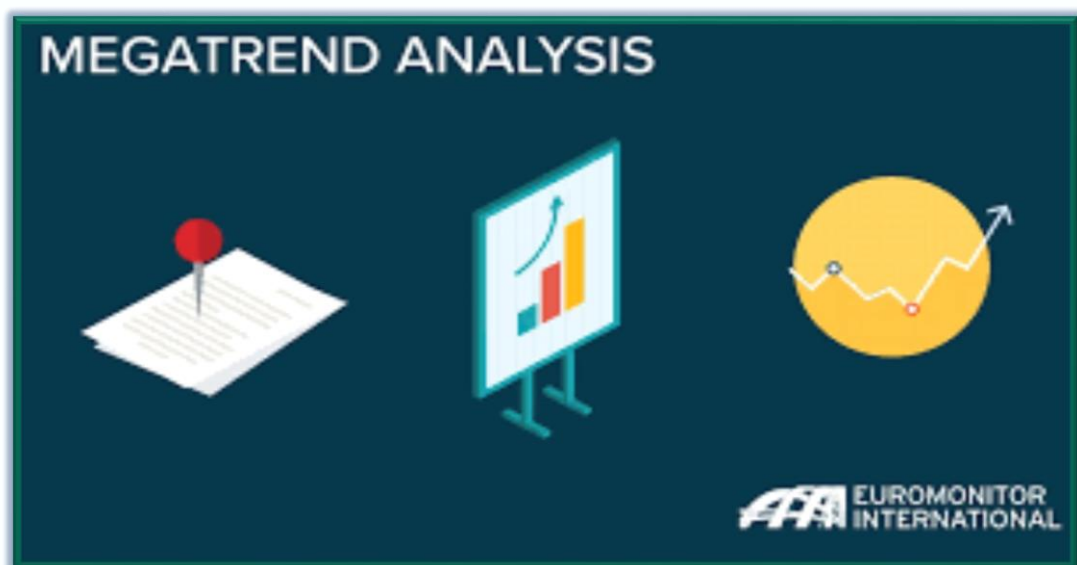
Among the difficulties we faced during the preparation of this research, there were a number of discrepancies that we had to take into account when setting the results:

1. “Some” Arab countries such as Syria, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia, Iraq, Sudan and to a lesser extent Egypt, had witnessed during the 2010–2020 period difficult



circumstances that caused significant changes in the value of indices. Consequently, I have considered the indices of the three years before the decade of the Arab turmoil, in addition to the last three years (2018–2021). Then, the average value of a certain country was concluded, while taking into consideration more than one model for precision purposes.

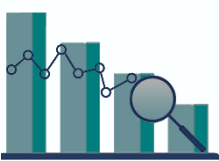
- ▶ 2. When determining the ranking of Arab countries among each other and then determining their ranking globally, we noticed that the regional ranking is inconsistent with the global ranking, and the reason is due to:
  - a. The number of countries on a regional basis is a fixed one (19 Arab countries that were measured), while in international models there are indices that measure more than 200 countries (independent countries or dependent territory), while others measure 193 countries (The number of countries in the United Nations), or measure the countries of which data is available, which sometimes may be less than a hundred countries. Hence, the regional ranking differs from the global one, though with limited difference.
  - b. The impact of the turmoil decade (2010–2020) was different from one Arab country to another, where the economies of some countries have undergone major transformations that exceed those of other Arab countries. As a result, due to these exceptional circumstance, some countries were ranked higher than others. Therefore, to determine the mega-trend of the index, some results have been modified based on the trend of the measured index, using the statistical technique of time series analysis, used in future studies.



The measurement results were as follows:

**Table 2: Indices of Arab Countries 2018–2021**

	Democracy <sup>6</sup>	Political stability <sup>7</sup>	Gini <sup>8</sup>	Militarization <sup>9</sup>	Globalization <sup>10</sup>	R&D expenditure (% of GDP) <sup>11</sup>	Crime per 100 thousand <sup>12</sup>	Poverty (%) <sup>13</sup>	Health expenditure <sup>14</sup>	Literacy <sup>15</sup>
<b>Egypt</b>	2.93	-1.21	31.5	705	68.34	0.72	46.83	32.5	4.95	26
<b>Libya</b>	1.95	-2.48	30.7	484	55.28	0.51	61.78	33	6.1	12
<b>Tunisia</b>	6.59	-0.63	32.8	574	68.72	0.68	43.69	15.2	7.29	18.2
<b>Algeria</b>	3.77	-0.86	27.4	743	56.15	0.54	52.03	5.5	6.22	19
<b>Morocco</b>	5.04	-0.33	39.5	720	70.53	0.73	48.66	15	5.31	26
<b>Mauritania</b>	3.92	-0.75	32.6	848	50.57	0.01	43.8	31	4.58	47
<b>Sudan</b>	2.54	-1.76	45	538	46.34	0.3	42.34	46.5	4.51	39
<b>Jordan</b>	3.62	-0.32	33.7	833	73.4	0.71	39.96	15.7	7.79	2.1
<b>Syria</b>	1.43	-2.73	32.7	796	50.83	0.02	68.4	35.2	3.57	15
<b>Iraq</b>	3.62	-2.53	29.5	664	46.73	0.04	70.5	18.9	4.11	14
<b>KSA</b>	2.08	-0.66	54.9	735	67.73	0.82	60.1	12.7	6.36	5.3
<b>Lebanon</b>	4.16	-1.65	31.8	728	68.63	0.79	67.6	27.4	8.35	4.9
<b>Kuwait</b>	3.8	0.24	53.9	818	71.86	0.06	33.42	4.1	5	3.8
<b>UAE</b>	2.7	0.63	48.9	713	75.51	1.3	53.3	7.2	4.23	7
<b>Qatar</b>	3.24	0.67	56.3	571	75.32	0.51	52.1	3.3	2.49	7
<b>Oman</b>	3	0.37	55.1	751	63.73	0.22	49	6.2	4.13	4
<b>Bahrain</b>	2.49	-0.59	57.4	739	68.92	0.1	55.4	12.5	4.13	4.3
<b>Yemen</b>	1.95	-2.67	36.7	671	48	0.27	61.3	48.6	4.88	34
<b>Palestine</b>	3.93	-2.05	33.7	807	33.9	0.49	12	36	6	3.3





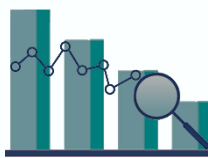
## Ranking Among Arab Countries

The ranking of the Arab countries was made on the basis of:

- ▶ 1. Determining the values of each state's indices.
- ▶ 2. Determining the ranking of each Arab country based on the values of each of the ten indices (highest to lowest).
- ▶ 3. The best country would be given the value 19 (According to the number of countries in question), then 18 and 17, etc.



- ▶ 4. We multiply the country's rank by the value of the relative weight of the index (i.e., we multiply 19 by 5 for the first country, then 18 by 5 for the second country, etc.), so on so forth with the other indices, where we multiply the country's ranking by the weight of the index as shown in table 1. It's important to note here that we took into account that the highest value of some indicators are considered the worst case (such as in the case of crime or military index, etc.). Consequently, the worst country is ranked number 1 and multiplied by the weight of the index, which makes it get a lower value than the best country. Therefore, the order is sometimes ascending and sometimes descending, based on the nature of the index (negative or positive).
- ▶ 5. We add the values obtained of each country and rank them according to the total.





Based on these steps, the total of the Arab countries and their ranking in the ten indices are shown in tables 3–7:

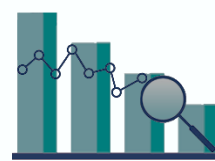
**Table 3: Democracy and Political Stability Indices of the Arab Countries (2018–2021)**

Country	Democracy	Weight: 5 (19×5)	Country	Political stability	Weight: 5 (19×5)
Tunisia	6.59	95	Qatar	0.67	95
Morocco	5.04	90	UAE	0.63	90
Lebanon	4.16	85	Oman	0.37	85
Palestine	3.93	80	Kuwait	0.24	80
Mauritania	3.92	75	Jordan	-0.32	75
Kuwait	3.8	70	Morocco	-0.33	70
Algeria	3.77	65	Bahrain	-0.59	65
Jordan	3.62	60	Tunisia	-0.63	60
Iraq	3.62	60	KSA	-0.66	55
Qatar	3.24	55	Mauritania	-0.75	50
Oman	3	50	Algeria	-0.86	45
Egypt	2.93	45	Egypt	-1.21	40
UAE	2.7	40	Lebanon	-1.65	35
Sudan	2.54	35	Sudan	-1.76	30
Bahrain	2.49	30	Palestine	-2.05	25
KSA	2.08	25	Libya	-2.48	20
Libya	1.95	20	Iraq	-2.53	15
Yemen	1.95	20	Yemen	-2.67	10
Syria	1.43	15	Syria	-2.73	5



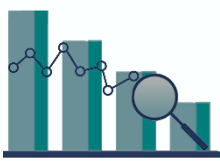
**Table 4: Gini and Militarization Indices**

Country	Gini	Weight: 4 (19×4)	Country	Militarization	Weight: 4 (19×4)
Algeria	27.4	76	Libya	484	76
Iraq	29.5	72	Sudan	538	72
Libya	30.7	68	Qatar	571	68
Egypt	31.5	64	Tunisia	574	64
Lebanon	31.8	60	Mauritania	648	60
Mauritania	32.6	56	Iraq	664	56
Syria	32.7	52	Yemen	671	52
Tunisia	32.8	48	Egypt	705	48
Jordan	33.7	44	UAE	713	44
Palestine	33.7	44	Morocco	720	40
Yemen	36.7	40	Lebanon	728	36
Morocco	39.5	36	KSA	735	32
Sudan	45	32	Bahrain	739	28
UAE	48.9	28	Algeria	743	24
Kuwait	53.9	24	Oman	751	20
KSA	54.9	20	Syria	796	16
Oman	55.1	16	Palestine	807	12
Qatar	56.3	12	Kuwait	818	8
Bahrain	57.4	8	Jordan	833	4



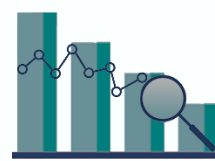
**Table 5: Globalization and R&D Expenditure Indices**

Country	Globalization	Weight: 3 (19×3)	Country	R&D expenditure	Weight: 2 (19×2)
UAE	75.51	57	UAE	1.3	38
Qatar	75.32	54	KSA	0.82	36
Jordan	73.4	51	Lebanon	0.79	34
Kuwait	71.86	48	Morocco	0.73	32
Morocco	70.53	45	Egypt	0.72	30
Bahrain	68.92	42	Jordan	0.71	28
Tunisia	68.72	39	Tunisia	0.68	26
Lebanon	68.63	36	Algeria	0.54	24
Egypt	68.34	33	Libya	0.51	22
KSA	67.73	30	Qatar	0.51	20
Oman	63.73	27	Palestine	0.49	18
Algeria	56.15	24	Sudan	0.3	16
Libya	55.28	21	Yemen	0.27	14
Syria	50.83	18	Oman	0.22	12
Mauritania	50.57	15	Bahrain	0.1	10
Yemen	48	12	Kuwait	0.06	8
Iraq	46.73	9	Iraq	0.04	6
Sudan	46.34	6	Syria	0.02	4
Palestine	33.9	3	Mauritania	0.01	2



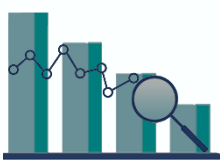
**Table 6: Crime and Poverty Indices**

Country	Crime per 100 thousand	Weight: 2 (19×2)	Country	Poverty	Weight: 2 (19×2)
<b>Palestine</b>	12	38	<b>Qatar</b>	3.3	38
<b>Kuwait</b>	33.42	36	<b>Kuwait</b>	4.1	36
<b>Jordan</b>	39.96	34	<b>Algeria</b>	5.5	34
<b>Sudan</b>	42.34	32	<b>Oman</b>	6.2	32
<b>Tunisia</b>	43.69	30	<b>UAE</b>	7.2	30
<b>Mauritania</b>	43.8	28	<b>Bahrain</b>	12.5	28
<b>Egypt</b>	46.83	26	<b>KSA</b>	12.7	26
<b>Morocco</b>	48.66	24	<b>Morocco</b>	15	24
<b>Oman</b>	49	22	<b>Tunisia</b>	15.2	22
<b>Algeria</b>	52.03	20	<b>Jordan</b>	15.7	20
<b>Qatar</b>	52.1	18	<b>Iraq</b>	18.9	18
<b>UAE</b>	53.3	16	<b>Lebanon</b>	27.4	16
<b>Bahrain</b>	55.4	14	<b>Mauritania</b>	31	14
<b>KSA</b>	60.1	12	<b>Egypt</b>	32.5	12
<b>Yemen</b>	61.3	10	<b>Libya</b>	33	10
<b>Libya</b>	61.78	8	<b>Syria</b>	35.2	8
<b>Lebanon</b>	67.6	6	<b>Palestine</b>	36	6
<b>Syria</b>	68.4	4	<b>Sudan</b>	46.5	4
<b>Iraq</b>	70.5	2	<b>Yemen</b>	48.6	2



**Table 7: Health Expenditure and Literacy Indices**

Country	Health expenditure (% of GDP)	Weight: 2 (19×2)	Country	Literacy	Weight: 2 (19×2)
Lebanon	8.35	38	Jordan	2.1	38
Jordan	7.79	36	Palestine	3.3	36
Tunisia	7.29	34	Kuwait	3.8	34
KSA	6.36	32	Oman	4	32
Algeria	6.22	30	Bahrain	4.3	30
Libya	6.1	28	Lebanon	4.9	28
Palestine	6	26	KSA	5.3	26
Morocco	5.31	24	UAE	7	24
Kuwait	5	22	Qatar	7	24
Egypt	4.95	20	Libya	12	22
Yemen	4.88	18	Iraq	14	20
Mauritania	4.58	16	Syria	15	18
Sudan	4.51	14	Tunisia	18.2	16
UAE	4.23	12	Algeria	19	14
Oman	4.13	10	Egypt	26	12
Bahrain	4.13	10	Morocco	26	12
Iraq	4.11	8	Yemen	34	10
Syria	3.57	6	Sudan	39	8
Qatar	2.49	4	Mauritania	47	6



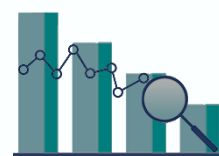
Adding the scores of each Arab country and comparing them with their total of the pre-Arab turmoil period (2007–2010), the ranking would be as follows, see table 8:

**Table 8: Arab Countries Ranking Before and After the Arab Turmoil**

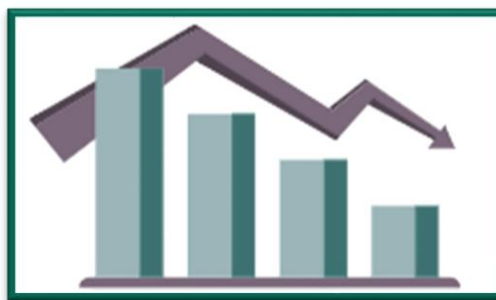
Country	Ranking of Arab countries by total score (2020–2021)	Average of total score before the turmoil (2007–2010)	Drop or progress of scores between the pre- and post-turmoil period	Ranking of Arab countries based on the drop of scores
Tunisia	469	478	-9	13
Morocco	409	408	+1	2
Jordan	390	395	-5	10
Qatar	388	388	0	3
UAE	379	380	-1	4
Lebanon	374	391	-17	15
Kuwait	369	370	-1	4
Algeria	356	360	-4	9
Egypt	330	339	-9	13
Mauritania	322	323	-1	4
Oman	306	307	-1	4
Libya	295	328	-33	17
KSA	294	300	-6	12
Palestine	288	289	-1	4
Iraq	266	260	+6	1
Bahrain	265	270	-5	11
Sudan	249	270	-21	16
Yemen	188	249	-61	18
Syria	146	349	-103	19

Based on table 8, we conclude the following:

- ▶ 1. The scores of 17 countries have dropped after the turmoil decade.
- ▶ 2. There only two countries whose scores have increased; Iraq (+6) and Morocco (+1).
- ▶ 3. Five countries have encountered the highest drop of scores during the turmoil decade; Syria (103), Yemen (61), Libya (33), Lebanon (17) and Sudan (21).



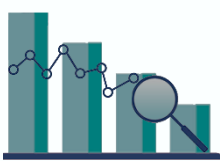
- 4. If the absolute value of the sum of indices is:  $19$  (number of countries)  $\times$   $31$  (sum of weights) =  $589$ , and the total drop of scores is  $278$  (Table 8), this means that the turmoil has caused a drop of  $47.2\%$  in the 10 indices of the Arab countries.



As for the Arab ranking worldwide in each index, table 9 shows the following:

**Table 9: Arab Ranking Worldwide in Each of the Ten Indices<sup>16</sup>**

Country	Democracy	Political stability	Gini	Militarization	Globalization	R&D	Crime	Poverty	Health	Literacy	Total	Global ranking
Tunisia	54	86	39	78	65	45	72	46	63	113	661	66
Jordan	118	133	49	147	45	41	71	34	50	46	734	73
UAE	145	29	35	131	42	25	50	63	140	84	744	74
Qatar	126	36	119	76	43	53	29	54	175	86	797	80
Lebanon	108	144	32	136	71	37	70	86	43	77	804	80
Bahrain	150	76	148	140	62	73	21	36	142	55	903	90
KSA	156	87	146	118	70	36	101	32	90	74	910	91
Morocco	96	96	106	135	59	38	111	42	115	130	928	93
Libya	157	163	22	37	118	52	89	99	96	96	929	93
Kuwait	114	71	140	144	51	82	61	78	125	67	933	93
Palestine	113	143	50	142	164	54	84	58	97	58	963	96
Oman	136	63	147	142	85	65	35	85	143	70	971	97
Algeria	115	126	12	141	113	47	118	89	95	116	972	97
Egypt	138	141	30	129	67	39	146	101	126	132	1,049	105
Mauritania	112	147	36	114	145	101	116	96	132	149	1,148	115
Iraq	118	160	21	118	162	88	126	85	145	153	1,176	118
Sudan	149	172	56	62	163	60	185	144	133	145	1,269	127
Syria	164	177	37	139	144	94	113	172	150	108	1,298	130
Yemen	157	179	84	122	159	62	145	168	129	134	1,339	134





Based on table 9, and concerning the Arab countries ranking globally (The average number of ranked countries is 185 in the ten indices over three years), we conclude the following:

- ▶ 1. There was no Arab country among the top 65 countries in the global ranking.
- ▶ 2. The order of Arab countries was as follows:
  - a. The ranks of 13 countries were between 66 and 97.
  - b. The ranks of 6 countries were between 105 and 134.
- ▶ 3. The total population of the Arab countries that are ranked least globally include 64.7% of the total population of the Arab world, indicating the continuation of the Arab impasse. This requires measuring on the basis of “society” and not on the basis of Arab countries, because it is more expressive of the Arab situation.
- ▶ 4. The table indicates that the difference in scores between the best Arab country (Tunisia) and the worst country (Yemen) is 678, which is more than the double. This means that the disparities in the Arab structure are quite sharp.
- ▶ 5. If we look at the index values of a country like Egypt, which is the largest in terms of population, media influence, and military power, not to mention its historical value in the Arab conscience, we will find that the decline in its ability to lead the region is a reflection of the decline in its achievements and ranking in development indices. It is ranked 14th among the Arab countries, and was not ranked the first or the second in any of the ten indices. The difference between Egypt and the first Arab country is 388, as shown in tables 9 and 10.



When determining the best two Arab countries in each index, we find the following results according to the previous criteria:

**Table 10: Countries Ranked First and Second Among Arab Countries in the Ten Indices**

Index	Democracy	Political stability	Gini	Militarization	Globalization	R&D	Crime	Poverty	Health	Literacy
1st	Tunisia	UAE	Algeria	Libya	UAE	UAE	Bahrain	KSA	Lebanon <sup>17</sup>	Jordan
2nd	Morocco	Qatar	Iraq	Sudan	Qatar	KSA	Qatar	Jordan	Jordan	Bahrain

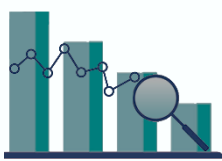
### Analysis

Our impressions must not affect us in accepting or rejecting these results, as mentioned earlier in the introduction. To make a sound judgment about a country, it is also important not to rely on a single index and not to ignore the differences in the weights of the indices.



By monitoring the ten Arab indices, we concluded the following:

- ▶ 1. It is noted that in the main indices, which have a relative high weight, the Arab countries have scored the worst, such as in democracy, political stability and militarization indices, which represent 45.2% of the total weights of all indices. Since these three indices are of a structural nature, hence they influence the rest of the indices the most, and are considered their driver, as termed by future studies. This means that any shifts in the Arab position depends mainly on the change of these three indices.



► 2. It is noted that the main Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, KSA and Sudan) lag behind in most of the indices, when compared to the rest of the medium or small size Arab countries, whether status or population wise. Therefore, the weakness of the central indices and the backwardness of the main Arab countries leads us to say that we cannot be optimistic about the Arab conditions.

► 3. It is necessary to note that some indicators (poverty, health, and literacy) were calculated in the Gulf countries on the basis of the total population and not only the citizens (where foreigners constitute about 63% of the total population in 2018/2019), and that the total population of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries constitute only about 9% of the total Arab population.<sup>18</sup>

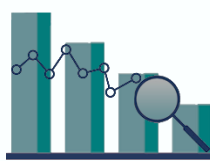


► 4. Comparing the geo-strategic weight of the Arab region with the rest of the regions indicates that it either ranked the last or the penultimate, especially in the main indices.

► 5. A study conducted previously by the researcher has showed that the Arab region is one of the most penetrated regions in the world.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the current decline of the United States (US) and the decline of the importance of the Arab region to the US, as was explained by the “Interim National Security Strategic Guidance,” issued by the current US President Joe Biden,<sup>20</sup> means that the region is on the cusp of strategic transformations. These would give the central Arab forces the chance to forge new international alliances with rising global powers that are less interventionist than the US and other Western European countries. However, this depends on the level of rationality of the Arab decision-makers and the achievements concerning the ten indices that we discussed in this study.



Joe Biden



## The General Trend of Political Stability in the Arab Countries 2018–2021

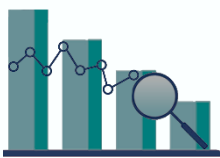
Since the political stability index is the most comprehensive one, then determining its general direction determines the stability trends in the Arab countries during the next five years, until 2025.



Based on the results of the past four years, the following was concluded:

**Table 11: Trends of Political Stability in Arab Countries 2017–2021<sup>21</sup>**

Country/ progress (+) or drop (-) of stability scores	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
<b>Yemen</b>	-0.6	+1	+1.8	+0.7
<b>Syria</b>	-0.1	+0.7	+0.8	0
<b>Sudan</b>	+5.4	+3.5	+2.8	-0.4
<b>Libya</b>	-0.7	-2.4	-4.8	-1.8
<b>Iraq</b>	+9.2	+6	+2.9	-0.3
<b>Mauritania</b>	+4.6	+3.1	+1	-0.4
<b>Lebanon</b>	-0.8	-2.2	-4	-4.3
<b>Palestine</b>	-1	-1.2	-0.9	-2.2
<b>Egypt</b>	+4.8	+3.7	+3.4	+1
<b>Jordan</b>	+1.9	0	-0.9	-1.4
<b>Algeria</b>	+3.2	+2.2	+1.8	+1
<b>Morocco</b>	+3.4	+2.5	+1.5	-0.3
<b>KSA</b>	+1.5	+0.5	+0.7	-0.9
<b>Tunisia</b>	+5	+2.9	+0.9	-1.1
<b>Bahrain</b>	-1.8	-2.3	-2.9	-2.8
<b>Kuwait</b>	+5.6	+3	+0.3	-2
<b>Oman</b>	+2.1	+2.2	-0.4	-2.4
<b>Qatar</b>	-0.1	+4	+1.3	-0.4
<b>UAE</b>	+3.4	+2.5	-0.2	-2.2



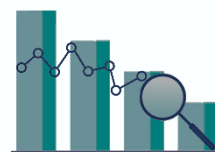
- ▶ 1. In 2021, three Arab countries (Yemen, Egypt and Algeria) out of 19 have witnessed improvement in political stability. However, the improvement rate of Egypt and Algeria is decreasing annually, indicating that it may become negative in the next few years.
- ▶ 2. It is noted that what applies to Egypt and Algeria almost applies to most Arab countries, in terms of the tendency of gradual decline in improvement (as in Sudan or Kuwait), or in terms of getting worse, as is the case of Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman, UAE, Jordan, Palestine, and Libya. This means that the trend of worsening stability conditions has preceded the Covid-19 pandemic, and the latter has added a new factor of instability to the relevant sub-indices.
- ▶ 3. If we calculate the total progress and decline of stability levels in 2021, we find that the overall total of all Arab countries is a drop in stability scores by a total of 20.2 points compared to 2020.

### Political Stability Indices in Non-Arab Regional Powers

Table 12 reveals the values of the political stability index of the regional powers that have direct and continuous influence in Arab affairs. They are Israel, Turkey and Iran. The table indicates the following:



- ▶ 1. The instability trend is equally increasing in two countries, Iran and Israel, although the total score of Israel's stability index is higher than Iran's. However, the growing points of instability in the two countries will be reflected in one way or another on the Arab region, thus increasing the tension there.
- ▶ 2. Although Turkey has recorded a clear improvement in its stability index during the measurement period, it is noted that this improvement has declined in 2020 and became negative in 2021.
- ▶ 3. If we consider the mutual influence between Arab instability and the instability of non-Arab regional powers, this indicates that there will be more turmoil on the Arab and non-Arab sides.
- ▶ 4. The US disengagement from the Middle East has created a geo-strategic vacuum that will be employed by rising powers (China and Russia). This may lead to the reconfiguration of traditional alliances, hence possible confrontations



between the forces of traditional regional alliances and the forces leaning to new alliances. As a result, the structural stability of the Middle East region will be effected, and the stability of each country depends on its proactive adaptation efforts that would absorb the effects of the upcoming transformations.

**Table 12: Non-Arab Regional Powers<sup>22</sup>**

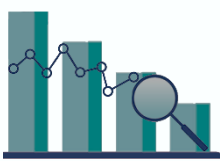
Country	2018	2019	2020	2021	Result	Total 2021*	Global Ranking of 179 countries**
Iran	+1.3	-0.2	-1.5	-1.1	-1.5	84.5	136
Turkey	+1.1	+2.5	+0.6	-0.6	+3.6	79.7	122
Israel	+0.2	+0.2	-0.4	-1.5	-1.5	44	31

\* The total score indicates “instability.”

\*\* The highest is the worst.

## Recommendations

Although we acknowledge that there are gaps in quantitative measurement methods, it rids society of the burdens of the “Cognitive Dissonance” theory,<sup>23</sup> which is based on mental deception resulting from the control of a certain idea or impression refuted by quantitative data. For ideological biases, country tendencies, emotional ties, charismatic fascination, or ethnic prejudice generally push individuals and leaders alike to fabricate interpretations of the reality consistent with the idea that dominates the individual or the leader. However, “strict scientific quantitative approaches” refine this view and neutralize its impact on the individual’s cognitive system. Therefore, it lays the sound basis of a “qualitative” analysis, and builds the most appropriate theories to understand our Arab landscape. It helps us to determine the achievements of each Arab country, on the one hand, and the achievements of the Arab region compared to the rest of the global geopolitical regions, on the other hand.





Based on that, we call for:

1. Defining the positions and policies of Arab countries on the basis of quantitative approaches, similar to our study, in order to get rid of the quirks of artificial cognitive consistency.
2. Arab powers to start developing proactive adaptive strategies to employ the geostrategic future shifts to their advantage.
3. The need to be aware that since the non-Arab regional powers are competing to forge strategic partnerships or strategic understandings with the international forces advancing towards the region—after the US disengagement—this means that the least fortunate is Israel.<sup>24</sup> For despite the development of its relations with China and the attempts to arrange its relations with Russia, Iranian relations with the two powers, as well as the Turkish relationship with Russia, indicates that they are ahead of Israel in this regard. Thus, Arab strategists are required to think of ways to employ this development for the benefit of the Arab side. This issue could be the focus of further scientific research.





## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For more details about measurement in the social sciences and its methodology, see National Research Council, *The Importance of Common Metrics for Advancing Social Science Theory and Research: A Workshop Summary* (Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 2011), pp. 7–30.
- <sup>2</sup> To see the problems and methods of measurement, and identify the indices and their calculation equations, see the following reference that discusses 165 indices and their growing trend, and provides information about the institutions that issue them: Romina Bandura and Carlos Martin del Campo, *A Survey of Composite Indices Measuring Country Performance: 2006 Update* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2006), pp. 9–11 and 13–91.
- <sup>3</sup> Normalization of ratings means adjusting values measured on different scales to a notionally common scale.
- <sup>4</sup> To find out the number of sub-indices, please refer to the models cited in the endnote of each index, and to understand the measurement steps and identify the indicators, see [https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.42/2017/Seminar/Chapter\\_6\\_draft\\_2017.06.15\\_-\\_for\\_the\\_seminar.pdf](https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.42/2017/Seminar/Chapter_6_draft_2017.06.15_-_for_the_seminar.pdf); see also measuring Global militarization Index (GMI) in [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bits/tream/handle/document/74494/ssoar-2021-bayer\\_et\\_al-Global\\_Militarisation\\_Index\\_presentation\\_codebook.pdf?sequence=1&isAllo](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bits/tream/handle/document/74494/ssoar-2021-bayer_et_al-Global_Militarisation_Index_presentation_codebook.pdf?sequence=1&isAllo)
- <sup>5</sup> Political stability index is the most comprehensive one, for it includes most of the other indices or sub-indices. However, the problem of its measurement remains in the analyses of the sub-indices. For example, when measuring the equality in income distribution some consider it the ratio of the average income of the 20% richest to the 20% poorest, while others consider it the ratio of the average income of the 10% richest to the 10% poorest. Also, the some study the literacy rate of population aged 15 years and over, while others consider the populated aged 18 years and above. It is also noted that some consider the Kearney Globalization Index, while others the KOF Globalization Index. As a result, we tried to unite indices and apply them on all Arab countries, based on their rank. For the ranking of the Arab countries in these models was very close, despite the discrepancy sometimes in the unit of measurement or the number of indices or relative weights. See the Political Stability Index and its circumstances in Political Stability - Country Rankings, site of TheGlobalEconomy.com, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb\\_political\\_stability/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_political_stability/); see also Political Stability No Violence, site of The World Bank, <https://tcdata360.worldbank.org/indicators/h395cb858?country=ITA&indicator=379&countries=BRA&viz=choropleth&years=2016>; Resilience, site of Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2020 Edition, <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/data/resilience/>; Natalie Fiertz (ed.), *Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021* (Washington: The Fund For Peace, 2021), <https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/fsi2021-report.pdf>; and Fragile and Conflict Affected State, site of Fund For Peace, <https://fundforpeace.org/what-we-do/fragile-and-conflict-affected-states/>
- <sup>6</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Democracy Index 2020: In Sickness and in Health?,” 3/2/2021, [https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf?mkt\\_tok=NzUzLVJJUS00MzgAAAF\\_0\\_oV3WR43ErnuEj\\_F7w8ErzmKCvtyNC7r328LXOQ8TgHi1DeOBcVpoWnVQlrhkq6bkZmZKILA\\_deUWceTg6Ig24YW0ZhselggTLOrQycxG5S4A](https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf?mkt_tok=NzUzLVJJUS00MzgAAAF_0_oV3WR43ErnuEj_F7w8ErzmKCvtyNC7r328LXOQ8TgHi1DeOBcVpoWnVQlrhkq6bkZmZKILA_deUWceTg6Ig24YW0ZhselggTLOrQycxG5S4A)
- <sup>7</sup> Political Stability - Country Rankings, TheGlobalEconomy.com.
- <sup>8</sup> Gini Coefficient By Country 2021, site of World Population Review, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gini-coefficient-by-country/>; The World Fact Book, site of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>; Nadia Belhaj Hassine, “Economic Inequality in the Arab Region,” 15/8/2014, site of The Society for the Study of Economic Inequality (ECINEQ), [http://www.ecineq.org/ecineq\\_nyc17/FILESx2017/CR2/p426.pdf](http://www.ecineq.org/ecineq_nyc17/FILESx2017/CR2/p426.pdf); Brian Stoffel, 7 Countries With Worse Income Inequality Than the United States, site of The Motley Fool, 17/7/2017, <https://www.fool.com/investing/2017/07/17/7-countries-with-worse-income-inequality-than-the.aspx>; Jihène Sbaouelgi and Ghazi Boulila, “Does the Impact of Gini Index on Growth Differ among GCC Countries?,” site of Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA), 15/2/2016, [https://mpr.aub.uni-muenchen.de/70564/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_70564.pdf](https://mpr.aub.uni-muenchen.de/70564/1/MPRA_paper_70564.pdf); and Urban - Gini index - Omani – Total, site of National Centre for Statistics and Information, 2018, <https://data.gov.om/wnewgpb/income-expenditure?tsId=1059020>; For the Gulf countries, see details of every country in the site of World Inequality Database, <https://wid.world/country/kuwait/>
- <sup>9</sup> Trends In World Military Expenditure, 2020, SIPRI Fact Sheet, April 2021, site of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), [https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs\\_2104\\_milex\\_0.pdf](https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs_2104_milex_0.pdf); Military expenditure (% of GDP) - Arab World, The World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?locations=1A> About 20% of the total budget of the Palestinian Authority goes to the security services, according to the Authority's statistics, see Adnan Abu Amer, Security Services Drain Palestine's Budget, 7/5/2015, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/05/palestine-gaza-security-services-annual-budget-finance-aman.html>; and The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), The Palestinian Security Sector Budget 2019: Basis of The Internal Missions (Miscellaneous Spending) In Operating Expenses, site of AMAN, 20/1/2021, [https://www.aman-palestine.org/cached\\_uploads/download/2021/01/20/security-budget-english-translation-1611148250.pdf](https://www.aman-palestine.org/cached_uploads/download/2021/01/20/security-budget-english-translation-1611148250.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> Top 50 countries in the Globalization Index 2020, site of Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268168/globalization-index-by-country/>; and Overall globalization - Country rankings, TheGlobalEconomy.com, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/kof\\_overall\\_glob/#Yemen](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/kof_overall_glob/#Yemen)
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- <sup>12</sup> Crime Index by Country 2021 Mid-Year, site of Numbeo, [https://www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings\\_by\\_country.jsp](https://www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings_by_country.jsp); Crime Index by City 2021 Mid-Year, Numbeo, <https://www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings.jsp>; and Global Organized Crime Index 2021, site of Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, <https://kbb9z40cmb2apwafcho9v3j-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/gitoc-global-organized-crime-index-2021.pdf>
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- <sup>14</sup> Current Health Expenditure (% of GDP), The World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS>; Libya - Current Health Expenditure per Capita, World Data Atlas, site of Knoema, <https://knoema.com/atlas/Libya/Health-expenditure-per-capita>; Libya - General Government Expenditure, site of countryeconomy.com, <https://countryeconomy.com/government/expenditure/libya>; Public Expenditure Review of the Palestinian Authority Towards Enhanced Public Finance Management and Improved Fiscal Sustainability, The World Bank, September 2016, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/320891473688227759/pdf/ACS18454-REVISED-FINAL-PER-SEPTEMBER-2016-FOR-PUBLIC-DISCLOSURE-PDF.pdf>; Samer Hamidi, Hacer Özgen Narci, Fevzi Akinci and Omar Nacakgedigi, "Examining Health Care Spending Trends Over a Decade: the Palestinian Case," *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, vol. 21, no. 12, 2015, pp. 861–870, in site of ResearchGate, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282943085\\_Examining\\_Health\\_Care\\_Spending\\_Trends\\_over\\_a\\_Decade\\_The\\_Palestinian\\_Case](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282943085_Examining_Health_Care_Spending_Trends_over_a_Decade_The_Palestinian_Case); and Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency, 2019 Public Budget Performance Report, February 2020, site of Transparency Palestine (Aman), [aman-palestine.org/ cached\\_uploads/download/2020/04/26/public-budget-performance-report-2019-1587933395.pdf](https://aman-palestine.org/ cached_uploads/download/2020/04/26/public-budget-performance-report-2019-1587933395.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> Malik Bu Essah, Arab Countries Ranked by Literacy Rate, site of StepFeed, 8/9/2018, <https://stepfeed.com/arab-countries-ranked-by-literacy-rate-0383>; Literacy Rate by Country 2021, World Population Review, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/literacy-rate-by-country>; and Literacy Rate, Adult Total (% of People Ages 15 and Above), The World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS>
- <sup>16</sup> For the ranking of Arab countries among the different models, see the following references (For comparison and finding that the differences are mostly limited, but they are affected by the number of countries being measured): Gini Coefficient By Country 2021, World Population Review; List of countries by income equality, site of Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_income\\_equality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_income_equality); Overall globalization - Country rankings, TheGlobalEconomy.com; Research and development expenditure - Country rankings, TheGlobalEconomy.com, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/research\\_and\\_development/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/research_and_development/); Indicators of Sustainable Development: Guidelines and Methodologies, 3rd Edition - Full set of methodology sheets, site of the United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Sustainable Development, 15/6/2007, pp. 318–321, [https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/methodology\\_sheets.pdf](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/methodology_sheets.pdf); The 2020 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), site of the United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports, 16/7/2020, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-MPI>; List of countries by research and development spending, Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_research\\_and\\_development\\_spending](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_research_and_development_spending); Murder rate: Countries Compared, site of NationMaster, <https://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Crime/Violent-crime/Murder-rate>; Country Comparison > Population below poverty line, indexmundi, [https://www.google.com/search?q=poverty+index+by+country&rlz=1C1YUOF\\_enJO942JO942&oq=poverty+index+by+country&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i22i3019.20755j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=poverty+index+by+country&rlz=1C1YUOF_enJO942JO942&oq=poverty+index+by+country&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i22i3019.20755j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8); Health spending as percent of GDP - Country rankings; TheGlobalEconomy.com, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/health\\_spending\\_as\\_percent\\_of\\_gdp/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/health_spending_as_percent_of_gdp/); Country Comparison > Literacy; indexmundi, <https://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?c=sf&v=39>
- <sup>17</sup> These results were before the current Lebanese crises.
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- <sup>22</sup> Natalie Fiertz (ed.), *Fragile States Index Annual Report 2021*; Israel: Political Stability, TheGlobalEconomy.com, [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Israel/wb\\_political\\_stability/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Israel/wb_political_stability/); and Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), *Global Peace Index 2021: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (Sydney: IEP, 2021), <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GPI-2021-web-1.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> E. Harmon-Jones (ed.), *Cognitive Dissonance, Second Edition: Reexamining a Pivotal Theory in Psychology*, American Psychological Association, 2019, pp. 3–24.

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<sup>24</sup> To learn about the Israeli concern about this transformation, see the perceptions of Israeli strategists concerning this issue: Lazar Berman, With US Credibility Gashed by Kabul Fiasco, Israel May be Bruised by Association, site of The Times of Israel, 17/8/2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-us-standing-battered-by-kabul-retreat-israel-may-be-bruised-by-association/>; Zev Chafets, Israel Feels Alone Without the U.S. in Afghanistan, site of Bloomberg, 2/9/2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-09-02/without-the-u-s-in-afghanistan-israel-feels-alone-with-threat-of-extremism>; and David Feith, Opinion: Israel's growing ties to China are testing its relationship with the U.S., site of *The Washington Post* newspaper, 6/7/2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/07/06/israels-growing-ties-china-are-testing-its-relationship-with-us/> Regarding the Turkish approach towards China, see Ayca Alemdaroglu and Sultan Tepe, Erdogan Is Turning Turkey Into a Chinese Client State, site of *Foreign Policy* magazine, 16/9/2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/16/erdogan-is-turning-turkey-into-a-chinese-client-state/>

