



# THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST 2023

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

### THEME

Digitalization, Governance, and Sustainability

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Prof. Wadouda Badran** - Dean of the the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science - The British University in Egypt

**Prof. Ali Eldin Hillal** - Professor of Political Science - Cairo University and The British University in Egypt and Former Minister of Youth

**Prof. Adla Ragab** - Professor of Economics - the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

21 OCTOBER 2023

HYBRID

The British University in Egypt  
El-Shorouk City, Cairo, Egypt



The  
BRITISH  
UNIVERSITY  
IN EGYPT

FACULTY OF BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION, ECONOMICS,  
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



*The Faculty of Business Administration, Economics and Political Science (BAEPS) at The British University in Egypt* is delighted to host The Annual Conference of Business, Economics and Politics in the Middle East on **21 October 2023**.

The Middle East region is a 'hotspot' where the effects of security related issues, migration, refugees, as well as climate change are greater than in other regions of the world, with implication not only on global and national politics, but equally on national and international businesses and economies. In the same sense, the region poses challenges as well as chances for good governance, sustainability, and digitalization. The aim of this annual conference is to create and sustain emphasis on studying this region while employing and encouraging interdisciplinary perspectives ranging from business, economics, political science, and sociology.



The  
BRITISH  
UNIVERSITY  
IN EGYPT

FACULTY OF BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION, ECONOMICS,  
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



CFA Institute

**PRME** Principles for Responsible  
Management Education  
an initiative of the 

**AACSB**

Business  
Education  
Alliance  
Member



## **SESSION ONE: DIGITALIZATION**

### **PARALLEL SESSION A1: DIGITALIZATION, MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

**Examining the Impact of Big Data Analytics and Neurological Marketing Research on Marketing Automation in the Egyptian Passenger Automobile Industry**

**Wael Kortam - Professor of Marketing and Director of Advanced Marketing Research Centre (AMRC) at The British University in Egypt**

**Sara El-Arabawy – Assistant Lecturer of Business Administration at The British University in Egypt**

This research paper seeks to emphasize the impact of Big Data Analytics and Neurological marketing research on marketing automation in the Egyptian Passengers Automobile Industry. The motivation for undertaking this research stems from the strong evidence that big data analytics, neurological marketing research and marketing automation are extremely used nowadays by companies, as they become the multimillion industries within the current turbulent and the hypercompetitive Aspects of modern business environments. On the basis of the above idea, that the three variables are the major hot topics nowadays, thus the research aims to bridge the gap between the variables by investigating the impact of Big Data Analytics and Neurological marketing research on marketing automation in the Egyptian Passengers Automobile industry. This research will arguably contribute to provide in-depth investigation of the research phenomenon and variables through a mixed approach. An exploratory qualitative design will be devised, within depth interviews with concerned marketers to define the research gap, develop the Conceptual model and formulate its testable hypothesis. Subsequently, a conclusive causal design will be devised through a nonprobability quota sample and a structured questionnaire for quantitative analysis purposes relying on confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis for hypothesis testing. Data collection will be implemented through administrating the structured questionnaires in the Egyptian

Passengers Automobile Industry as it is claimed to be a relevant and insightful empirical context to demonstrate the interrelationships among the four main research variables.

Keywords: Big Data Analytics, Neurological Marketing Research and Marketing Automation.

### **Examining the Impact of Digitalization on Organizational Resilience: The Mediating Role of Consumer Resistance.**

**Youmna Mohamed Youssef- Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Faculty of Commerce at Mansoura University**

The rapid diffusion of digital technology and other innovations has led to dramatic changes of the organization's service operations and processes, this is more evident in today's turbulent environment than any time before as there is a growing need to examine how to manage crisis and customer experiences. As a result, the marketing landscape is changing, firms are increasingly searching for ways to better engage customers and other stakeholders as well as there is a growing need for firms to examine how to develop their services, influence consumer response to innovation and become more resilient. The growth of digitalization can create opportunities for firms, enhance the service innovation experience and allow firms to become more resilient. Accordingly, this study aims to fill the research gap in the marketing literature. The purpose of this study is to: First, Synthesis the extant literature on digitalization, consumer resistance and organizational resilience. Second, identify the conceptualization of the relationships among digitalization, consumer resistance and organizational resilience. Third, investigate whether the success in using digital technology, devices and analytics would influence consumer response to innovation. Fourth, examine the relationship between digitalization and organizational resilience. Finally, help marketers to use digitalization and impact resilience through adding value to the consumer response to innovation and coping with resistance.

Keywords: Digitalization, Consumer Resistance, Organizational Resilience

## **Integrating Accounting Information Systems and Marketing Information Systems for Building and Sustaining Competitive Advantage**

**Wael Kortam - Professor of Marketing and Director of Advanced Marketing Research Centre (AMRC) at The British University in Egypt**

**Maysa Saad - Assistant Professor of Accounting at the Faculty of Commerce at Cairo University**

This paper aims to bridge an evident research gap in theory and practice through identifying and integrating important interfaces among AIS and MKIS. Little research and professional attention can be argued to be paid to the profitable synergy among the logical design components and implementation tips for highly effective AIS such as costing systems and MKIS such as Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRM). This research will endeavor to achieve such integration through spotting all potential competitive linkages among AIS and MKIS and propose the most competitive methodology to integrate them. It is argued by authors that integrating AIS and MKIS can create and sustain competitive advantage in six different ways; which are: 1- Supporting differential positioning for the organization 2- Leading low cost operations with higher levels of productivity, quality and customer service 3- Supporting market niching strategies 4- Augmenting core accounting and marketing competencies across the value chain 5- Creating synergy among accounting and marketing functions 6- Achieving intimacy with customers, suppliers and distributors.

**PARALLEL SESSION B1: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN DIGITALIZATION AND GOVERNANCE ON MICRO AND MACRO LEVELS**

**Artificial Intelligence in the UAE Oil and Gas Sectors:  
Challenges and Opportunities**

**Felipe Villasuso - Advisor, Corporate Governance Legal, Governance, & Compliance at ADNOC/PhD candidate at LSBU**

Objective/ scope: Artificial intelligence ('AI') has been under continuous development and increasing use and the Oil and Gas sector has been following this trend. According to an EY survey, 92% of Oil and Gas companies are either currently investing in AI or plan to do so in the next two years. Following this trend, important AI regulatory policies, such as the UAE National Strategy for AI, have been put in place in the UAE.

Now more than ever, governments and industries are taking bold steps towards decarbonization and seeking more ways to improve sustainability across operations by deploying advanced technologies which needed to be Assessed from a legal, governance and sustainability perspective with respect to its challenges and opportunities.

Methodology / procedure: The research will consider a benchmarking analysis concerning both upstream and downstream segments of National and International Oil Companies based in the UAE and respective service providers pursuant information available on annual reports and interviews. By way of illustration, case studies to be considered shall be related to: 1) optimized business monitoring of fuel delivery and respective management of workforce implemented by ADNOC Distribution via AI-backed solution of machine learning models; 2) automated drilling systems to collect from simulations to help the drill operator understand the environment, accelerating results and reducing maintenance and costs implemented by Shell; and 3) data centres of cloud solutions to accelerate

data analysis and faster decision making on drilling process via AI-machine learning implemented by BP. Some of the questions to be addressed are: What was purpose of the AI implementation; What governance framework those entities are subject to? How is data security managed? What are the challenges to implement an effective AI innovation within the specific company? What benefits have been achieved?

Expected result: Such study shall benefit and guide the literature, Oil & Gas professionals, regulators and overall Oil & Gas stakeholders which are in need of further Assessment of the complexities of AI, with its challenges and opportunities to reach ambitious innovations and new ways of working. Equally, given that regulations are being developed, early adopters of new technologies and respective innovators can have the benefit to contribute for the development of such regulations.

Novelty: From one side, with respect to opportunities, AI technology has been an important tool for the development of business as it allows efficient and innovative ways to manage time-consuming, repetitive jobs, and automate huge amounts of data in faster, more accurate and more consistent ways than can be achieved by humans. On the other side, with respect to challenges, AI systems' ability to make decisions and perform tasks can raise issues and concerns about fairness, accountability and integrity which rises the demand for sound ethical governance of AI. The dynamic development of the industrial revolution is empowering companies to take better control of their environmental footprint, enabling them to take an active role in achieving sustainability goals.

## **The Economic Effect of Smart Contracts on E-Commerce**

**Mohamed Ashour - Lecturer of Economics at Horus University**

The Arab Republic of Egypt seeks to achieve digital transformation for all its sectors by 2030. Blockchain technology is one of the most important modern

technologies that allow the exchange of value and the completion of transactions digitally and ensure the validity and accuracy of transactions, and it is characterized by transparency and reliability, so it works to manage and secure transactions through the Internet.

Self-executing contracts (smart contracts), which rely on blockchain technology, are one of the important arms of artificial intelligence and offer a unique method of contracting that differs from the methods used for a long time in contracting. These contracts have important economic effects on e-commerce (E-Commerce), the most important of which is accelerating the wheel of e-commerce and adding confidence and security to it, as blockchain technology and smart contracts have been used in the fields of e-commerce as well as in financial transfers in foreign banks and in supply chains, but research and study show that there are some negative effects that will become clear through the study.

This study aims to shed light on the economic effects of self-executing contracts on e-commerce with the economic effects in the field of e-commerce, despite its technical problems, but many governments have adopted that technology and those contracts due to the speed, confidence and safety they provide in transactions.

Results and recommendations of this study: 1. In order to benefit from the positive effects of self-executing contracts (smart contracts) with the speed, confidence and safety they provide in transactions, the Egyptian legislator must issue laws regulating this technology and these contracts, as well as national financial institutions must take all measures to understand and activate this technology; 2. In order to avoid the negative economic effects that self-executing contracts (smart contracts) may have on e-commerce, such as problems of understanding, clarity and agreement between the parties, the legalization workers in that field must find and activate easy and clear technical solutions with the involvement of a set of computer and legal skills in the creation of the smart contract, This will include the expression of existing legal obligations in the form of codes and

the need for legal knowledge when writing codes for self-executing contracts (smart contracts).

### **Role of Artificial Intelligence in Building Intellectual Marketing Capital**

**Wael Kortam - Professor of Marketing and Director of Advanced Marketing Research Centre (AMRC) at The British University in Egypt**

**Maha Darwish - Senior Project Manager for Cybersecurity at Banque Misr**

Being in the digitization era, technological tools have taken over in every operative Aspect of major industries. Consequently, even modern management and marketing theories have been challenged from operational Aspects due to the disruption caused by these technological tools. Disruptive technologies comprising internet of things (IOT), big data analytics, blockchain integrated with networking infrastructure, and artificial intelligence have created innovative ways towards data driven decision making thus operation of business. Artificial intelligence (AI) is the umbrella term that describes the effort to mimic human skills and replicate human intelligence with machines. Most modern AI uses a technique known as machine learning. Machines learn from examples in the form of training data used to find patterns and Associations in data and to make statistical predictions. As a result, AI with respect to anticipating consumers' needs by continuous learning will add to marketing capital to more than 20% attained by old marketing methodologies to know hidden 80% of human needs.

There are various implementation tools of the AI. Companies like Google and Spotify use AI platform tools such as IBM Watson, Google Assistant from strategic perspective to build on their marketing capital to serve consumers proactively not merely just in time. Recent survey via MIT Technology Review Insights 2020 version clarified that AI is the priority technology for sales and marketing functions with 24% of US companies already using AI and 60% expected to use it by 2022. According to Valvic, B. Corbo, L. Costa e Silva, S. and Dabic, M. (2021) various journal including European Journal of Operational Research and Marketing Intelligence

and planning, and a lot more have discussed role the evolving role of AI in marketing. Moreover, it is clarified that AI is an integral part on the macro-marketing level for the client benefit.

Reviewing relevant literature critically, academic and practice gaps have been identified for role of the artificial intelligence to capitalize on the marketing function. Firstly, for the Aspect of academia artificial intelligence has been mostly discussed as a concept of defense in terms in negating replacement of the human function from the knowledge management theory. Secondly, from the industrial operative Aspect, AI has been mostly elaborated within various tools of the disruptive technologies aiding in Assessing intrinsic human needs. Suggested paper will examine role of the AI within stochastic marketing. Stochastic marketing is relatively new term investing in the capital for digitized marketing area. It embeds real time interaction with customer based on AI online and offline simultaneously. In other words, synchronization of marketing models with artificial intelligence system in real time. Research findings are expected to argue for a value-added model that will involve synchronized human expertise and artificial intelligence technology execution.

## SESSION TWO: SUSTAINABILITY

### **PARALLEL SESSION A2: CONTEMPORARY CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

#### **Safe Option and the Relationship between Cognitive Ability and Risk Aversion**

**Mohamed Rashwan - Associate Professor & Acting Head of Business Administration Department at The British University in Egypt**

**Ahmed AbdelAziz - Associate Professor & Acting Head of Basic and Applied Psychology Department at The British University in Egypt**

A large body of experimental research has provided empirical support for the link between cognitive abilities and attitudes towards risk. However, the findings have not been consistently confirmed. In this study, we try to investigate whether the relationship between cognitive ability and risk aversion is sensitive to the availability of the safe option condition— the availability of a riskless alternative in which a positive amount of money can be obtained with certainty. The subjects (n=112) were divided into high (n=42) and low (n= 40) cognitive abilities according to their scores on Raven's Progressive Matrices Test (RPMT). We conducted a laboratory experiment in which subjects with high and low cognitive ability made both safe and unsafe risky decisions using the Bomb Risk Elicitation Task (BRET). We find that subjects with high cognitive ability performed riskers than subjects with low cognitive ability when the experiment mode was designed for both safe and unsafe risky decisions.

**Keywords:** Cognitive ability, Risk aversion, Safe option, Risk-preferences

**The impact of Sustaining the Agility of Attitude Transformation on Credibility Matrix: The mediation Effect of Social Media Advertisements “Insights from Touristic Hospitality Context in Egypt”**

**Zeinab Younis - Associate Professor of Public Administration at The British University in Egypt**

**Marwa Ibrahim - Lecturer of Marketing at The British University in Egypt**

**Wael Kortam - Professor of Marketing and Director of Advanced Marketing Research Centre (AMRC) at The British University in Egypt**

This paper examines the effects of sustaining the agility of attitude transformation on credibility matrix with respect to the mediation effect of social media advertisements. Under the Umbrella of New Public management, the Agility of attitude transformation entails the vision of a new policy approach as it is facing a volatile environment of risks and challenges. The group of factors in this study includes the agility of attitude transformation as an independent variable measured by (process- attitudes, process-competence, and process-resource), while the credibility matrix is determined by (customers’ trust and customer experience) as dependent factors. It's important to note that there is no sufficient data regarding the effect of sustaining the agility of attitude transformation on credibility matrix inside the tourism/hospitality context in Egypt. Therefore, the utility of this research lies in the fact that it permits the identification of major concerns and the formulation of essential conclusions, and it can contribute to a deeper understanding of those factors and accordingly the consumer trust, experience incentives.

The current research is based on quantitative data derived from an online survey which will be distributed among hotel visitors in Egypt. On the academic side, the research allows underlining significant issues and formulating vital findings in relevance to cover the gaps in data scarcity about the agility policy of attitude transformation. Moreover, on the practical side it relates to highlight customer experience and trust which are two main components of the credibility matrix within the mediation effect of advertising campaigns helping to develop a credible branded sector as tourism in the eyes of its users.

Keywords: Agility of Attitude Transformation, Social Media Advertising, Credibility Matrix, Consumer Trust, Consumer Experience.

### **A Roadmap for a Cradle to Cradle Approach to Achieve a Sustainable Management System for Waste Lithium-Ion Batteries in the Egyptian Market**

**Mohammed Khairy - Engineer & Environmental and Social Advisor**

**Dalia Nakhla - PhD, Cleaner Production and Pollution Abatement Expert**

**Marwi Kishk - University Professor and Campaign Strategy Expert**

Depleted Lithium-ion batteries from damaged or end-of-life equipment are becoming more abundant in the light of mass production and trade of electronics as laptops and cellular phones, and especially upon the rising commercialization of Electric Vehicles utilizing Lithium-ion batteries. Market research and scientific conclusions indicate that 1) lithium-ion batteries are exported for recycling by experienced industries if not already thrown away irresponsibly in landfills, 2) no specific protocol/policy is set in Egypt to recycle spent batteries in a safe manner, 3) lithium-ion recycling process still lacks a universal standard and could be dangerous if not handled properly. This paper is presenting an attempt to Assess the possibility of developing a suggested framework to authorize and permit potential local lithium-ion recycling solutions, and management improvement of batteries at the end of life (EoL) through the formal waste handling channels. The findings presented in this study highlight the significant potential for adopting sustainable economic growth within the energy storage and waste battery recycling sectors.

### **Joint Ventures as a Strategy of Decarbonization in The Maritime Industry - Challenges & Opportunities**

**Felipe Villasuso - Advisor, Corporate Governance Legal, Governance, & Compliance at ADNOC/ PhD candidate at LSBU**

Objective/ scope: Maritime is a key industry to implement decarbonisation. According to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), the Maritime energy

demand has been accounted for around 1 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and 3% of annual global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on a CO<sub>2</sub>e. This research intends to Assess the challenges and opportunities of the Maritime Joint Ventures (JVs) considering the increasing popularity of JV announcements to focus on decarbonisation and the relevance of the Maritime sector on emissions a sit accounts for 3% of annual GHG emissions on a CO<sub>2</sub>e.

**Methodology / procedure:** The research will consider a benchmarking analysis of markets practices across global and local Maritime companies with respect to their practices on their JVs with focus on decarbonisation. Some of the questions to address are with key players of the Maritime industry are: What purpose has been justified the usage of JVs; What kind of disclosure has been in place? Have they been disclosed at the JVs partners' own ESG reporting? Have there been any situational conflicts of interest between the JV partners regarding decarbonisation? If so, how have they been managed? Are there any JVs in your organisation with focus on decarbonisation? If so, have they been effective? What are the challenges to ensure effective implementation of decarbonisation policies throughout JVs?

**Expected result:** Such study shall benefit and guide the literature, Maritime professionals, regulators and overall Maritime stakeholders in the UAE market and globally which are in need of further Assessment of the complexities of JVs, with its challenges and opportunities to reach ambitious decarbonization goals. JVs must be carefully managed as the requirement of transparency has become more important in terms of ESG reporting.

**Novelty:** From one side, with respect to opportunities, JVs have been an important tool for the development of business as they allow having an effective joint management of collective resources, funding, know-how, technology, greater sharing of network and knowledge of a local market. JVs also provide the opportunity to access new markets, distribution networks, increased capacity, risk mitigation, effective cost/liability sharing, cross-selling with synergies between JV partners and their clients. On the other side, with respect to challenges, JVs not always have the same governance standards as subsidiaries as sometimes they

are not consolidated in the financial statements which can result in less oversight from the shareholders. JVs can also have potential conflicts of interest situations as they usually have JV partners as suppliers, operator and/or contractor, particularly where they can provide the technology. By understanding the above complexities, stakeholders will have appropriate tools to ensure that decarbonisation targets are met to ensure compliance with the IMO and the Sustainable Development Goals. Leaders must be prepared for the new challenges and explore business opportunities to ensure that companies implement that appropriate path to satisfy the new requirements.

## **PARALLEL SESSION B2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Following the Leader: A Comparative Study Exploring the Validity of Export Led Growth Hypothesis.**

**Mayar Bakeer - PhD candidate at German University in Cairo**

The Export-led growth hypothesis has been a controversial topic and its validity has been under scrutiny; even for one of its well renowned Role models: South Korea. The paper explores the causal relation between exports and GDP for South Korea and Egypt for a time span of 61 years. Unit root tests are implemented and the existence of structural breaks were discovered. Then a cointegration test using the Gregory Hansen followed by an ARDL and Error correction model. The methodology emphasized the presence of a short-run causality and long run relationship. Finally, a Toda Yamamoto Granger causality test showed that there is a bidirectional relation between GDP and Exports. The paper then compares the results between South Korea and Egypt to shed light on whether adopting the South Korean Export Model is applicable for a developing country or not.

Keywords: Exports, Economic Growth, Unit Root, Structural Break, Gregory-Hansen, ARDL, ECM, Toda Yamamoto Granger Causality, Cointegration, South Korea, Egypt JEL Classification Code:C32, F43, O47, O53.

### **Can CSR Communication Replace Non-CSR Communication in Egypt? An Empirical Study Drawing on Theory of Reasoned Action and Stimuli-Organism-Response Theory (Online)**

**Nashwa Sadek - Postgraduate Student at London South Bank University**

In reference to recent changes in consumer behaviour, it is evident in literature that consumers favour certain communication messages and channels over others. This raised the question of which communication or media strategy has the greatest

influence on consumer behavioural intention? Accordingly, this paper aims to critically examine Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a communication strategy on different media platforms in Egypt. Drawing on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), congruity theory, and the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, this paper will be one of the first studies that compares between the effectiveness of CSR and non-CSR communication on social media and television in Egypt. Focusing on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), this study highlights the application of the outlined theories and investigates the attitudes of consumers towards a low involvement brand that launches a CSR communication strategy. By measuring different brand attitudes, the study resulted in a coherent conceptual framework that included cognitive and affective attitudes towards CSR advertising. Firstly, a systematic literature review is presented on CSR communication studies published in the Middle East in the past five years. Secondly, to expand the dearth of CSR research in the Middle East, a 2x2 factorial survey experiments were conducted to compare the effects of CSR to non-CSR advertising on television and social media and to examine the role of message-respondent congruence. A plethora of brand attitudes were examined as mediators.

These attitudes were ad likeability, brand likeability, emotional brand attachment, brand trust, perceived brand functionality, and the main outcome was purchase intention. Final data was collected from 474 Egyptian consumers. The results provide substantial evidence that CSR communication in Egypt has a stronger positive impact on brand attitudes and purchase intention than non-CSR communication. By applying independent sample t-test, results revealed that all averages of the mediators were significantly higher for consumers who saw the CSR message than those who saw the non-CSR message. The same averages were higher for television than for social media. Based on structural equation modelling, the examined brand attitudes do not have equal effect sizes on purchase intention.

Results suggested numerous theoretical contributions in which firstly, the study proposes that to apply TRA on the category of low involvement products, the attitude towards the brand has a strong impact on final behavioural intention.

Additionally, this study contributes to TRA and SOR by emphasizing the importance of including cognitive and affective attitudes within brand attitudes and the importance of realising that different brand attitudes do not have linear or equal effects on purchase intention. Lastly, this study proposes a future research agenda to compare between the impact of attitude towards the behaviour and attitude towards the brand in low and high involvement products. Thus, giving opportunity to further examine the determinants of TRA.

### **The Effect of ESG Factors on Financial Leverage and Credit Risk: A Comparative Study of Listed Firms**

**Rania Salem – Lecturer at The British University in Egypt**

**Youseph Adel - The British University in Egypt**

Investors and regulators are increasingly giving environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors more weight and importance when evaluating the performance and risk profile of businesses, assuming “that investors place intrinsic (non-monetary) value to socially responsible investment” (Broadstock, Chan, et. Al, 2020). Yet, the effect of ESG on the financial leverage and credit risk of businesses is understudied. In this research, we examine how ESG ratings impact the financial leverage and credit risk on a sample of listed firms in the MENA, American, and Asian countries. We expect that better ESG ratings are connected with reduced financial leverage and credit risk, demonstrating that ESG can strengthen the financial stability and resilience of businesses. ESG factors have become more prevalent within firms as they are currently being set as a standard, or even a prerequisite for a lot of firms, as it provides a transparent medium for stakeholders to actively partake in corporate responsibility.

Companies desire to present all stakeholders with a transparent view of their corporate social responsibility procedures and activities. Over the course of more than two decades, corporate disclosure of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors has evolved in several ways. In addition, an increasing number of

companies are now involved in a wide range of ESG disclosure initiatives, and this crucial problem has become a subject of considerable interest (Alareeni and Hamdan, 2020). Moreover, firm provided ESG reports provide an extensive look into company insights, specifically regarding how they are run internally. The governance Aspect of ESG procedures, in particular, creates a line of trust between stakeholder and direct company administration, with the stakeholder being able to identify key components of management. On the other hand, according to Alareeni and Hamdi (2020), inefficient disclosures are corollary to manipulation, dishonesty, and unethical behaviour, all of which come at the consequence of the firm, stakeholder, and the economy itself. With the potential of an approaching recession in the US, Chinese, and European economies in the next years (Guennette, Kose, & Sugawara, 2022), businesses must be aware of their financial standing in order to either prepare for a collapse or prevail. Before taking on leveraged situations, it is crucial for businesses to have a comprehensive understanding of leverage and its possible downsides.

Systematically, financial leverage may be utilised to position a portfolio to profit from successful investments and minimise the entry barrier for particular ventures. In contrast, if the company's investments are unsuccessful, the disadvantages of leverage will compound as they must repay any loans with extra interest, fees, margin rates, and contract premiums, if they have obtained any. Therefore, if firms wished to use debt and equity to finance its activities, it must have credibility and trust with their loan owner and equity holders, as financial leverage is not a guaranteed business venture. Conflicts may arise in the presence of a mismanaged firm, or one that's open to corruption or manipulation, causing corporates to have less options for loans or none at all.

This research compares the effect of ESG factors on financial leverage and credit risk across firms listed in different indexes in the MENA region, the US, and Asia for ten years, covering 2013 to 2023. We compare firms with high ESG ratings against firms with low ESG ratings to gather results involving leveraging decisions.

These corporations will be chosen across indexes such as the S&P 500, the EGX 30, the SSE Composite, among others. We measure ESG performance using the MSCI ESG ratings, which cover a comprehensive set of indicators across environmental, social and governance dimensions. We measure leverage using the ratio of total debt to total Assets, Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), Degree of Financial Leverage (DFL), Degree of Operating Leverage (DOL), and credit risk using the credit default swap (CDS) spreads. To compensate for possible endogeneity and confounding variables, we employ panel data regression and propensity score matching techniques. We control for various firm-specific and macroeconomic factors that may affect leverage and credit risk. We use panel data regression models with fixed effects and instrumental variables to address potential errors or outliers. The findings indicate that ESG performance has a significant negative effect on both leverage and credit risk, after controlling for other determinants. The effect is stronger for firms with higher exposure to ESG-related risks and opportunities, such as those in regulated industries, consumer-facing sectors or innovation-intensive fields. Our findings suggest that ESG can be a valuable source of competitive advantage and risk management for firms, and that investors and creditors should incorporate ESG factors into their valuation and lending decisions.

Keywords: Environmental and Social Goals (ESG), Financial Leverage, Credit Risk.

### **Mitigation Pathways towards Sustainable Development: Assessing the Impact of Fiscal and Monetary Policies on Carbon Emissions (Online)**

**Dimitrios Paparas- Principal Lecturer at Harper Adams University**

The relationship between fiscal and monetary policies and sustainable development has been a topic of growing interest among policymakers and scholars. This study examines the linkages between macroeconomic policies, domestic consumer spending, fossil fuel consumption, renewable energy consumption, and carbon dioxide emissions in OECD countries, with a focus on

their implications for sustainable development. Drawing on panel data covering the period 2000-2020, we employ a variety of econometric techniques, including fixed effects and dynamic panel data models, to investigate the relationships between these variables. Our results suggest that fiscal and monetary policies, along with domestic consumer spending and renewable energy consumption, have a significant negative effect on carbon dioxide emissions, while fossil fuel consumption has a positive effect. Moreover, we find evidence of complementarity between fiscal and monetary policies in promoting sustainable development, with fiscal policy playing a more significant role in reducing emissions. Our findings have important implications for policymakers and suggest the need for coordinated macroeconomic policies and a transition to renewable energy sources to achieve sustainable development goals. Our findings have important implications for policymakers in OECD countries and beyond. Our results suggest the need for coordinated fiscal and monetary policies that incentivize renewable energy consumption and discourage fossil fuel consumption. Specifically, policies such as carbon taxes, subsidies for renewable energy sources, and investment in public transportation can all play a role in promoting sustainable development. Future research in this area could explore the mechanisms underlying the relationships between macroeconomic policies and sustainable development, including the role of specific policy interventions. Additionally, comparative studies across different country contexts could shed light on the effectiveness of different policy approaches to promoting sustainable development.

## SESSION THREE: GOVERNANCE

### **PARALLEL SESSION A3: GOVERNANCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: DYNAMICS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR**

#### **The Regional Middle Powers: Prospects on Re-Identifying the International System**

**Rana Abo Amra - PhD, Academic Researcher in Political Science, the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University**

At a time when the international system was dealing with an unprecedented crisis, the war in Ukraine broke out. At the intellectual and governmental levels, the international system was in crisis. The United States presided over a unipolar world following the conclusion of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, but this structure of the international order did not hold up all that well, particularly over the past two decades.

The conflict in Ukraine served to draw attention to the difficulty in describing and identifying the structure of the contemporary international order. As a result of the political machinations they engage in to advance their interests and maintain stability during these tumultuous times, middle powers and regional middle powers play an important role in defining the characteristics of the international system. Examining the nations' votes on the General Assembly resolutions on the conflict and reviewing its remarks that endorsed the balance between the parties can help identify the middle power's policy of remaining neutral for as long as feasible.

As a result, the analysis will look at the following questions: What part did the middle powers play in the conflict? What recent developments/fields have given MENA's middle powers/regional middle powers the chance to participate in global affairs? What are the trump cards that middle powers can play? What are the international organisations and tools that make this possible? Whether through a vote in the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations? Or

through the coalitions and alliances it created during the first year of the conflict? Is it possible for the middle powers in the region to exert more or less pressure on the main warring parties? Using the "balance of relations" strategy rather than "balance of power," were the regional middle powers actually able to advance their own interests without major confrontations with the super powers?

### **Exploring Arab Public Opinion on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Insights from the Arab Opinion Index 2022 (Online)**

**Marco Jovanovic - Research Assistant at Institute of Social Sciences - Belgrade, Serbia**

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is one of the most pressing issues in global politics with repercussion far beyond the Eastern Europe. Public in many parts of the world show interest for ongoing conflict and holds different opinions on the war and whether its declaration by Russia was a unjustified action or a forced move. This paper tends to examine public opinion on this matter in Arab countries and its correlation with views on the Unites States of America. In order to do that it uses data from Arab Opinion Index 2022, 8th wave of the biggest regional survey which was conducted in 14 countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Mauritania) on a sample of 33.000 respondents. The paper will first give a brief introduction on Russia-Ukraine conflict as a pressing global issue and put it in a contextual framework of geopolitical competition between Russia and the West led by the USA. Following, the paper will explore attitudes of public opinion in Arab countries to Russia-Ukraine conflict and its correlation with views on the Unites States of America. The paper will also analyze differences in attitudes across the countries of the Arab world.

Finally, the paper will give concluding remarks comparing the findings with data from countries with high level of anti-American attitudes, such as Serbia, which have shown that public support for Russia in the Russia-Ukraine conflict is more

result of dislikes towards the West and the US than it is a display of pro-Russian sentiments. These results have important implications for policymakers and academics seeking to understand the complex dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the factors that influence public opinion in the Arab world and elsewhere, as well as for stakeholders involved in international relations and global security.

### **Game Changing and Profound Transformations: The Political-Economics Repercussions of the Energy Crisis on the MENA Region in Post Russia-Ukraine Conflict**

**Aya Badr - Head of Department in the Technical Office Central Sector, IDSC - The Egyptian Cabinet**

Whereas energy security has played a vital role in the geopolitical and economic interactions globally, that role has gained additional prominence as energy security has become a top priority for policy makers globally especially after the escalation of the Russia Ukraine conflict which has severely affected energy security. Accordingly, energy security volatility has exacerbated due to price and supply fluctuations which have led to transformations in energy policies to secure it during times of crisis whether through looking for alternative suppliers or through shifting to renewable and untraditional sources.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region was affected by these profound changes globally related to the energy security, such as the transformation in the balance of power in the global system, in addition to the geopolitical and political-economic interaction between great powers (China - Russia - United States - European Union) and the region, and interactions between the main regional players themselves. So, new patterns of relationships and interactions have emerged regionally that causing the reshape of the ways through which the national interests would be defined and attained. In addition, these transformations could have impacts on the geopolitics of the region and the existed issues and escalated

conflicts.

In other words, the current crisis of energy security has caused several repercussions on by generating promising opportunities for the regional actors together with causing more complications and threats. In Fact, the MENA region is considered as a main player in the global energy markets due to their major contribution in the production of both nonrenewable and renewable energy sources in addition to their hegemony on some key entities especially OPEC+ cartel and the East Med Gas Forum (EMGF).

Nonetheless, the political-economic repercussions of the energy security crisis on the MENA region are debatable. It may be referred to two points of views in this regard: whether the current crisis could lead to the promotion of peace and prosperity regionally in addition to the strengthening of the position of the MENA region in the global system, or it could increase instability regionally due to the escalation of the global competition and scramble for the MENA's energy sources.

Based on the above, the current paper has endeavored to answer the following research question: How the energy crisis globally has contributed in game changing and profound transformations regionally, through causing political-economic repercussions on the MENA region after the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict?

### **Russian War against Ukraine and Its Global Impact: Exploring Ecocide and Food 'Weaponisation' (Online)**

**Rinata Kazak - Associate Professor of Legal History, Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University – Ukraine; Visiting researcher, Tema-M, Linköping University, Sweden**

Scholarship on ecocide in relation to complex system of environmental protection has evolved rapidly over the past decade, getting as much more attention last years. The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war put ecocide on the public and political agenda, as well as the food security as a global SDG 2 in frame of Agenda 2030. Ukraine is the second-largest exporter of barley supplies, fourth in corn, and fifth in

wheat. According to the governmental data, more than 80 000 square kilometers of land are currently littered with mines, which makes it unsuitable for further life and industrial or economic use. Additionally, the fifth of Ukraine's protected areas have been ruined by the war, with the contamination of previously fertile soils alone costing €11.4bn in damages. This data illustrates that the ecocide in Ukraine not only poses a threat for the environmental sustainability in the region but also globally, specifically for the food security.

The concept of ecocide originated in the 1970s after the devastating effects on environment through use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War (Zierler, 2011). While ecocide is associated with military actions, it can also be observed in the use of petroleum products (Metcheva, Ostoich, & Beltcheva, 2022), as well as in the dependence on fossil fuels (Gunderson & Fyock, 2022). Both of these aspects are relevant to the ongoing Russo- Ukrainian war, which poses a significant threat to the environment, given the military actions and fossil fuel dependency involved. Furthermore, the ongoing war illustrates the utilization of food as a geopolitical tool. Although it is not a novel concept, as historical examples from both ancient and modern history illustrate how control over food resources can significantly impact a nation's diplomatic and military strategies.

The international reaction to Russia's invasion into Ukraine illustrates how the environment is still being undervalued, rooted in a utilitarian perspective on nature (Palarchyk, 2023). Therefore, this moment could serve as an opportunity to shift this perspective and recognize nature as a "producer" of environmental sustainability both regionally and worldwide. Transformations in justice toward the greening of legislation can be seen as the prerequisite for the potential implementing a global New International Green Order.

Besides the legislative challenges there is the practical risks for the global food security (SDG 2). Namely, according to the Kyiv School of Economic, the agriculture sector in Ukraine has suffered damages worth over \$6.6 billion. However, the total value of losses, which includes the revenue that could have been generated from agriculture, amounts to \$34.25 billion. The losses suffered by Ukraine in crop

production alone in 2022 were estimated at \$11.2 bn, and was expected to bear an additional loss of \$3 billion for winter crops in 2022-2023.

The disruption in agricultural logistics has led to increased transportation and shipping costs, and the domestic prices of commodities oriented towards exports have plummeted, causing an additional loss of \$18.5 bn. Moving from the outcomes of the Russo-Ukraine war to the larger context, it worth mentioning that one of the strategies that can be attributed to Russia is the 'weaponization' of food resources. This tactic involves various means, including the disruption of food supply chains, and thus the use of food aid as a tool for geopolitical influence. Therefore, the weaponization of food resources also underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing food security challenges.

**PARALLEL SESSION B3: GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENT ON  
NATIONAL LEVELS**

**Empowering Women Through Data: How NGOS in Egypt are bridging the Gender Data Gap**

**Perihan Abdel Gawad - The British University in Egypt**

**Rola Al-Kammash – Assistant Lecturer of Political Science at The British University in Egypt**

Governments around the world are adopting the United Nations' (UN) sustainable development goals (SDGs). Examining and re-evaluating their approaches and policies, many governments are working towards diminishing gender disparities in their programs, strategies, policies, and research (OECD, n.d.). However, governments, especially in the Middle East, are faced with a striking gender data gap that slows down and/or prohibits gender mainstreaming efforts. Therefore, no matter the scale of their investments and efforts to overcome gender disparities, gender-disaggregated data is pivotal for achieving such a development (Data2x, 2022). Such data, ideally covering several years, is crucial for the policy making process, being used to evaluate the situation, and enabling practitioners to develop appropriate evidence-based responses and policies while tracking changes and taking corrective Measures. Governments tend to consult and cooperate with civil society organizations, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that participate in the data collection process and Assess the impacts of the government's policies proposed for the issue tackled (OECD, n.d.). Contrary to popular belief, gender data is not confined to women's issues, but rather encompasses the set of interactions between individuals and across all sectors, from getting an ID to accessing quality education to getting a decent job to using public transport and feeling safe at home and in public spaces (Bonfert et al, 2022). Governments in the Middle East face a huge gender data gap issue. In its situational analysis of women and girls' status in the Middle East, the UN (2021) stressed the

lack of data in many issue areas and emphasized the need to enhance data collection and disaggregation. With SDGs entering their decade of delivery, there is an urgent need for governments in cooperation with CSOs to address the gender data gap in order to track the progress towards all goals, and especially SDG 5 (Grantham, 2020, p.18, The World Bank, 2022).

This paper aims at exploring the efforts in addressing the gender data gap in post-Arab Spring Egypt, highlighting the role played by local and international NGOs in bridging this gap. This paper attempts to answer the following question: To what extent do Egyptian civil society organisations, specifically NGOs, play a role in obtaining and delivering high-quality gender disaggregated data in the economic and health domains. Authors of this paper will conduct semi-structured interviews with monitoring and evaluation specialists in local and international NGOs in Egypt as well as analyzing reports published by NGOs to examine the extent to which they contribute to bridging and/or attempting to bridge the gender data gap. The paper is divided into 2 sections: The first section surveys literature on the problem of the gender data gap, highlighting the importance of addressing this problem and possible solutions suggested in the literature. The second section constructs and Showcases a conceptual framework guided by the 3 key problems identified by the World Bank: (1) the production, (2) the analysis, and (3) the dissemination of gender dis- aggregated data. (Bonfert et al, 2022) Finally, the third section critically examines the finding of the interviews and maps the efforts of local and international NGOs in bridging or attempting to bridge the gender data gap in Egypt after the Arab Spring.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Sustainable Development, SDGs, Gender Data Gap, Gender-Disaggregated Data, NGOs, Egypt, Post-Arab Spring.

## **Decent Life Initiative in Egypt and Sustainable Development**

**AbdelRahman El-Mansoury - The British University in Egypt**

**Yasmin Khodary – Professor of Political Science at The British University in Egypt**

In 2019, the Egyptian government launched the ‘Decent Life’ Initiative with the aim of providing “a decent life for the most vulnerable groups nationwide and contribute to enhancing the quality of daily public services provided to citizens, with an eye to inhabitants of rural areas” (Presidency Office, 2019). With the increasing international, regional and national emphasis on sustainable development and its associated three pillars ‘economic growth, social equity and environmental protection’, this study aims to answer the following question: To what extent the three pillars of sustainable development, particularly, the environmental pillar, is well integrated into the Egyptian initiative “Decent life”.

To answer the research question, the study utilizes the post-Keynesian theory and employs primary sources, including 5 semi-structured interviews with government officials and other interviews with the initiative’s beneficiaries as well as reports whether on the initiative or the socio-economic and environmental conditions in Egypt. The post-Keynesian theory advocates a kind of growth that brings about a better distribution of wealth, and a renovated principle of effective demand. At the heart of the post Keynesian vision of sustainable development is the connection between the social and ecological dimensions of sustainable development, which requires institutional change to ensure greater fairness and environmental protection that ensures justice for current and future generations. Furthermore, the post-Keynesian theory emphasizes on government investment in housing and infrastructure as the primary source of sustainable competitive advantage for all three pillars of sustainable development: economic growth, a healthy environment, and a developed society. The purpose of this investment approach is also to create incentives, and voluntary compliance toward

environmentally and economically relevant goals through the dynamic dissemination of new technological systems, which promotes innovations for a sustainable society, economy, and environment. This study argues that though the government initiatives have accrued some positive gains on the social, levels, very little attention - if any- was given to the environmental aspect of Decent Life' Initiative.

### **From Top-Down Environmental Policies to Limited Bottom-up Environmental Policies: Analysis Before and After Adopting the SDGs in Egypt**

**Afnan El-Sayed - The British University in Egypt**

**Yasmin Khodary - Professor of Political Science at The British University in Egypt**

In the recent few years, sustainable development and environmental protection became widely visible in the media and on government agenda in Egypt. Yet, Egypt has a history of ineffective environmental regulations (McKenna, 2013, Al-Shaabani, 2018; Eltayb, 2021). While Al-Shaabani criticised the lack of awareness and efficiency among monitoring entities, Eltayb (2021), after reviewing the Egyptian government's expenditures on the environment, finds that the limited funding obstructs the impact of any government activities taken to protect the environment. Thus McKenna noted that Egypt is still in critical need of sustainability. This paper questions whether the Egyptian government managed to create a balance between the needs of businesses in Egypt and the environment. The paper argues that the Egyptian government adopted a top-down participation in its environmental actions that disregarded the private businesses' inclusion in setting the new environmental goals. This has eventually increased the struggle of firms in accepting the government's environmental actions or complying with their environmental obligations. The paper is going to assess the businesses' inclusion and participation in the making and implementation of Egypt's Environmental Sustainability strategy as well as environmental laws and actions. It is going to identify the stages - if any-where the private businesses were included and the

degree the Egyptian environmental sustainability strategy was influenced by the participation of such businesses. The importance of this research lies not only in identifying the level of businesses' inclusion but also in exploring the level of government involvement and control. The findings can, hence, serve in providing lessons for better environmental policies making.

### **Ecofeminism between The Aleppo Pines and Olive Trees: A Study of Palestinian Women's Resistance in The Occupied Territories in the West Bank**

**Habiba Ayman - The British University in Egypt**

**Amira Adel - Assistant Lecturer of Political Science at The British University in Egypt**

The horticultural endeavor of cultivating olive trees, which is a prominent agricultural pursuit in Palestine, holds a profound significance that extends beyond the mere achievement of crop yield and economic prosperity (Simaan, 2017). Literature has showcased the symbolism of the environment and its resources in this conflict and has also touched upon its role in peace negotiations. Building on this, this paper seeks to analyse how environmental injustice, with a focus on water scarcity, has been utilized as a tool of both resistance and oppression by Palestinian Women in the West Bank and the Israeli settlers. To put it differently, this paper conducts a thorough examination of how Palestinian women have employed water as a means of resistance, while also considering how it has been used as a means of oppression by Israeli settlers. Accordingly, the complex intersectionality of gender, settler-colonialism, and 'environmental injustice' is analysed from an Ecofeminist perspective.

This paper delves into the intricate tapestry of non-violent resistance, as it unfolds within the enduring struggle of Palestinian women against the dual oppressive forces of settler colonialism and environmental injustice practices in the West Bank. It delves into the profound significance of the environment, with a specific focus on the pressing matter of 'water scarcity', as a means of exerting

control and fostering resistance by all parties involved. It subsequently becomes apparent that Palestinian women, through their steadfast determination, have skillfully developed ecofeminist tactics that prioritize their own empowerment and the preservation of their land and environment.

**POSTGRADUATE PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES**  
**PARALLEL SESSION C1: POSTGRADUATE PERSPECTIVES ON**  
**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Perceptions and Practices of the EU as a Security Actor in The Mediterranean Post-2015**

**Reem El Barbary - Assistant Lecturer of Political Science at The British University in Egypt**

The European Union (EU)'s perception and construction of its, performative, representational image and character, and self-other dichotomy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean underwent significant, transformative, discursive changes over the past few decades. Such shifts in the EU's discourse demonstrate its keenness on presenting itself as a regional hub for civilization, stability, and democratic values, and distinguishing itself from the locus of cross-border threats and dangerous and conflict ridden other, with whom its shares boundaries. Furthermore, they laid and modified the foundation upon which its security architecture rests and interests are articulated and vocalized (C.F. Cebeci and Shumacher, 2016). The conflict-induced instability and vulnerability of the southern neighborhood had implications on the EU's perception of and engagement with the Mediterranean which subsequently informed its discursive construction of the area as well as its security approach, agenda, and practices towards it. The last version of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) toward the Mediterranean in 2015 (European Commission, 2015), which stresses stabilization over issues of democratization, followed by the subsequent release of the EU Global Strategy in June 2016 (European External Action Service, 2016) and the incremental development of the collective EU defense architecture (Ibid, 2016) invite for further research on the nature of the evolution in the EU continuous efforts to construct itself as a security actor, especially in the Mediterranean. Accordingly, this study, situated in previous interpretivist scholarly production on EU-Mediterranean relations seeks to investigate continuities and changes in the EU

discursive construction of its identity as a security actor (in light of these recent developments) and its implications on the Mediterranean, as one of the most important areas in which the EU has been historically active as a security (as well as a developmental) actor. The analysis uses a critical constructivist approach to identify first the novelty in the EU self-construction as a security actor and second to analyze subsequent EU mapping of the Mediterranean other. Building upon Bourdieu's (1977) field theory and concept of habitus, the analysis extends to critically examine EU security practices in the Mediterranean post-2015 with the aim of identifying how processes of European self-construction and threat perception are translated into actions toward the Mediterranean with a focus on the developments in the EU self-construction as a security actor post-2015 and its security perceptions and practices in the Mediterranean.

### **Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy Post the Arab Uprisings: An Analysis of The Saudi- Egyptian Partnership (2011-2016)**

**Maysa Mohamed - Researcher at The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology**

The Arab uprisings of 2011 came as a "shock" for international and regional geo-strategic players, including the Gulf. The Saudi regime, in particular, had fears of the so-called "domino effect". This prompted the gulf country to adopt new methods in its foreign policy, employing both soft and hard power measures either to contain the uprisings through direct military intervention and other soft power measures, which include greater financial flows to pro-gulf regimes, or to support regime change in cases of historical antagonism with regimes in Syria and Libya. Nevertheless, the downfall of Mubarak's regime in particular constituted a threat to the gulf stability.

There were fears of a potential expansion of Egyptian relations with Iran, Qatar, and Islamic opposition groups in Saudi Arabia under Morsi's regime. Nevertheless, whilst the rise of al- Sisi in Egypt was welcomed in Saudi Arabia, their

bilateral relations witnessed periods of tensions as well. The so-called “Egypt First” doctrine developed by al-Sisi stresses the importance of Egypt’s security landscape and domestic stability, avoiding the country’s enduement in broader regional conflicts, including in Yemen and Syria where Saudi Arabia has greater presence. The aim of this paper is to critically examine Saudi Arabia’s foreign policy after 2011, focusing on the areas of convergence and divergence in the Saudi-Egyptian interests (2011-2016). The study uses Complex Realism, a theory developed to understand the particularities of Third world countries’ foreign policies. It moves beyond the redundancy of foreign policy analysis. Instead of relying on psychological explanations that fail to admit the importance of the context itself or the structural explanations that neglect the role of the agency, the theory explains how the agency seizes the opportunities from the structure to develop a foreign policy based on “regime survival”.

### **Assessing the Transformations and Changes in Russia’s Foreign Policy towards the West since the Collapse of the Soviet Union**

**Ereny Safwat - Head of Monitoring & Reporting Unit at the European North African Centre for Research**

Essentially, Russia’s foreign policy was largely guided by a blend of pro-West policies in the immediate post-Cold War era. However, Russia foreign policy transformed later into a more inclusive, aggressive and competitive anti-West behavior since the beginnings of the 2000th. The aim of this paper is to Assess the transformations that took place in Russia’s foreign policy towards the west, and US hegemony since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

This paper raises a main research question which is: How Russia’s foreign policy has been transformed towards the west since the collapse of the Soviet Union? This paper uses a comparative study between the patterns and determinants of Russia’s foreign towards the west in the era of president Yeltsin and President Putin.

This paper argues that the changes in Russia's foreign policy can be found in both the internal sources of Russia's foreign policy, as well as in the external environment. Thus, this paper uses the power transition theory as the theoretical framework in order to Assess how Russia transformed from a satisfied great power with a full admission towards the west hegemony into a dissatisfied great power that seeks to challenge the hegemony of the west. This theory will enable this paper to look at the state and system levels of analysis.

This paper is going to be divided into three main sections. The first section will be an introductory section. The second section will focus on Russia's foreign policy towards the west under the rule of Yeltsin. The third section will focus on the patterns of Russia foreign policy towards the west under the rule of Putin. In this section, this paper focuses on Russia- Georgia war, and how this war sheds the light on the major shift and transformation that took place in Russia's foreign policy. The fourth section will provide a comparative analysis on Russia's foreign policy in these two periods of time.

### **The Impact of Women's Participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping on the Effectiveness of the Operations**

**Aya El Sharkawy - Senior Resettlement Assistant at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Since 1948, the UN Peacekeeping Missions have been playing a significant role in helping countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Despite the tremendous efforts in sustaining troops and police from around the globe, to integrate them with civilian peacekeepers to advance the effectiveness of missions, there was a considerable lack of women integration in these troops. For that reason, the Security Council (SC) passed the United Nations Security Council resolution number (UNSCR/1325) on the 31st of October 2000.

Consequently, many participating militaries around the world strived to achieve gender equality and opened more doors for women to join services at home and

abroad. Egypt, which is one of the largest contributors to the UN peacekeeping Missions, prioritized increasing female peacekeepers on its agenda given the importance of the role of women in peace processes (CICCCR, 2016; Donadio, 2019; UN Peacekeeping, 2022).

This paper aims at reviewing the existing arguments in literature that are mostly used to advocate for the increase of women in the UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs). In that context, this paper argues that increasing the number of women in PKOs is improving the effectiveness of the mission operation itself in any country, which is significant because the more these missions are effective, the less conflicts will occur. The UN PKOs is the only international military around the world existing, that does not use force, but rather work on achieving peace globally and preventing peace and conflict. Accordingly, its operations effectiveness is necessary to maintain peace all over the world.

This paper will be divided into three sections. The first section will list the arguments that have been commonly used in literature to advocate for increasing women in PKOs. The second section will focus on how increasing women in PKOs have a direct impact on the following areas: maintaining protection, preventing sexual violence, and inspiration of other women in joining the PKOs. The third section will focus on providing evidence from case studies to prove the previously mentioned.

## PARALLEL SESSION C2: POSTGRADUATE PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUE

- ◆ **Gender Representation in Egyptian Textbooks: A Critical Analysis of Arabic Language and Qiyam wa Ihtiram Al-Akhar Post-2017 Educational Reforms**

**Yasmine Okail - Consultant at Rotam Agrochem**

On the national and international level, the issue of gender representation is increasingly being acknowledged as it plays a critical role in understanding social attitudes towards gender. In Egypt, where traditional gender roles are deeply rooted in the society and culture, it is important to examine how textbooks portray gender. In the early 1990s, Egyptian school textbooks were heavily criticised for presenting stereotypical content. However, in 2017, the Egyptian government reformed the curriculum. Concurrently, it launched the National Strategy for Empowering Egyptian Women 2030 (NSEEW 2030), which tackles the educational reforms. NSEEW 2030 clarifies that, through educational reform, the Egyptian government aims to present gender-sensitive content and empower Egyptian women.

This study aims to address two related objectives. First, it aims to explore gender representation in two subjects: Arabic and Qiyam wa Ihtiram Al-Akhar textbooks at the primary stage. For instance, it explores how gender roles are portrayed in the textbooks. Second, the study aims to Assess to what extent NSEEW 2030 conform with the content of the textbooks. It focuses on NSEEW 2030. The research explores several questions, including: “Does the content of the Arabic language and Qiyam wa Ihtiram Al-Akhar textbooks in Egyptian schools encourage males and females to engage in non-traditional occupations and activities?”

The research uses the Arabic and Qiyam wa Ihtiram Al-Akhar textbooks as primary sources. To reach results, the study uses qualitative and quantitative content analysis. To effectively analyse the content, it uses a toolkit provided by UNESCO, which provides a framework to analyse gender representation and

facilitates the identification of gender stereotypes and biases that can exist in textbooks. Thus, it can facilitate the development of gender-sensitive content. The study paves the way to the improvement of the Egyptian education towards being more gender sensitive. By examining the content of these textbooks, the research identifies areas where gender equality could be promoted.

### **Securitizing Migration in the Sense of Identity: The Hungarian Double Standards in Responding to the Refugees' Crisis**

**Donia Zaatar - Education Project Manager at Egyptian Red Crescent**

Research Question: To what extent Hungary securitization/de-securitization of migration showed a double standard attitude towards migrants and refugees? Assessing the Hungarian response towards Syrian refugees' crisis and Ukrainian refugees' crisis

Main Concepts: Collective violence, populism and political extreme actions.  
Theoretical Reference: Securitization/ Populism

Purpose and Research Problem: The purpose of this essay is to critically discuss how the Hungarian government feared the loss of national identity rejecting the application of the European Union policies in accepting refugee which resulted in collective violent actions towards Syrian refugees and accepting Ukrainian refugees. Hence, showing the double standard concerning the same issue.

The issue of migration faced many oppositions in recent politics due to the large influx of migrants and refugees to western countries. European countries used to accept a reasonable number of migrants and refugees. However, this acceptance started to shift recently. Some European countries in the last decade show inadequate response to the migrants and refugees' crisis fearing that accepting migrants and refugees would threaten their own identity. Jonas(2019) Stated that some European countries broke the EU laws of hosting refugees because of fearing identity loss. Poland and Hungary as clear examples refused to take in any refugee and migrant, stating security and identity concerns. Hungary discriminated against

Syrian refugees fearing identity loss. Orla (2019) stated that Hungary did not allow refugees entry after the Syrian crisis as it allowed in only two Asylum-seekers per day. It has one of the strictest anti-immigration laws in Europe and has built a 109-mile-long fence along its southern border to curb crossings of refugees and Asylum seekers from Serbia and Croatia. In that sense, the purpose of this essay is to critically discuss how the Hungarian government securitized migration fearing the loss of national identity rejecting the application of the European Union policies in accepting refugee which resulted in populist mobilization and collective violent actions towards Syrian refugees and accepting Ukrainian refugees. Hence, showing the double standard concerning the same issue. This essay aims to answer its main research question that states "To what extent Hungary showed a double standard attitude towards refugees fearing identity threat? Assessing the Hungarian response towards Syrian refugees' crisis and Ukrainian refugees' crisis".

This essay mainly argues that fearing the threat and loss of national identity could lead to securitizing migration resulting in violent and discriminative actions towards minority groups through a populist attitude. In that sense, for the sake of protecting the national and social identity; Hungary did not respond effectively and responded inadequately to the Humanitarian Syrian refugees' crisis.

This paper will be divided into four sections: Introduction; Literature on the topic; Theoretical Framework social identity theory could be valid in the understanding of violent actions; Analysis of the Syrian refugee crisis response and the Ukrainian refugee crisis response; finally, Violent Actions Towards Muslim Refugees. For example, Viktor Orban stated, that he "simply reflected the will of the Hungarian people", refusing to accept refugees, because the large-scale immigration from Muslim countries undermines "the sovereignty and cultural identity of Hungary" and the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban defended his country's refusal of an EU-wide refugee resettlement quota, saying that he believed refugees are "Muslim invaders. (Violent actions because of religious identity).

## **Disease and Pollution in The Writings of Sayyid Qutb Through The Lens of Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* and *Natural Symbols***

**Nour Hany Aboeella - Postgraduate student at The British University in Egypt**

Following the logic of Emile Durkheim, Douglas expects the geo-political concerns of the wider community to be replicated in the bodily concerns of individuals. In societies where interactions with foreigners bring more evil than good, for instance, Douglas observes that individuals are usually encouraged to protect both the borders of their territories and the physical boundaries of their own bodies.

This paper argues that Douglas' two central insights - i) human beings classify their worlds through the concepts of purity and pollution; and ii) a deep psycho-social relationship exists between the communal and individual bodies - are of direct relevance to Qutb's description of the umma. For Qutb, the world is divided in stark terms between, on the one hand, the adherents, symbols and systems of the Islamic civilization and, on the other hand, the adherents, symbols and systems of all non-Muslim civilizations. With the boundary lines drawn, Qutb encourages (pure) Muslims to isolate themselves from the (impure) Western world.

As Douglas expects, Qutb attaches a special degree of danger to Muslims who cross boundaries by seeking to emulate Western behaviours or who live in the West. In so doing, they are neither truly Western nor Muslim. As noted, in speaking of the umma itself, Qutb appeals to the language of decay, sickness and disease. Such metaphors had been used by many others before him. By describing the umma as dead, however, Qutb takes this metaphor further. (Indeed, even Douglas does not anticipate this degree of horror.) The same strategy, however, allows Qutb to argue for radical political action - revolution against the state - in terms of a purification (and thereafter a rebirth) of Islam itself. This paper presents the discourse of purity and pollution in Qutb's *Ma'alim fi al-tariq* and other relevant works (such as *Islam and the Problem of Civilization*) as a coherent rhetorical strategy. Guided by Mary Douglas' theories, it explores the ways in which Qutb seeks to impose order on his own religio-political landscape. Douglas' theories allow for a fresh engagement with

Qutb's work and a deeper understanding of his hope for a new (pure) umma

**Accepting Ukrainian Refugee:** The Hungarian state will provide free accommodation, food, medical Assistance, and financial aid to refugees from Ukraine. "Hungary is a good friend of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. If they need any help, we are here and they can count on us," Orbán said, speaking to reporters at a refugee aid center.

**Proving the Hungarian Double Standard:** It was an unusual trip for the conservative nationalist leader. Orbán has earned a reputation for xenophobia and harshness toward refugees due to a wide range of actions he took in response to the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis – including building a 13-foot razor-wire fence along Hungary's southern border with Serbia and deploying armed forces to kick out refugees he said were in the country illegally. And he frequently portrayed refugees as rapists and terrorists. Now, Orbán has opened up Hungary's borders to Ukrainian refugees and has backed down from his anti-immigrant rhetoric.

## **The Debate on The Sudanese Depiction in Egypt**

### **Amira ElSayed - Postgraduate student at The British University in Egypt**

Egypt has always been a cosmopolitan country that attracts various populations across the world (Grabska, 2006). One of the largest communities living in Egypt is the Sudanese one, and studying the relationship between both communities had a large debate in the literature. According to Moro (2004), Egypt and Sudan are having a profound historical relationship that influenced the movement of Egyptians and Sudanese across the borders of both countries. This relationship started with the annexing of Sudan in 1826 by the Ottoman ruler, Muhammad Ali, and went through various Phases that directly affected this relationship

When it comes to studying the status quo of the Sudanese community in Egypt, the literature is usually focused on the historical relationship between both countries

and how, at some point in history, they were legally united as the Kingdom of Egypt and Sudan. Additionally, both Egyptian and Sudanese literature focus on the ups and downs they went through throughout history. Therefore, to better analyze how Sudanese are living in Egypt, the paper focused on the Sudanese perspective as well as the Egyptian one, in addition, to fully understanding the policies and agreements between both countries that might affect their relationship. It shed the light on the engagement of Egyptian society with other communities living in it generally and specified in the Sudanese one. Consequently, the paper tests to what extent the Sudanese living in Egypt are having a satisfactory livelihood. The decision to study the subjective experience of Sudanese in Egypt requires a methodology that targets both, state and individual levels of analysis. Therefore, the paper used a qualitative methodology based on primary sources such as policies, agreements, speeches, and interviews. Besides, it used the cultural theory/approach to evaluate how culture might contribute to shaping the depiction of Sudanese among Egyptians.

The paper will be divided into three main parts. The first part will tackle the main policies and agreements that shaped the relationship between both countries. The second part will analyze the status quo of the Sudanese living in Egypt from the Egyptian and Sudanese perspectives. Lastly, the third part will focus on the findings and mainly the reason behind the depiction of Sudanese among Egyptians.

**Takaful in Islam: A Critical Analysis to Religious Studies in Egyptian Curricula**  
**Mohamed Hossam Sakr - Postgraduate student at The British University in Egypt**

Education in Egypt remains as one of the important Aspects which influences the behaviour of the society. Egyptian education went through several stages of development by exposing school curricula into a series of reinterpretations regarding its scientific content. So, school curricula could be analysed as an agent which affects the performance and interactions within the Egyptian society in accordance with the political and economic visions of the state.

This paper will be focusing on the nature, and evolution of the concept of Takaful “Solidarity” within the governmental schools curricula. Moreover, this paper will analyse the Islamic interpretation of solidarity from the social, economic, and cultural dimensions.

Accordingly, this paper argues that the Egyptian state promotes its vision of moderate Islam by placing the theme of Takaful into school curricula. As it would serve as an alternative narrative to the secular and radical visions conceptions within Sunni Islamic thought.

Concurrently, the Egyptian ministry of education proceeded in a series of reforms within the curricula, and specially within the module of religious studies since 2016. Furthermore, religious studies is a compulsory module which aims to regulate the student’s behaviour towards the society in accordance with the Sunni Islamic teachings, and the state’s socio- political vision for national development.

This paper will rely on discourse analysis, by focusing on the concept of Takaful within educational textbooks, scholarly books, articles, recorded lectures and interviews with thinkers concerned with the mentioned theme. The concept of Takaful holds a historical, theological, and pedogeological meaning which influenced Islamic thought “moderate Islamic narrative” during the modern era. Also, Islamic political thought relied thoroughly on the concept of Takaful to advocate development and prosperity within the society and the state.

**PARALLEL SESSION C3: THE POSTGRADUATE PERSPECTIVE ON  
COMPARATIVE POLITICS**

**The Failure of Al-Nahda in Post-Arab Spring Tunisia: The Struggle between Mundane Party Politics and Islamist Ideals**

**Fatemah Mosaad - Teaching Assistant at European Universities in Egypt**

After decades of being marginalized and brutally repressed under Ben Ali's rule, Tunisian Islamists—affiliated with al-Nahda movement—managed to secure significant electoral victories following the Tunisian revolution in 2011. Yet, despite the electoral victories that al-Nahda secured after the uprising, and its initial political success, it witnessed electoral and reputational losses. The recent failings of al-Nahda—in tandem with the political failings of mainstream Islamist groups post Arab uprisings—has stimulated lots of discussions. While some argued that the political failings experienced by Islamists demonstrate the unviability of Islamism, and the impracticality of Islamist ideals, others explained the failings of Islamists with reference to mundane party politics, rejecting the particularity of Islamist parties. In light of this, this paper—with special focus on struggles at the level of al-Nahda's leadership—aim to analyse the failings of al-Nahda in Tunisia during the post-Arab uprisings period. It Asks “How did leadership struggles impact the trajectory of al-Nahda in post-revolutionary Tunisia?”.

The paper argues the al-Nahda's political failure does not necessarily assert the unviability of Islamism as an ideology, and that the party's failure can best be explained by referring to struggles, accusations, and fragmentation at the level of the party's leadership. Accordingly, this paper is divided into three main sections. The first section reviews the literature on the failure of Islamism, reviewing works such as Olivier Roy's Failure of Political Islam and some of its critics. The second section sheds light on al-Nahda's trajectory in post-revolutionary Tunisia and highlights its recent political failings. The third section then examines several weaknesses and problems at the level of the al-Nahda's leadership such as the

party's leaders' accusations of corruption, fragmentation and ideational struggles. The paper concludes by highlighting that the failure of al-Nahda is—arguably—best understood by referring to the weaknesses of the party's leadership, which does not necessarily reveal the failure of Islamism or the unviability of Islamist's ideology.

### **The Impact of Human Capital Development on Poverty Reduction: Empirical Evidence in Africa from 2000 to 2017**

**Ibrahim Rabie - Economic Researcher and Project Coordinator at Ministry of Finance**

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the impact of human capital development in terms of both education and health on poverty reduction in Africa during the period (2000- 2017). The study was motivated because of high poverty rates that characterised African developing countries. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to critically evaluate whether improvements in educational and health sector have a positive impact on reducing poverty in the case of African countries or not which is controversial. This dissertation applies a quantitative approach through econometric modelling, using the Generalized Least Square (GLS) method to estimate the Random Effect Model. Unit root tests are applied to check stationarity as well as Hausman test to take the decision between Fixed and Random Effect models. Ten variables have been selected for the purposed study including one dependent variable of Household consumption expenditures as a proxy for poverty reduction and nine other explanatory variables were modelled: per capita income (PCI), Education enrolment, “tertiary school Enrolment (TSE)”, government expenditures on health (GEH), unemployment, inflation, FDI, Trade openness and Net official development Assistance (NODA). Results show that tertiary education enrolment and governments' expenditures on health sector as dimensions of human capital development have a positive robust impact on poverty reduction in Africa economies, income per capita growth has a statistically significant and robust impact on the incidence of poverty and education is more effective than health to reduce poverty. The study therefore recommends that the

governments of the African countries should increase budgetary allocation to both education and health sectors to improve people's intellectual capacity and raises the production capacity of the economy and therefore a reduction in poverty level. This can be achieved through establishing several skills acquisition centers across the countries.

### **European Women in IS: An Analysis of the Socio-Political Environment in Relation to Second and Third Generation Migrants in Western Europe**

**Mariam Sabry - Postgraduate student at The British University in Egypt**

Statistics show that at least 20% of IS' European members are women (Gaub and Lisiecka, 2016). In 2019, it was estimated that two thirds of European women who joined IS since 2014 are second and third generation migrants, while one third are new Muslim converts (Vale, 2019). These women have been identified by European authorities and scholars, since late 2013, as "IS fan-girls" (Ben-Israel, 2018). Besides, scholars, until today, did not settle on the reasons why these women joined IS (RAN, 2017). In fact, the reasons are diverse, due to diversity in these women's profiles in terms of age, financial and social status, educational levels, etc.

Thus, the question this paper attempts to answer is: Why are European Women receptive to IS' call? Hence, the proposed research will focus on second and third generation migrants of European women who joined IS; to investigate the socio-political factors in their home countries (i.e. push factors) that encouraged them to join IS and fight against their home- lands. The paper argues that having women joining the "Islamic cause" is a strategic shift in IS' thinking to fight against westernization and build the "Islamic Empire". In support of their cause, women (life-givers) are to take life from those who do not deserve it from IS' perspective (i.e. Western infidels). In addition, there is nothing more effective than relying on western agents to fight westernization.

This phenomenon is facilitated by political and social discrimination against

Muslims, in general, and Muslim women in particular in Europe.

This research is important; as attention should be paid to the different Aspects and reasons that hinder peace and stability, which is considered the building block towards development and sustainability.

The paper adopts a qualitative approach in answering the research question; whereas a selection of documentaries and News Reports from online newspapers, as The Guardian and ABC News, about the lives of European women who joined IS will be consulted; to investigate these women's incentives for joining IS. There would also be an analysis for the European governments' decisions regarding the re-integration of those women and their children in European societies to Assess the consequences of these decisions on future terrorism in Europe.

The proposed paper will be divided into three sections. The first section examines the rise of "Islamic" terrorism in Europe, while the second section lays the foundations of the theoretical framework; highlighting the main thesis and components of the Social Identity theory. Then, using the theory, the third section investigates the domestic socio-political factors within European countries that encouraged Women to join IS. It also examines the responses of European governments on the repatriation of European women who desire to leave IS and return to their homelands with their children and investigates the possible consequences of these responses on European security and future terrorism.

### **Lebanon Consociational System post-Taif**

#### **Yassin Ashour - Head of Public Policy -Energy at Moharram and Partners**

In 1989 the Taif Agreement was signed to end 15 years of deadly civil war. The agreement amended a long existing consociational system to balance political representation of different sects. It stated that the abolishment of the sectarian power sharing system is a national goal in which all sects should work together to achieve. Moreover, the political establishment, despite few initiatives that were not backed by any of the major political elites, did not take any considerable steps

towards achieving that goal. According to Lijphart, the consociational democracy's objective is to facilitate the transition from political instability to a stable political system. However, Lebanon was not able to develop from the consociational system into a more sustainable governing system. The academic literature pays significant attention to the role of the power sharing mechanisms in maintaining peace and order in the post conflict era. Interesting debates sparked between different camps. Some argue in favour of the consociational system as a tool that mitigates the risks of the development of sectarian identities into violent conflicts. Others argue that the power sharing arrangement deepens societal divisions by prioritising sectarian identities over national identities. Lebanon has gained enormous attention as a successful case of consociationalism by some. Others highlighted the drawbacks of the system and traced the crises that Lebanon faces to the power sharing arrangement.

In this paper, the author aims to apply Lijphart's conditions on the case of Lebanon from 1990. The paper will be divided into two main sections. The first section will discuss the theory and the conditions stated in Lijphart's work. The second section will apply Liphart's conditions to the case of Lebanon.

### **Issues of Gender Equality in Egyptian Family Law: State Feminist Perspectives and Impact on Legislative Reform**

**Sara Amr - Political Science Teacher at Salah Eldin International School**

This paper examines how state feminism in Egypt represented in the National Council of Women tackles women's private- public rights dichotomy during the presidency of Abdelfatah el Sisi. It aims to scrutinize the reasons behind the prioritization of state feminism on framing non- controversial women's public right issues on the expense of developing women's private-family laws in their awareness campaigns. The analysis utilizes social movement theory specifically Tarrow's (1994) schema of opportunities to synthesize the political opportunity approach i.e. the stability of elite collation towards the existence of state feminism and the NCW 's formal access to state institutions. Additionally, Goffman's (1974)

framing approach as well as Faurchurst and Sarr (1996)'s farming techniques helped analyze a prominent NCW campaign " Ta'a Marbouta" to examine whether the National Council of Women's awareness campaigns try to push forward and develop family law or not. The paper concludes that the relationship between the NCW, the state and Al Azhar is dynamic and combines elements of agreements and disagreements. Consequently, this top-down legislative action hampered by Al Azhar affects the development of Egyptian family law and women private rights during the presidency of Abdelfatah el Sisi.

Keywords: private rights; women rights, Social Movement ; Azhar , National Council



## THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST 2023

### SPECIAL THANKS TO

#### REVIEW COMMITTEE

Prof. Amany Masoud

Prof. Gamal Selim

Prof. Rasha Hussein

Prof. Wael Kortam

Assoc. Prof. Hebatallah Ghoneim

Assoc. Prof. Mostafa AboElsoud

Assoc. Prof. Rasha Mansour

### PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES

Final papers will be published in a Conference Proceedings. Chances for international publication of the full paper will be also available on the basis of relevance and through a blind review process in a number of international journals.



The  
BRITISH  
UNIVERSITY  
IN EGYPT

FACULTY OF BUSINESS  
ADMINISTRATION, ECONOMICS,  
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



CFA Institute

PRME Principles for Responsible  
Management Education

an initiative of the

