

ELITE

Meeting Her Excellency Ambassador Naela Gabr

*The Chairperson of the National
Coordinating Committee for
Combating and Preventing
Illegal Migration and
Trafficking in Persons*



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ELITE



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WORLD URBAN FORUM



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Interview with Ambassador Naela Gabr

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Elite newspaper had the honour of conducting an exclusive interview with Ambassador Naela Gabr, Chairperson of the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration and Trafficking in Persons, affiliated with the Egyptian Cabinet. From this platform, she leads Egypt's steadfast efforts to confront this formidable challenge that impacts the economies of both migrant-sending and receiving nations. Her Excellency granted us the opportunity to cast light on her distinguished diplomatic and professional journey.

Throughout her career, Her Excellency has held several high-ranking positions, including her role as Egypt's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva,

where she championed human rights and sustainable development on the international level. She also served as Egypt's Ambassador to South Africa, Botswana, and Lesotho, where she fostered strong diplomatic ties with the African continent. Among her notable accomplishments was her leadership of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), actively advancing women's rights and gender equality worldwide.

In this interview, Ambassador Gabr discussed the current challenges Egypt and the region face in combating illegal migration and human trafficking. She emphasised the critical importance of international and regional cooperation to confront these issues and safeguard communities—a topic explored further throughout this article.

1. How did your relationship with the Faculty of Economics and Political Science begin, and why did you choose it?

The Ambassador explained that her choice of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, despite obtaining grades that would have allowed her to join many prestigious scientific faculties, stemmed from her profound admiration for Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who inspired an entire generation. She noted that her academic journey was a very pleasant one, with a blend of challenges and rewarding experiences, facing both demanding courses and others rich in scholarly content, alongside distinguished professors of notable academic and professional stature. Among them were Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Dr. Hamid Rabea, and Dr. Ali Eddin Hilal, who all left a lasting impact on her path.

The Ambassador then continued seeking knowledge, earning a Master's degree in International Relations from the same faculty. Although she did not enter academia, the doors of diplomacy opened before her, as she excelled in the examinations of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, securing the highest scores in both written and oral exams. This success firmly set her on the path of diplomacy, which she pursued with unwavering determination and success.

2. What was your daily life like as a student at the Faculty, and what activities and relationships did you build with your professors? How did studying Political Science shape your character and prepare you for your distinguished career?

In response to this question, Her Excellency explained that, given the considerable distance between her residence and the college and her ongoing academic commitments, she did not have ample opportunity to participate in many cultural or student activities. Her days were occupied with lectures and study. Despite these pressures, she contributed to the college's wall magazine and was able to successfully build ties of friendship and affection with a number of her peers, which remain strong to this day, in spite of the changing circumstances of life and the various prominent career paths each of them was set on.

These bonds extended beyond her fellow students to her professors, especially Dr. Hamid Rabea and Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. She noted that, Dr. Boutros-Ghali was her advisor for her master's thesis, and their relationship remained close across their different professional and personal stages, lasting until just days before his passing. He had always been her primary supporter throughout her diplomatic career, and was always an exemplary mentor and role model.

3. You were recently honoured and celebrated as a role model by President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi during the Egyptian Women's Celebration. How did you feel about this recognition as a prominent figure in promoting the status of women in Egypt, and how do you view the evolution of the Egyptian government's approach to women's issues?

Her Excellency expressed her immense happiness at receiving this recognition, which came as a culmination of a distinguished career dedicated to unparalleled support for women's issues and rights, reflected in the various positions she has held throughout her professional journey. She has been elected six consecutive times as an international expert on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an unprecedented achievement among United Nations treaty bodies, owing to her extensive experience in this field and her unwavering advocacy for a system of values that uphold women's rights as well as respecting the values of our Arab Region.

Regarding her views on the Egyptian government's approach to women's issues, she emphasised that there is unprecedented support for the political and social rights of Egyptian women. She also expressed her profound satisfaction with the renewed efforts to highlight the importance of family planning, given its significant implications for women's physical and mental health, as well as their roles as mothers, particularly for women who are the primary breadwinners of their families.

4. How has your experience with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) influenced national policies in Egypt concerning women's rights?

Her Excellency expressed her deep gratitude for her tenure as an expert on the CEDAW Committee, a position that reflects the complete trust in her diligent and tireless work on this issue, as well as her strict adherence to the preparation of necessary working papers and policies.

She emphasised her efforts to convey that experience to Egypt, particularly during the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, a time when the political leadership sought to vilify the CEDAW Convention through extensive media mobilisation via their affiliated platforms.

Consequently, she worked vigorously to defend women's rights during this unjust period. This commitment led her to engage with many influential figures in the field of women's rights, such as her meetings with Dr. Amna Nossier, among others, with the hope of rescuing women from the depths of marginalisation and despair they faced at that time. She aimed to affirm that Islamic teachings do not contradict the political and economic rights of women enshrined in the convention.

Moreover, the Ambassador made significant efforts to advocate for the rights of rural women, who constitute a substantial percentage of Egyptian women. She initiated a general recommendation within the CEDAW Committee addressing Article 14 of the convention concerning rural women, analysing the various difficulties and challenges they face and providing recommendations to different countries on how to safeguard the rights and needs of rural women. The Ambassador was keen to share this experience not only within Egypt but also across various Arab nations. Additionally, she contributed to the promotion of CEDAW within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation by advocating for the establishment of a Women's Development Organization (WDO) based in Cairo and working to turn this idea into reality.

In conclusion, the Ambassador underscored that CEDAW is a vital document and a fundamental cornerstone for development, stating that true development cannot be achieved without empowering women and enhancing their rights.

5. You were awarded the Palmes académiques in recognition of your contributions to French culture. What does this honour mean to you, and how do you view the significance and evolution of Egyptian-French relations?

In response to this question, Her Excellency the Ambassador expressed her deep gratitude for such an honour, which comes after a significant period of promoting and supporting French culture in Egypt, highlighting her extensive work as a presidential representative in the Francophonie Council. Furthermore, she emphasised her enduring passion for the French language, viewing it not merely as a language but as a rich culture in its own right.

The Ambassador consistently advises the new and current generation of diplomats on the necessity of mastering the French language, especially for those wishing to work in Africa. She stressed that this proficiency is not merely a matter of social prestige, as some may perceive, but rather an essential and vital tool that enables them to perform their duties effectively and successfully. She noted that her command of the French language has been instrumental in her various diplomatic roles in Paris, Geneva, and the African Group.

6. As the current Chair of the National Coordinating Committee for Combating and Preventing Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking, what efforts and measures is the committee undertaking in coordination with relevant authorities to address the issue of irregular migration at both regional and local levels? What are the most notable achievements?

Firstly, on the local level, Ambassador Naela Gabr expressed that the committee she leads, which reports directly to the Prime Minister, has led efforts to combat this phenomenon across all fronts—legislative, institutional, and practical. In terms of legislation, the committee successfully established the first law specifically addressing irregular migration in the Middle East, Law No. 82 of 2016, which defines the crime of human trafficking for the first time and imposes stringent penalties. This initiative was coordinated with the Ministry of Interior to instil and reinforce the principle of deterrence.



On the institutional front, the existence of the committee as an organisational body in Egypt lends the country significant weight on the international stage, where the committee is more recognized than locally. Furthermore, the fact that it operates directly under the Prime Minister also serves as evidence of a clear political vision and commitment to addressing this complex issue. The committee is characterised by having a flexible and highly interconnected mechanism that avoids bureaucracy; notably, it does not burden the state with costs related to awareness campaigns and conferences, as it receives funding in the form of grants from international organisations and countries.

On the practical level, the committee operates based on studies aimed at determining the geographic distribution of the phenomena of interest, thereby allowing it to allocate efforts and actions according to the needs of different governorates.

Internationally, the committee collaborates with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparing reports for the United Nations and participates in discussions of these reports at meetings held in Geneva. The committee also highlights its activities in Egypt, presenting them to the international community, emphasising that this issue constitutes a blatant violation of human rights.



Additionally, it is committed to sharing Egypt's experiences on this topic at the regional level, representing Egypt in regional conferences and meetings aimed at raising awareness among countries and individuals and exchanging views and expertise regarding this matter.

These efforts have borne fruit, as Egypt has successfully exercised strong political will to control its borders, particularly its shores. No Egyptian migrant vessel has departed since September 2016, despite the challenges surrounding Egypt and the precarious economic situation in the region, which directly affects the issue of illegal migration in the country. While there are isolated cases of illegal migration, their prevalence remains limited, primarily due to the ongoing presence of human trafficking networks and the lucrative nature of this crime for its perpetrators. Nevertheless, Egypt has effectively managed the situation amidst a highly sensitive and complex economic and regional context.

7. How does Ambassador Naela Gabr perceive the current regional situation, particularly regarding the war in Palestine, the civil wars in Sudan, and various escalating conflicts?

What impact do these events have on the rates of illegal migration, and what role does Egypt play in this context?

In response to inquiries about these unfortunate events sweeping across the Arab world, Ambassador Naela expressed her deep concern and sorrow, as any Arab citizen would, regarding the injustices occurring in the region, particularly on the Palestinian front.

She condemned the oppressive actions of the occupying forces under the leadership of Prime Minister Netanyahu, who has made his state a hostage to his aggressive and imperial ambitions, surpassing all war criminals throughout history. This is set against a backdrop of an international community that has stood powerless in the face of a state that violates all standards and principles of human rights, beginning with its unwavering support for such actions since October 7, based on false foundations.

All these factors reflect on Egypt, particularly in terms of job opportunities and the impact on national income sources, such as the Suez Canal and tourism and various economic sectors—two of the key drivers behind the phenomenon of irregular migration. Consequently, the committee has set its priority to lead awareness campaigns targeted at youth during this critical phase, in coordination with various local development partners. These campaigns aim not only to raise awareness about the dangers of irregular migration but also to showcase a range of alternative opportunities available in the Egyptian market, which is among the largest markets in the region. This approach requires innovative solutions and ideas from young people, focusing primarily on the Egyptian market rather than resorting to irregular migration.

8. In the midst of the current economic challenges, what are the key challenges and risks that the state and the committee should take into consideration?

Her Excellency placed the regional challenge at the forefront, highlighting its impact on various aspects, not only economically but also psychologically on the Egyptian citizen.

However, the most significant challenge is, of course, the economic one. She believes that Egypt's way out of this dark tunnel lies in primarily supporting the private sector, which, in turn, provides ample job opportunities for youth. It is crucial not to leave the government to navigate the economic process alone, especially in an era that requires innovative solutions and ideas—solutions that cannot be implemented solely by the government but must be based on organising the economic process within a broader framework.

She emphasised the necessity of focusing on certain vital strategic sectors, such as agriculture, industry, and technical education, urging a departure from the traditional perceptions that have been ingrained in the public mindset. This shift is essential to generate added value that creates opportunities and opens new horizons for youth in the economic sector. Additionally, she encouraged young people to study the market and its needs, understanding the value of work itself, enabling them to become qualified and sought after by emerging economic sectors. This involves moving away from the traditional view of public employment and the entrenched culture surrounding prestigious academic institutions.

She concluded her response by stressing the importance of supporting national industries and promoting the slogan "Egyptian Products First." This is a goal the state aims to achieve by creating new markets for artisans and manufacturers.

The ambassador also noted that she has adopted this slogan throughout her diplomatic career by presenting gifts to foreign ambassadors and officials, all of which are locally produced. Such products serve as excellent ambassadors for Egyptian goods and manufacturing, a principle she encourages the current generation of diplomats to embrace as well.

9. How is the Egyptian state addressing the increase in the number of refugees and the rising risks of irregular migration and human trafficking within Egypt?

Her Excellency noted that Egypt has transitioned from being a source and transit country to becoming more of a destination country. Currently, the inflow of migrants significantly exceeds the outflow due to the prevailing circumstances. The Egyptian state is giving this issue considerable attention, acknowledging that while it represents a burden and responsibility for the Egyptian administration, Egypt has always welcomed its guests warmly. However, it is crucial to regularise their status within the country to understand their numbers and basic needs, as well as to maintain security. With the increase in refugee numbers, Egypt now hosts over 790,000 registered refugees, not to mention many others who are unregistered. This situation poses significant risks, especially since the assistance and support received by Egypt for these individuals do not adequately correspond to the numbers it accommodates annually from neighbouring countries. This imbalance places additional pressures on the labour market, particularly the informal sector, as well as on social services such as health, education, and housing. Despite Egypt's long-standing hospitality towards its guests throughout different eras, the large influx poses a serious threat, particularly regarding population concentrations in specific areas. She concluded this point by expressing her hope that the challenging circumstances surrounding Egypt and the Arab region will soon pass, wishing for peace and prosperity. Furthermore, the ambassador highlighted one of the key programs activated previously to combat irregular migration: the "Aware Migrant" program.

This initiative is part of broader media campaigns and Egyptian efforts that have been translated and disseminated widely to raise awareness about the risks of irregular migration

to migrants themselves and to educate them about the definition and dangers of human trafficking, which fundamentally involves exploiting the most vulnerable and needy groups. The committee is also seeking funding to revitalise this campaign to educate African brethren from source countries about the risks of irregular migration.

10. In conclusion, what are the key pieces of advice you would like to share with our students, particularly those interested in joining the diplomatic service in light of global changes and developments?

At the end of our engaging and rich conversation, Ambassador Naela Gabr concluded her remarks by encouraging students from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science to pursue careers in diplomacy. She advised them to stay updated on current events, which can change rapidly from one day to the next, and to regularly read rich newspapers and magazines filled with both global and local news, such as Al-Ahram Weekly, Al-Ahram Hebdo, and the International Affairs journal, which continues to maintain its prestige and relevance.

The ambassador emphasised the importance of foreign language proficiency as a fundamental requirement for entering the diplomatic service, recommending that students master at least one foreign language in reading, writing, and translation. She also stressed the need to give due attention to the Arabic language, which has recently received less emphasis among the current youth generation. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of maintaining a respectable appearance and representing the country in a commendable manner.

On behalf of Elite newspaper, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Her Excellency for the wonderful opportunity to meet with her and for sharing the invaluable insights and lessons learned from her distinguished and significant career.



The Faculty organizes a seminar titled "Artificial Intelligence: Security Challenges and Development Opportunities."

Zeyad Mohamed-Economics-Fourth level



A seminar was held at the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University, titled "Artificial Intelligence: Security Challenges and Development Opportunities." The discussion was moderated by Assistant Professor. Dr. Hala El-Rashidi, Director of the Center for Political Studies and Research, and featured contributions from Air Force Major General Dr. Hesham El-Halabi, advisor at the Military Academy for Postgraduate Studies, and Professor. Dr. Rabab El-Sherif, Dean of the Graduate School of Nanotechnology at Cairo University. The seminar examined the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence in both security and development, sparking an in-depth dialogue about the potential impacts of this technology on societies and nations.



In his speech, Air Force Major General Dr. Hesham El-Halabi addressed the impact of artificial intelligence on modern warfare and national security. He highlighted that the increasing use of unmanned systems, such as autonomous aircraft and vessels, has become a hallmark of modern militaries due to their capability to execute complex tasks without direct human intervention. These systems are characterized by high efficiency and reduced cost, making their use highly attractive. However, the challenge lies in their autonomy and ability to make critical decisions, raising concerns about control and potential errors that could result from this significant challenge. General El-Halabi added that artificial intelligence has redefined traditional deterrence concepts, allowing intelligent systems to make rapid decisions, thereby enhancing military forces' ability to carry out complex operations swiftly and effectively. This advancement makes warfare more dynamic and introduces an element of unpredictability. Nevertheless, as reliance on these systems grows, the question arises as to how to handle potential errors in autonomous decision-making, especially if these errors could lead to significant human or material losses.

Another challenge discussed by General El-Halabi was the role of artificial intelligence in bolstering cyber-attack capabilities. This technology enables attackers to analyze and breach advanced information systems, potentially targeting infrastructure such as energy grids, transportation, and communications. Such attacks could disrupt daily life and lead to complete paralysis in critical sectors. He noted that these threats are no longer limited to states but have expanded to include terrorist groups that might leverage commercially available technology to achieve their objectives, complicating counter-terrorism efforts and global security management. He emphasized that with the advancement of artificial intelligence, an arms race among major powers seeking to develop more sophisticated systems is intensifying, increasing global tensions. This technological race poses new challenges to global stability and necessitates new security measures and defensive policies aligned with rapid technological developments.

Conversely, Dr. Rabab El-Sherif, Dean of the Graduate School of Nanotechnology at Cairo University, outlined the significant benefits that artificial intelligence can offer to support development and improve societal well-being. She began by noting that artificial intelligence is not solely confined to military applications but acts as a primary catalyst for achieving developmental goals, including eradicating poverty and enhancing healthcare and education.

This perspective highlights the dual nature of artificial intelligence as a tool that, while powerful, requires careful management to ensure positive outcomes. She explained that artificial intelligence could greatly improve the efficiency of various sectors, such as agriculture, by analyzing climatic and soil data to provide recommendations that enhance productivity and reduce waste. This step is crucial for achieving food security and promoting environmental sustainability, especially in the face of increasing global climate challenges. In the field of healthcare, Dr. El-Sherif emphasized the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing diagnostic and treatment processes. She affirmed that employing artificial intelligence to analyze vast medical data sets helps identify new disease patterns and develop effective treatments more rapidly. This leads to better quality health services and increased hospital efficiency, improving the ability of healthcare systems to respond to pandemics and other urgent health challenges. She also focused on the role of artificial intelligence in education. She pointed out that modern technology enables the design of tailored educational curricula that cater to individual student needs, making learning more effective and interactive.



These technologies deepen students' understanding of concepts and help develop skills that align with the needs of the modern job market, thereby enhancing their employability and reducing unemployment rates. She addressed the significant and potentially negative economic impacts that could arise from the increasing reliance on artificial intelligence, noting that this shift may radically alter the labor market. While automation and artificial intelligence offer benefits such as increased productivity and cost reduction, they could lead to the contraction of traditional jobs dependent on manual or routine tasks. However, this transformation also creates new job opportunities that require advanced skills in areas like programming, analysis, and critical thinking, highlighting the need for workforce skill development aligned with future market needs. To adapt to this change, Dr. Rabab stressed the importance of government investment in comprehensive training and qualification programs aimed at supporting workers and equipping them with the necessary skills to adapt to technological advances.

These programs should include training in the use of advanced technology and the development of analytical and intellectual capabilities, ensuring that workers are ready to thrive in modern work environments increasingly based on artificial intelligence. She pointed out that such programs are not merely a preventive measure but a strategic necessity for sustaining economic development and preventing negative consequences like rising unemployment rates. This approach turns the challenges of automation into opportunities by preparing individuals to strike a balance between modern technology use and ensuring sustainable job creation that meets evolving market demands.

In conclusion, the seminar highlighted that artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword, offering immense potential for development and progress, while simultaneously requiring careful regulation to ensure optimal benefits and mitigate risks. Both General El-Halabi and Dr. El-Sherif emphasized this. General El-Halabi concluded his speech by stressing the importance of cautious adoption of technology in the military domain, noting that losing control over intelligent systems could jeopardize international security and escalate arms races. On the other hand, Dr. El-Sherif closed by emphasizing the importance of leveraging artificial intelligence for development and societal well-being, underscoring the role of government policies in implementing training and qualification programs to support the workforce and ensure continued development.

The key takeaway from this fruitful seminar is that nations should establish clear regulatory policies and laws for the responsible use of artificial intelligence, while promoting international cooperation to address security challenges and protect societies from potential labor market impacts. The importance of research and development was highlighted to update legal and ethical frameworks that keep pace with technological advancements, ensuring that artificial intelligence serves as a force for human prosperity and societal advancement.



WORLD URBAN FORUM



WUF12: An opportunity for progressive development?

Kenzy Tamer-Political Science-L2



This November, Egypt has hosted the 12th Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12) and according to this year's slogan: "It all starts at home", change and certainly development should start locally first, then be expanded globally. Urban development issues are related to the simplest aspects that we usually take for granted, but deeply impact the shared urban existence of over 4.4 billion people: such as the air we breathe, the availability and cost of housing, the safety of our water supply, or the access to safe and inclusive public spaces.

Established by the UN in 2001, and in collaboration with UN-Habitat, the World Urban Forum comes back to Africa after over 20 years. This forum is here to examine one of the most critical issues around the world: rapid urbanization and its impacts on the environment. But most importantly it is a platform where experiences and expertise are shared from all around the world

WUF is also one of the most inclusive international gatherings that treat several urban matters, which are deeply intertwined with several pressing issues related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, the sessions organized during the 5-days conference, mainly aimed to discuss the matters of inequality, sustainable architecture and construction, gender-inclusivity in the urban sector, increasing the environmental consciousness, acknowledging the impacts of conflicts on urbanization, etc.....



Not only that, the choice of Cairo in itself is pivotal as the city's metropolitan area is the largest in Africa and it faces several challenges and suffers from rapid urbanization and high demographic growth. But most importantly, the recommendations and fruitful outcomes from the sessions surpass the simple concept of "home", because "home" is not only defined by a physical structure but it represents the attributes of belonging to the values that shape the cities and communities around the world. After its stop in Cairo, WUF13 is going to Baku in Azerbaijan where discussions are going to be carried on.



What was really remarkable in that forum was the voice given to the youth within the dialogue sessions. In addition, at the Urban Expo, the booths gave a platform for countries and for some NGOs and startups to market/represent sustainable urban planning projects from around the world. However, as impressive as it was especially in relation to the topics tackled, and in its inclusivity, we are here to ask:

Can it really help us build and achieve sustainable futures for our cities? Or is it going to become like any other forum that don't achieve or realize change especially in developing countries? Some of the sessions and discussions offered out of reach solutions, that cannot be adopted in developing countries; and if they were meant to be adopted, structural changes should be implemented to the infrastructure or sometimes changes in the roots of these countries' cultures... Because some of the "first world countries" problems are not the same as "the second world" or "less developed world" problems. And even if they were adopted for these countries, the general lack of political will to shift economic and unsustainable practices can be a barrier in front of the achievement of this development, and the SDG goals.





A Forgotten Africa: Why Global Outrage Stops there

Salma Nasr- Political science-Junior Year



In today's world, the headlines are stuck in a loop: Gaza-Israel conflicts, Russia-Ukraine clashes, and the endless discussions surrounding global superpowers and their dynamics. In any newspaper, you'll find these stories given top importance everyday. But where is the consistent reporting on the humanitarian catastrophes taking place across Africa? How often do you hear about the countless lives torn apart in Congo, the relentless violence in Sudan, or the suffering in the Central African Republic? Why do these brutal conflicts, where millions are displaced and entire communities are annihilated, barely appear for us?

The sad truth is that Africa's wars are often relegated to the margins. Take the Democratic Republic of Congo as an example. It is a country that sustains a decades-long conflict so devastating that it has claimed over four million lives. Yet, the narrative around it is far more complicated than a simple tale of oppressor versus oppressed because it's chaotic involving at least twenty different rebel groups and armies from neighboring countries. It's not a war that fits neatly into a headline, and so it struggles to get attention.



There isn't a single figure to blame or a clear ideology driving the violence. Instead, it's a mess of ethnic tensions, political greed, divisions and the long shadow of colonial exploitation.

Imagine trying to get the world interested in a crisis where most victims don't die in a missile bombing but from disease and starvation, far from the eyes of the cameras. How do you paint a vivid picture of suffering when it's quiet, unremarkable in refugee camps or villages? Even The New York Times, known for its international coverage, devoted far more attention to Darfur than Congo, despite the Congo crisis being far deadlier. It's easier for readers to rally around a narrative where evil has a face, and there's a clear-cut enemy. Darfur, for example, was easier to frame: a genocide by Sudanese authorities against specific ethnic groups. Congo's conflict, meanwhile, is like a saga with too many characters and no coherent plot. Who are the villains? Who are the victims? When the suffering comes not from bombs but from malaria or malnutrition, how does one create the sense of urgency necessary to break to the surface next to Gaza or Ukraine?



Let's also not forget the bystander effect in global politics. When the international community looks at conflicts, the level of interest often hinges on Western strategic interests. Wars that impact oil prices or have clear geopolitical stakes—like those involving Russia or in the Middle East—tend to get front-page coverage. But African conflicts? They often seem too far removed from Western priorities. They don't disrupt global markets or spark fears of a wider war between superpowers but worse it covers the western exploitation of natural resources in these countries. So somehow, it is advantageous for the western media, it's better to stay forgotten.

However, this isn't just an issue for Western audiences because even within the region, many countries show a weird level of apathy. During the Burundian massacre, when hundreds of thousands of bodies floated down the Nile's tributaries, many Egyptians were more concerned about water pollution than the human tragedy unfolding there.

The Nile, Egypt's lifeblood, was at the center of their worries, overshadowing the horror of a massacre happening to fellow Africans. Personally, I think it's because most Egyptians don't even consider themselves as a part of Africa. Africa is always portrayed in their minds as a black populated continent, and us being physically different make it look like we're distinct and, I dare say, better. This underlying racism and the everlasting nationalist tale make it easy to homogenize the suffering of a mass of black individuals and only care about our interest and how their suffering would hinder our daily life and national interests.

We live in a world where visuals dominate our news consumption. Bombs falling in Gaza or tanks rolling into Ukraine make for compelling television. In contrast, the plight of a Congolese mother losing her child to malaria is hard to capture in a way that will go viral. Human suffering, when it is quiet and far away, has a way of slipping through the cracks. The violence in places like Northern Mozambique or the Central African Republic isn't less tragic; it's just less visible and more complicated.

We cannot let convenience dictate our compassion. Every life has value, whether it's lost to war in Ukraine or malnutrition in Congo. The challenge is making sure that the world pays attention, even when the story is hard to tell.





The Enigma of Freedom

Salma El Bukhari - Political Science - Senior

Amidst the emergence of new information and historical sources, multiple pasts and narratives persist, challenging dominant accounts. Hegemonic narratives often attempt to suppress debates on controversial topics. Memory is a powerful weapon; it has the power to manipulate anyone into anything, with the right motive. It is the difference between freedom and deep, dark fates.

From that, a very distinctive feeling must be introduced; Hate. Hate is a powerful emotion characterized by a strong sense of “againstness” that is always directed toward a specific target. This feeling of hatred can function as a type of emotional investment, giving significance or influence to a particular person by identifying them as part of a group. This kind of thinking brings on a very unique kind of contention that creates a narrative of the self and the other, but for the sake of this article, this is not a case of “self” but a case of an only way out; “freedom”.



In the anime series Attack on Titan (AOT), Eren, the “protagonist”, acquires special titan powers to defend against the Marleyan assault (a foreign country that infiltrates Eren’s Homeland, Paradis Island).

Eren uses a unique titan power to trigger the rumbling to eradicate all human life on earth by stomping on them, sparing only the people of Paradis. Eren succeeds in exterminating 80% of the global population before his friends stop him and eliminate the power of the titans from the world.

Memory Studies asserts that history and memory are deeply interconnected, with memory acting as a means to bring the past into the present. This process continuously reshapes our perception of historical events, though the events themselves remain unchanged. The selective inclusion or omission of information in textbooks and propaganda illustrates how history is constructed.

The first encounter with memory in AOT was when Erwin, a military leader with an integral part in the story, has a flashback of his father, a history teacher, only retelling history of the past 100 years inside the walls of what we later come to know as Paradis Island. When Erwin asked his father about the people outside the walls, his father confided in him with a theory about how the king wiped the memories of the nation before the 100 years Eldian people have lived in Paradis. Erwin's father's theory was true and the King magically altered

everyone's memories for purely political reasons, the real world is not magical but it is clear projection of using politics of memory to manipulate a whole state's memory to indoctrinate certain ideas.

Beyond complexities surrounding hate as an emotion, hate also plays a crucial role in shaping our individual and communal identities. In other words, the target of our hostility isn't just present; it needs to be constructed. In this process, the fabricated adversary becomes essential to our self-perception. Hate is the driving force behind every action in AOT, it is fuelled by memories, action and bloodlust at its peak. In Marley, they used Willy Tybur, an Eldian to fuel hate against Paradis Island to unite the world through hate in order to attack them. A whole festival was organized, bringing all world leaders to Marley for Tybur to "tell them the truth" and again, begin a new cycle of hate.



The concept of the “other” must be reflected upon. Hate plays a crucial role in the negotiation of boundaries between individuals and communities, where 'others' are perceived as threats to our existence. AOT portrays individuals who are born into and endure circumstances that were established by their predecessors, aimlessly suffering due to the legacies of their ancestors.

Eren embodies numerous conflicting actions in this scenario. He rejects a submissive position in his relationship with the fear of the Other, in the beginning it was the titans infiltrating the walls and uprooting his life. He also intensely craves liberation from the societal comfort and limitations among his peers, he was initially very weak. His initial response to the Titans breaking through the Wall is fear, followed by anger: the Other that endangers his freedom must be annihilated.



Throughout the series, the “other” changes for Eren. It was the titans at first, but then he became a titan himself. Then, he found out that one of his comrades is a Marleyan Warrior, Reiner, and infiltrating the ranks of humanity inside the walls. That was when the Other changed again. Then he found out that there is humanity beyond the walls, and they hate Paradis Island, so they became the Other. Then the Other became the rest of the world, keeping him from freedom and that is why they must be gone. He goes through a process of dehumanizing each and every one of those he perceives as the “other”, at some point the Other mixed with himself.

Eren sees that the only route to freedom is to hate, to weaponize the political memory and historical memory, and to end everything. The creation of the Other forms the foundation of various discourses. It also perpetuates conspiracy theories about the constant presence and threat of the Other to our lives. Eren suggests that eradicating the differences of the “Other” paves the way for unity, peace, and freedom. Even though he might be mistaken, but it was the only way he saw how.



Women, Politics and Trump

Farida Ibrahim-Political Sciences-Third Year French



"They put her in, and she somehow – a woman – somehow she's doing better than [President Joe Biden] did." Words of interjection pronounced by Donald J. Trump, the re-elected president of the United States of America on a TV show on Fox News Channel.

Between opponents and supporters, red voters and blue voters, the American public opinion is drastically shattered. The origin of disagreement between republicans and democrats aren't only about racism, Roe v Wade right -abortion- , sexual orientation, illegal immigration or even low/high prices, but it's the conflict of beliefs, interests and the "polarization" of politics manipulated and glorified by mainstream media.

Although, what is more alarming is the controversy on topics related to Women : equality, health rights -reproductive freedoms-, misogyny, abuse and normalized aggressiveness towards them. Social media are recently flooded with disappointed citizens -mostly women and girls- scared for their future and planning on leaving the country, blaming other women voting for .



Trump claiming “ If you voted red and this is the norm you set, then enjoy lower gas prices” On the other side, Trump supporters -mostly white men- trying to justify Trump’s real intentions and policies which have no negative effect on women rights ; “...Because at the end of the day it’s the Land of free, you can do whatever you want, you can be whoever you want to be” they claimed.

“I work with the majority of men, just to see them smiling and high-fiving each other saying ‘Men won again’ made me terrified” was a statement of a woman of many, expressing their rage on social media after the election result as they feel that their freedom is deprived. Actually, in my opinion the cause of that isn’t in fact, the policies implemented but the hate/misogynistic speech that is pushed by the mainstream media, adding to that the statements expressed by Trump in some speeches and TV showing his real agenda towards women. Currentl, the most viral statement on Tiktok is “ Your body, my choice. Forever” said by Nicholas Fuentes is a far-right political pundit and live-streamer who promotes supremacist, misogynist hate speeches which is why his Youtube channel was permanently terminated in 2020. This specific one was vastly attacked because of his speech, as it revealed how policies implemented by the conservatives can have the target of “just” controlling women and not to “make America great again”.

This control was explained by Texas States representative James Talarico that when Trump, in his first term, overturned Roe v Wade, the republicans in Texas banned abortion under any condition and put death penalty on woman who did it, that’s why Trump’s opponents affirm that republican extremism is “killing” women.

Adding to that another argument expressed by women “How are we supposed to feel safe not only, when a convicted felon is ruling our country, but also actively talking about ‘the purge’ ”, which is mainly a dystopian imagination, not realised yet, mentionned by Trump during a rally in Pennsylvania, about having one “rough and strict” hour or day where every and any crime is legal and no one can stop anyone even the police, who in that case, is not supposed to charge anyone under any condition. He also talked about giving full immunity to the police, so it can be above the law, which in both cases is terrifying, even in just imagination, for people of color and women.

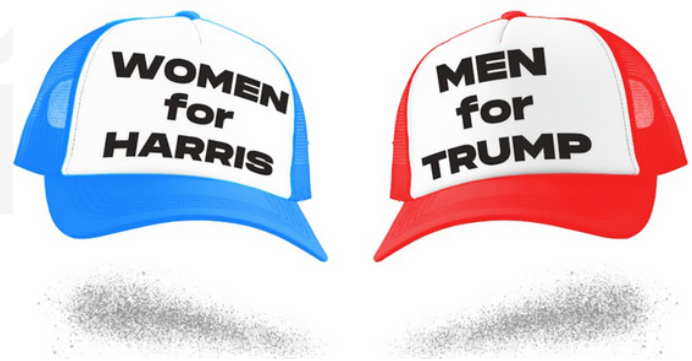


While the other camp see that it's because the republican will dominate the three branches of government including the Senate and likely the House, and because he will be more free to push the policies he actually wants now than he could in the first term because he no longer has to stress over winning votes for re-election ; that the media is biased because it's controlled by democrats. In fact, republican supporters claim that one of Trump's policies is to "terminate every diversity, equity and inclusion across the entire federal government".

As Trump's male voters base, rely on being a man's man, and because their candidate focuses on economic prosperity more than social issues including women's, they argued that : it is selfish of blue voters to put gender identity and women reproductive rights over worldly issues like illegal immigrants "crowding" the country, economic instability and high prices,the wellbeing of american families and to worry about elitist and privileged issues, originally pushed by democrats and far left liberals, while there are some people who can't afford their necessities... Then, what does Trump really want? He wants "MAGA" – to Make America Great Again-. The phrase has troubled liberals who think it is a call for a return to an America before civil rights, gay rights, and women's rights. But it has a more generous interpretation, one that is truer to my experience of Donald Trump as he is today. "Make America Great Again" recalls a nation brimming with vitality, with a can-do spirit, with hope and a belief.

It was an America that was beginning to confront its darker shadows, could acknowledge the injustice in its past and present, yet at the same time could celebrate its successes. It was a nation of broad prosperity, the world's most vibrant middle class, and an idealistic belief (though not consistently applied) in freedom, justice, and democracy. It was a nation that led the world in innovation, productivity, and technology. And it was the healthiest country in the world. This is the America they want to restore.

And now, after acknowledging both opinion, where is the truth between the two camps? Is the media over exaggerating about Trump's perspective of women or it's just the reality? What is the fate of American women? Will they survive the political system of the conservative son of immigrants? We will know the full answer in 4 years.





“Renegotiating” IMF Deal

Abdelrahman Sakr- Economics- Third Year



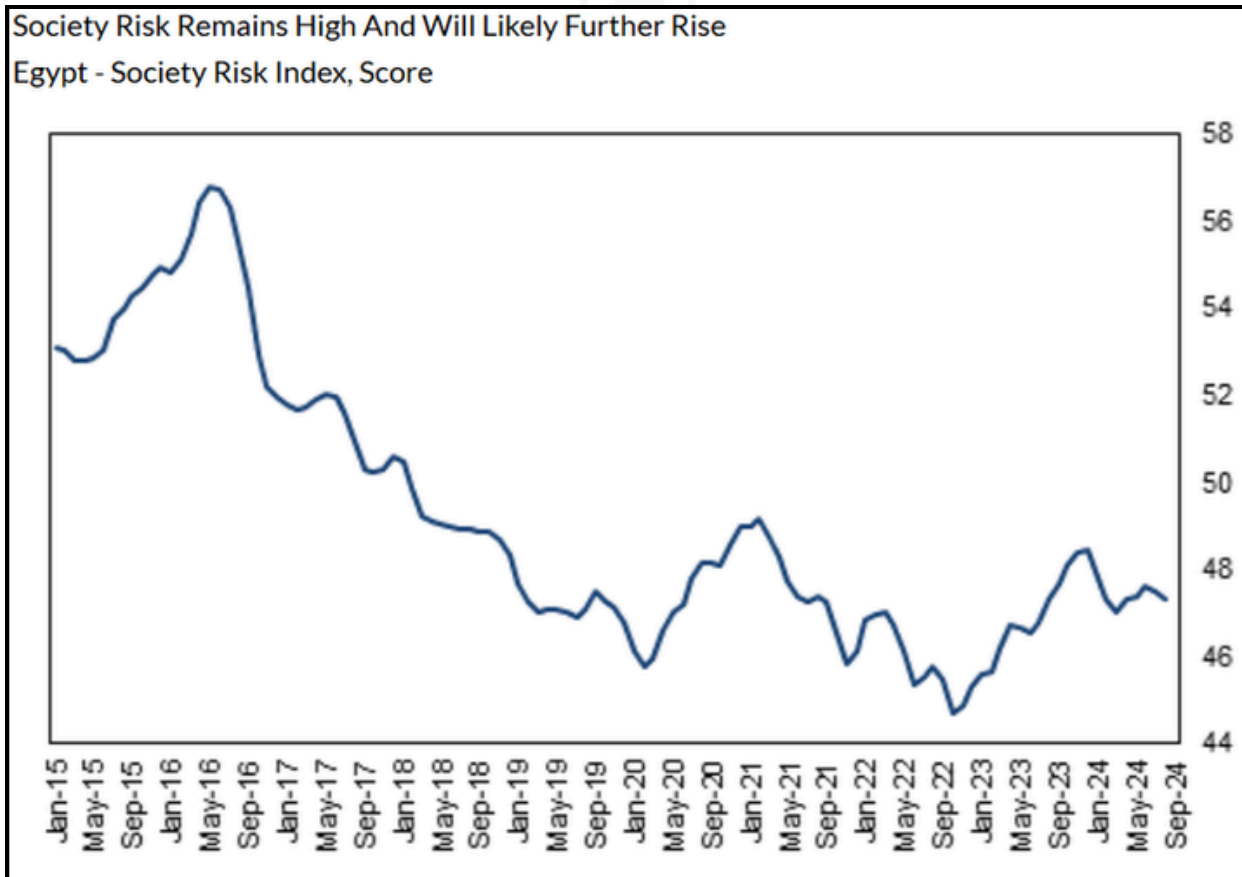
On October 21, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi stated that Egypt may need to renegotiate its program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) due to the economic strain caused by regional geopolitical risks. He expressed concern that the reforms required under the program could further burden the population. This comes after Egypt has implemented several challenging measures this year, including a 36% depreciation of the Egyptian pound in March and successive hikes in administered prices. Inflation, which fell from a peak of 35.7% in February to 25.7% in July, has been climbing again since August, driven by increases in fuel and electricity prices. Inflation is projected to reach around 28% in October and November, exacerbated by the recent fuel price hikes and seasonal factors.


Sisi’s remarks followed an October 18 increase in fuel prices of 13% to 17%, in line with an IMF-backed plan to fully eliminate fuel subsidies by December 2025. According to Fitch, the government is growing increasingly concerned about the potential for social unrest, fueled by economic pressures and Egypt’s stance on the Gaza conflict. The Fitch Society Risk Index indicates that unrest has returned to 2019 levels, a period marked by controversial constitutional amendments that extended el-Sisi’s potential rule until 2030 and granted him control over the judiciary.

Critical reforms remain for Egypt: the elimination of fuel subsidies, adherence to a flexible exchange rate, the public release of financial data, and the privatization of military-owned enterprises. Despite a 70% drop in Suez Canal revenues, ²⁴

Egypt's reliance on remittances and IMF support makes it improbable that the government would manipulate the exchange rate or abandon the IMF agreement. Therefore, el-Sisi's recent statements could be a strategic move aimed at achieving one or more objectives: persuading the IMF to overlook the privatization of military enterprises, delaying subsidy cuts, appeasing public sentiment, or all of the above..

Previously, such maneuvers have allowed the government evading some obligations while still imposing economic measures that strain society. Notably, prior to the presidential elections last year, el-Sisi declared that a flexible exchange rate would not be adopted if it threatened national security, even if it contradicted IMF conditions. Yet, just months later, the Egyptian pound was devalued. His recent rhetoric about prioritizing the public's well-being over rigid economic policies rings hollow in light of these past actions.





Our conception of the ultimate truth about the universe and our daily behaviors :

Nourine Negm- Political science- Senior student

We often consider our conceptualisation of the universe and existence as a mere aspect of our lives or a mere interesting topic to reflect upon. However, dedicate time for it or not, each of us has a particular idea, and belief of his or her own existence and of the creation of this universe. Consciously or unconsciously, often the latter, this conceptualisation of our existence determines and leads the majority, if not all of our actions, both the most significant and insignificant ones.

Here, we need to pause and ask ourselves: is what we think we believe about the universe and our existence consistent or coherent with what we deeply truly believe and with what dominates our unconscious mind and our actions?

Each of us in a way, considers oneself to hold the ultimate one revealed truth about the world. Consequently, whether intentionally and consciously or unintentionally through an unconscious automatic behavior, since oneself holds the so called "truth", everyone feels

compelled to impose it upon others, to share THE truth with the world, to enlighten others with THAT truth in a way. With most of us believing in being "the enlightened", we find ourselves divided into social groups with individuals who are, according to our own truth, "enlightened" as well. To each group everyone else has fallen into darkness but with different levels/degrees or even if some are considered enlightened, it remains a consideration of a lesser degree of enlightenment. It's a spectrum as are most things. From here, equally comes the inevitable social antagonies whether between social groups of the same country or between different countries and civilizations.

But what do we mean exactly by "the truth" ? And what is its source ? By the truth, we mean what we believe about this universe and its structure, about the nature of

life, and the nature of people, it's equally what we believe about the light and darkness in our world and which dominates, it's simply how we see our surrounding world. Henceforth, it's according to our perception, to that belief, that we choose how to behave with others and it's according to our own conceptualisation of the "ultimate truth" about the universe and existence, that we make our daily decisions. While the first source of the truth that would usually come to mind, is "religion", what we think about God and its existence, it's often very few people who sincerely ponder on that topic, very few brave and truly open-minded people dedicate the necessary time and effort, if not one's entire lifetime, to reflect upon and search into the different religions and the various conceptualisations of God and its existence, to find eventually their strong, well researched "Truth", rather than just inherit a certain belief or decide to choose whichever suits one's desires most or whichever satisfies one's need to belong most. Consequently, in our contemporary world of inherited beliefs, we find that "life experience" is another major source for many's deep down beliefs/ idea of "That ultimate truth", which is in this author's opinion, an unreliable source, for how can one's simple singular experience explain the mystic of the universe.

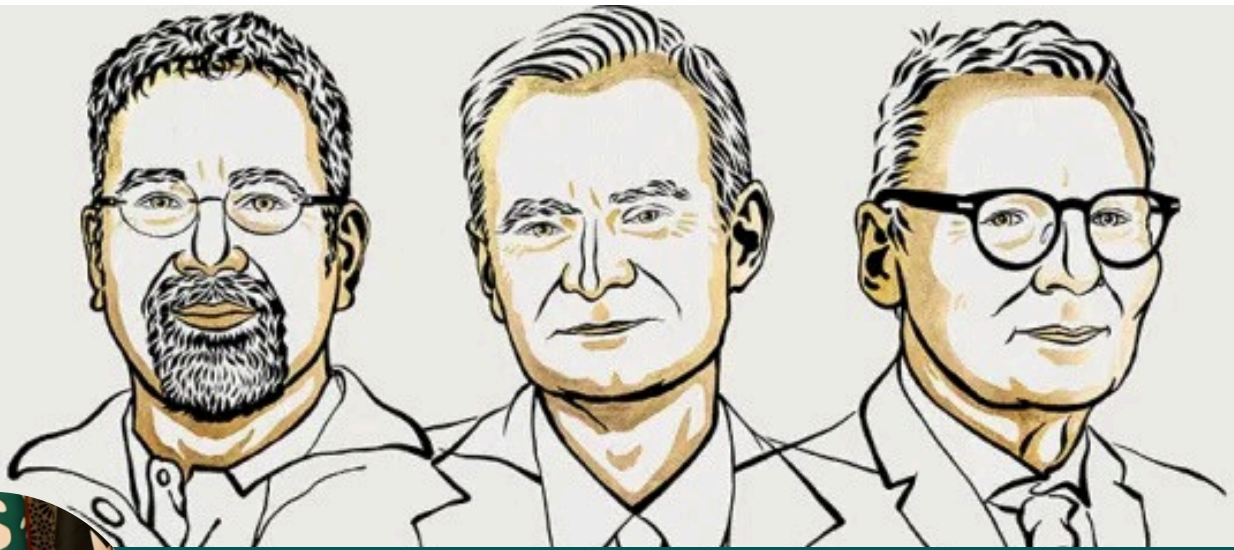
But why is all that important ? Our conceptualisation of this world, our so-called ultimate truth, is the source of our smallest daily actions and the culture that we spread around. It starts with the beginning of each day, from whether we choose to say to others: "Good morning, may this be a beautiful day" or whether we choose to say: "Why do you have so much energy early in the morning ?", it equally shows in the memes and reels we share daily on our social media profiles, we now unfortunately often find posts like: Someone: I would like to talk to you please, me: No, thank you dear, I don't converse with others anymore », such posts may gather reacts on the internet but they eventually spread a culture that decreases our compassion for one another and our openness to healthy conversations. When we ponder on such posts or harsh words said in the morning, we find that eventually they stem from our idea of what « the ultimate truth » is, they stem from our deep own belief about this universe and existence.



Dear reader, the belief of each of us, of having “the ultimate truth” and wanting to share it with others, is not really a problem, and unlike what most think, this author believes that that belief of having “the ultimate truth” is “not” a form of ego but rather a human need and condition, whether we want to or not. To clarify, a human is a being created to reflect upon the universe, to find its truth, it’s the purpose of our existence. As for why it’s the purpose of our existence, that remains to be unknown and surpasses our capacity to understand, maybe we’re created as a miracle for a larger wisdom and that we’re not actually the center of the universe, maybe we’re a creation embodying the universe created to explain it in simple micro terms. What remains undeniable though is that as far as we’re concerned the purpose of our existence is to reflect upon the universe, find its truth (or part of it at least), and “act” accordingly (/according to what we find, gather to be our belief). That is undeniable because simply, as demonstrated above, every single cell of ourselves and every single act, from the smallest to the biggest, (whether we want to or not), revolves around what our conceptualisation of “the ultimate truth” deep down is.

So ain’t it better to dedicate time and the necessary observational and intellectual effort to find and form the belief around which all of one’s life and actions would center ? Rather than being blindly guided in every single action by a profound belief in an under-researched conceptualisation of “the ultimate truth” about our universe and existence, by a conceptualisation that we didn’t even choose consciously and willingly, or by a belief that we weren’t even aware of its existence ?

Dear reader, at the end of this article, this author leaves you to wonder and reflect upon what, deep down in your soul, your conceptualisation of the “ultimate truth” about the universe and existence, is, what profound belief dominates your world and actions unconsciously ? And whether what you find is what you would truly like to believe about the world, what you would truly like to guide all of your actions ? If not, then, dear reader, it’s time to start an investigative observational journey of the universe, to find and embody a truth that you would willingly, knowledgeably and consciously like to believe in and let dominate your daily actions.



How (not) to destroy a nation? A Nobel prize in economics 2024 reading

Menna Wael-Economics- Year 4

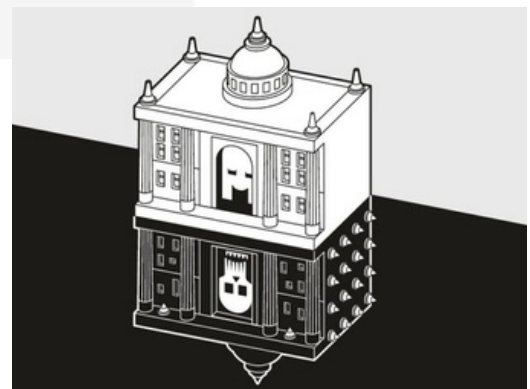


The Nobel Prize in Economics for this year has been awarded to Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James Robinson for their significant contributions to understanding why some countries are wealthier than others. This question is central to macroeconomics, especially considering that the richest 20% of countries are approximately 30 times wealthier than the poorest 20%. Despite global wealth growth, the disparity persists, indicating that poorer nations are not catching up.

The laureates' theories challenge conventional wisdom, particularly regarding the role of natural resources and geographic advantages in economic prosperity. For instance, countries rich in resources, like Venezuela, remain impoverished while resource-scarce nations, such as

Ireland, thrive economically. Their research highlights that the key differentiator between wealthy and poor nations is the stability and reliability of their institutions rather than their natural endowments.

Effective economies are fundamentally systems for allocating resources efficiently. When institutions are well-managed and trustworthy, citizens and investors can engage in economic activities with confidence, knowing their efforts will be rewarded. This principle applies universally, from



central banks to local businesses. For example, the ability of workers to invest in education and specialized skills hinges on the presence of reliable institutions that enforce contracts and protect investments. In contrast, countries lacking these institutions struggle to cultivate specialized labor forces or economic growth.

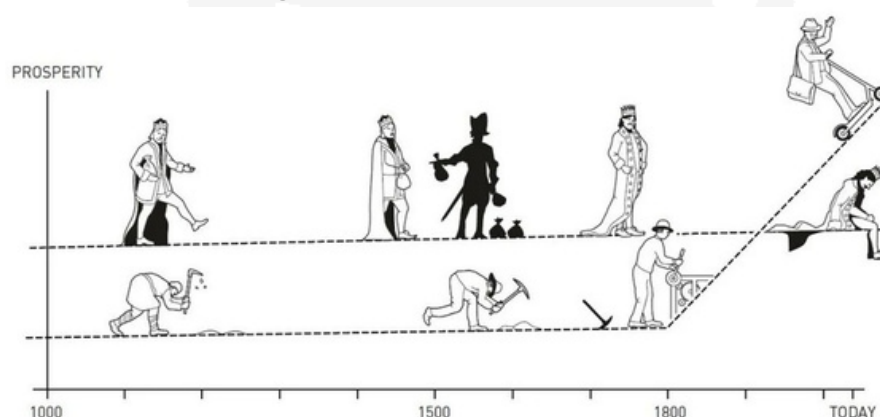
The laureates emphasize that good institutions foster an environment where people can invest resources into developing specialized skills. This specialization increases overall economic wealth. Their findings suggest a correlation between institutional quality and economic success, asserting that poor countries seldom have reliable institutions, while wealthy nations typically do.

While other economists have noted this correlation, the challenge lies in establishing causation. The laureates examined historical patterns, particularly the effects of colonialism, to demonstrate that countries with strong institutions can create wealth, rather than wealth merely allowing for the establishment of good institutions. Their research revealed that regions that were prosperous before colonial rule often became poorer afterward due to exploitative practices and institutions that prioritized resource extraction over sustainable development. In contrast, regions with less dense populations, which were less threatening to colonial powers,

often developed institutions that encouraged stability and economic growth. For instance, settler colonies, such as those in the modern United States and Australia, established systems that protected property rights and political liberties, fostering conditions for economic success. In these cases, a continuity of knowledge regarding institutional management persisted post-colonialism, which is less evident in regions that faced harsher colonial controls.

The laureates provide valuable insights into how nations can transition to better institutions. They advocate for peaceful, nonviolent transfers of power instead of revolutions, which often lead to new forms of despotism. Their research underscores that while establishing fair institutions is challenging—especially when those in power benefit from the status quo—it's essential for economic development.

In conclusion, the work of Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson not only highlights the critical role of institutions in economic prosperity but also offers practical recommendations for countries seeking to improve their economic situations. Their findings represent a significant step forward in understanding the relationship between institutional quality and economic success, challenging previous assumptions and paving the way for constructive policy recommendations.





Fitch's Credit Upgrade Sparks Hope For Egypt's Economy

Sara Basheer - Economics - Year 3



On the 1st of November 2024, Fitch Ratings announced that it has upgraded Egypt's long-term foreign-currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) from B- to B, with a stable outlook for the first time since 2019, indicating the country's strong finances on the back of foreign investments, and tighter monetary conditions

This upgrade reflects several key rating drivers, including lower external risks and policy adjustments, replenished external buffers, new capital inflows, more flexible exchange rates, falling inflation and reduced debt burden, initial steps to contain fiscal risks, geopolitical risks, and high but falling public debt levels.

One of the key rating drivers of this upgrade is the "Lower External Risk and Policy Adjustments".

The new foreign investments, particularly from Ras El Hekma, along with non-resident investments, have been key in improving Egypt's external finances, in addition to paving the way for the adoption of more flexible exchange rate and monetary policies, specially under the IMF monitoring programme, that ensures that there is no FX intervention by the Central Bank of Egypt, and proves to be more durable and sustainable than in the past.

Another key driver of this upgrade is the downward trend of inflation that started to drop in September to 26.4% from a high 35.7% in February, which is expected to continue falling, reaching 12.5% and 10.6% by the end of the fiscal year 2025 and 2026 respectively. This downward trend is mainly supported by the expectations of a recovering economy and broad currency stability.

As inflation stabilizes, the current 27.25% interest rate is expected to be cut, reaching a real rate around 4%. As a result, the debt interest-to-revenue ratio is anticipated to drop reaching 37% in FY29 after the 61% peak in FY25 , given the short maturity of Egypt's domestic debt, which will lead to a reduction in the government's debt interest burden.

Moreover, Fitch forecasts Egypt's GDP to grow from 2.4% in FY24 up to 4% in FY25, and to 5.3% in FY26, mainly driven by strengthening confidence and real incomes. Fitch also highlighted that deeper structural reforms, including reforms that aligns with the IMF EFF measures, are key to boost the private sector's activity and competitiveness, and to lift sustainable growth.

Additionally, despite the current geopolitical tensions that led Suez canal revenues to decline by more than half this year, remains to be a moderate threat to the economy overall, Fitch forecasts that Egypt will gradually recover from the low Suez canal revenues, reaching around half of the fiscal year FY23 by FY26.

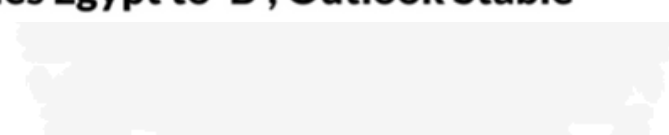
This upgrade comes as a spark of hope for the overall outlook of Egypt's economy, as the Prime Minister Mostafa Madboly emphasized that upgrading Egypt's credit rating to B for the first time in 4 years will have a significant impact on its ability to attract more investments and expand current investments, through increasing investor's confidence, in a way that serves egypt towards expanding the participation of the local and foreign private sectors in contributing to the egyptian economy.



FitchRatings

RATING ACTION COMMENTARY

Fitch Upgrades Egypt to 'B'; Outlook Stable





Between Promises and Reality : The Environmental Crisis Amidst Growth

Hana S.Elbadry-Third Level-Economics

As the world's attention shifts to the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku, it's hard not to cast our minds back to COP27, hosted by Egypt in 2022, where it had proudly showcased its commitment to tackling climate change with ambitious strategies like the "National Climate Change Strategy 2050." This was supposed to be the turning point ; the moment when Egypt would stand tall against the rising tides of environmental destruction. Fast forward to 2024, and it seems Egypt has taken a detour back into a thick, choking fog.

Empty Pledges, Polluted Skies

On paper, Egypt's climate strategy looks impressive—binding promises to reduce emissions, build sustainable infrastructure, and adapt to climate changes. But if you look past the shiny brochures and grand speeches, there's a different picture:

air that feels heavier by the year, streets filled with plastic, and a government that's too quick to sacrifice environmental protection for quick economic gains.

Cairo, a city already infamous for its pollution, continues to rank among the world's most polluted cities. The Swiss air quality monitor IQAir named Egypt the ninth most polluted country globally in 2023, blaming transportation, industry, and the open burning of waste. Fine particulate matter—those tiny, lethal particles less than 2.5 microns wide—hangs thick in the air, causing respiratory diseases, cardiovascular problems, and more. The situation is deteriorating: in 2023, Egypt's average PM2.5 concentration was 8.5 times higher than the World Health Organization's annual air quality guidelines, rendering Egypt's air quality unhealthy for sensitive groups.

Despite the government's promises at COP27, local communities in places like Beni Suef are living proof of how little has been done. Here, residents are suffering from pollution caused by industrial wastewater and toxic fumes from factories, with no solutions in sight. The government blames everything from traffic congestion to low wind speeds, but the people know better. The same story is unfolding in neighborhoods like Ain Shams, where residents are suffocating under the stench of industrial emissions from nearby oil refineries. And it's not just the air that's suffering. Thousands of trees are being ripped out across Cairo for urban expansion, leaving the city even more exposed to the sun's relentless rays.



Who pays the bill?

Pollution in Egypt isn't just an eyesore; it's an economic disaster. As Egypt's air quality continues to decline, the healthcare system is left to pick up the tab. Health costs are soaring, with diseases like respiratory illnesses, heart problems, and cancer on the rise—estimates put the health burden in Cairo alone at around 47 billion Egyptian pounds annually (according to a 2019 World Bank report). And that's just the start. Meanwhile, Egypt's tourism industry is feeling the burn too; after all, polluted air and water are hardly the ideal selling points for a vacation destination. So, what's stopping us from saving ourselves from this mounting economic mess?

Cutting Corners Today, Paying the Price Tomorrow

In its rush to attract foreign investment, Egypt has made it easier for businesses to bypass environmental regulations. Recent amendments to Egypt's Environmental Law (No. 338 of 1995) were touted as a way to boost the economy by simplifying the approval process for investors.

In theory, this should create a more business-friendly environment. In reality, it opens the door to unchecked environmental risks. The new regulations allow both foreign and domestic businesses to sidestep more rigorous environmental assessments, speeding up projects at the cost of oversight. While easing the regulatory burden may attract investment, it also raises concerns about long-term environmental damage. Egypt's constitution clearly mandates that development should not harm citizens' health or the environment, but these amendments seem to prioritize short-term economic growth over long-term sustainability.

Critics warn that this focus on immediate profits could have dire consequences for Egypt's air, water, and ecosystems. It's like cutting corners to save time and money now, only to find you're stuck with a bigger mess to clean up later.

A prime illustration of this short-sighted approach is the Marassi Marina project, developed by Emaar Properties on Egypt's northern coast.

The resort and yacht club caused significant coastal erosion and damage to nearby beaches—violating environmental laws.

Construction continued despite these violations, and the damage was only addressed after public outcry and government intervention. Emaar eventually spent millions on “mitigation,” but by then, the environmental harm had already been done.

At some point, Egypt will need to face the reality that sustainable development isn't just a buzzword. It's the only way forward. The current path—one that favors short-term profit over long-term prosperity—will only lead to more pollution, more diseases, and ultimately, a future where Egypt's natural beauty is just a memory. It's time to stop paying lip service to environmental goals and start implementing real change. The clock is ticking, and we can't afford to waste any more time.

