

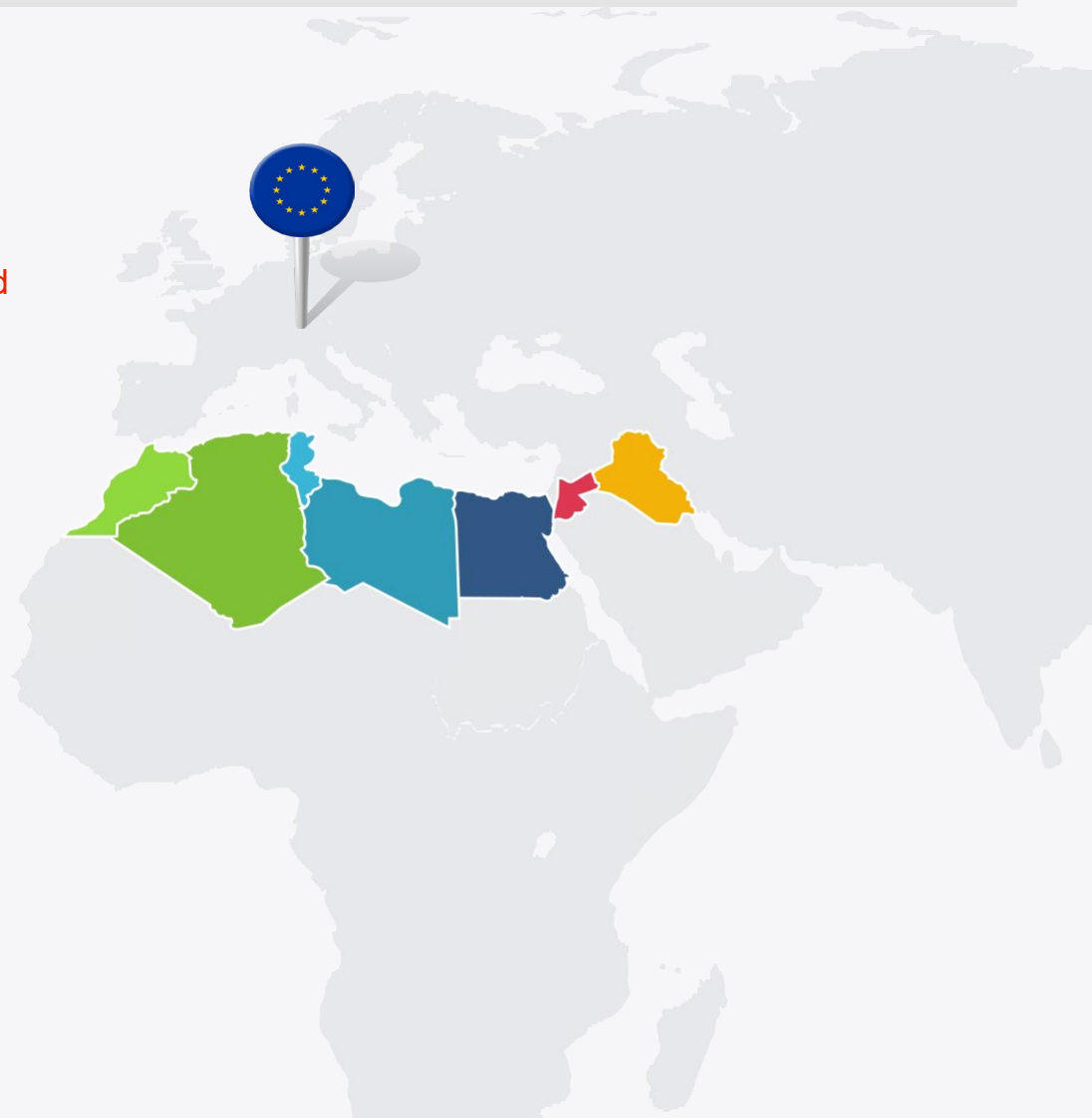
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A Generation in Waiting for Jobs and Justice:
Young People Not in Education Employment
or Training in North Africa

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1. Executive Summary

North Africa has some of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world and young women are at considerably greater risk of unemployment than young men and a majority of whom never make the school-employment transition. However, focusing on just those that are unemployed misses out on those that are neither in education or employment (NEETs). There are three main groups of NEETs: (1) unemployed, available for and actively seeking employment; (2) withdrawn from the labour market and full-time carers; (3) not actively seeking work including those queuing for formal sector employment, the long-term sick and disabled and young women barred from employment by cultural norms. Recognition of the importance of focusing on NEETs is evidenced by the Sustainable Development Goals having a specific Goal of reducing the NEET rate. However, accurate and reliable data on NEET rates are not available for all countries and there is a reliance on survey data that is not always available for secondary data analysis.

To understand the school-employment transition given extended periods in education and the time young people take to make the school-employment transition it is important to look at the 15-29 year age group. While young men typically take 2 to 3 years to make the school-work transition young women never make it. Young women are at much greater risk of unemployment and of being a NEET than young men, although young women are at greater risk of being out of the labour market and young men unemployed. A majority of male NEETs are unemployed and a majority of female NEETs are full-time carers. Nevertheless, nearly half of unemployed young people are women. Graduates and those living in rural areas are at greater risk of being a NEET than those living in urban areas and with lower educational qualifications. However, numerically there are more NEETs living in urban than rural areas and more with primary school or lower qualifications than those living in rural areas and with secondary and higher educational qualifications. There are differences between countries in the proportion of young people that are NEETs and the precise composition but the broad patterns are common across the countries.

While focusing on NEETs is important for developing policies it is important to recognise that the problem of youth unemployment and inactivity goes beyond job creation to creating decent jobs. A high proportion of those in employment are in poor quality, low paid and insecure employment. The main reasons for high unemployment and inactivity, at least for young men, is a lack of jobs. Certainly, young people think that lack of jobs followed by the need for *wasta* (connections) to get a job are the main causes of youth unemployment. For young women the picture is more complicated, certainly a lack of jobs that are considered gender appropriate for young women is an important factor as is the lack of equal opportunity but even more important are traditional cultural attitudes that see women's primary role as carers and men's as breadwinner. Nevertheless, more young women would take employment if decent jobs were available.

It follows that if more young people are to make the school-work transition and end up in decent jobs then more jobs need to be created. This means tackling the economic and political barriers to job creation and economic growth and making certain that there are the right jobs in the right places to absorb young people coming onto the labour market. There is no point tackling supply side issues if all that happens is that young people

become employable but remain jobless. Nevertheless, reforming educational curricula and pedagogy so that young people have the skills and knowledge employers are looking for is also necessary.

2. Introduction

Unemployment, and especially youth unemployment, is a major problem in North Africa and a threat to security in the region. Unemployment is mainly a problem of youth insertion into the labour market (Assaad and Kraft 2017); there has been a failure to capitalise on the youth bulge which presents a window of opportunity for driving inclusive economic growth (Assaad and Roudi-Fahimi 2009). The failure of post-2011 governments to address the issue means not only that the opportunity of capitalising on the demographic bonus was lost and talent is being wasted, but also that this failure is giving rise to a security challenge that threatens political and social stability and sustainable economic development (Madoui 2015; Ghafar 2016; OECD 2016).

In the developing MENA region there are about four times as many new job seekers as vacant jobs (ILO 2015). The problem is not just lack of jobs, however, but lack of *decent* jobs, with many young people in precarious employment. The 2011 Uprisings were fuelled by this latent demographic pressure, the inability of the labour market to create decent employment opportunities for young people coming onto it (Hong 2015). Young people and their parents were and continue to be frustrated by a lack of employment opportunities for new labour market entrants and the consequent loss of potential for upward social mobility (Teti et al forthcoming). Young people are frustrated because they cannot easily make the transition to adulthood. It leaves them open to possible radicalisation and jihadism (Chauffour 2017; Gouda and Marktanner 2017; World Bank 2014) and collective frustration is the driver of ongoing demonstrations and riots in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Furthermore, a lack of opportunity at home fuels migration, with a loss to the country of talent and skills (Ghafar 2016; Ordu et al 2011). While countries in the region are benefitting from economic growth, the benefits have not reached as far as their young people (World Bank 2012).

Young people in the region are a generation in waiting – waiting for decent jobs and waiting for social justice. They find it difficult to make the transition to employment; some only ever make it to insecure employment, while others never make it at all (and this is especially the case for young women - Assaad and Kraft 2017). The main reason that the transition is so difficult is because employment opportunities and decent jobs are just not there for the new labour market entrants. Young people are finding it difficult or even impossible to make the education-employment transition, taking a relatively long time to get a first job and remaining at risk of joining the long-term unemployed and/or permanently withdrawing from the labour market (Assaad and Kraft 2017). A high proportion of those that do make the transition end up in precarious employment (Gatti et al 2014). In Morocco, for example, only 21% of employed people aged 15- 29 are in permanent jobs and 73% work without an employment contract (Chauffour 2017; Kamal 2017). In Tunisia 82.5 % of young people in in employment in rural areas and 67% in urban areas have jobs that do not require a high-school leaving certificate (World Bank 2014). Educated youth expect decent employment and are not satisfied with whatever they can find in the informal economy - the low-wage, low-productivity jobs without long-term security which are all that the informal private sector can offer. Female graduates tend eventually to give up and withdraw from the labour market altogether, while male

ones are forced into precarious employment because they need to generate a living and so have little alternative. Mohamed Bouazizi did not self-immolate because he did not have a job (although he certainly did not have a decent one) but because he was sick to death with the harassment from corrupt officials that prevented him from even making a living from the petty trading in which he was engaged.

The problem is often seen as one of employment but the failure of North African countries to create sufficient employment to meet demand needs to be seen in the context of neo-liberal reforms that have reconfigured state, capital and labour relations since the 1980s, of the authoritarian nature of regimes and of the securitisation of migration policies in the West. Youth are often portrayed as the problem, with an emphasis on supply-side reforms, rather than seeing the problems as mainly requiring demand-side (job-creation) measures. The problems that affect youth are the result of structural economic and political issues which affect the wider society, as is evidenced, for example, by youth-to-adult unemployment ratios being relatively constant across time within a country but differing between countries (Eichhorst and Rinne 2014). The main cause of joblessness and inactivity is the lack of sufficient demand for workers on the labour market, and this is not restricted to youth. It is not young people that are the problem (Murphy 2017), and policies targeted at youth are unlikely to be effective if the wider problems are not addressed; indeed, they may marginalise young people even further.

Young people face multiple and complex barriers in making the education-employment transition in addition to the lack of sufficient decent jobs. The absence of relationship networks, the prevalence of 'wasta', a lack of the skills that employers are looking for and the burden of societal norms and expectations are also barriers (World Bank 2014). Young people themselves are aware of these barriers, with around two thirds seeing lack of employment opportunities as the main reason young people are unemployed, closely followed by not having relationship networks (World Bank 2014). However, less than a fifth see not having the necessary skills as a barrier and around a tenth not being informed about employment opportunities. Unemployment and precarious employment stall young people's transition to adulthood but impact differentially on youth depending on age, social class background, education, gender, disability, ethnicity and geographical location. Youth is a fluid category - the period between childhood dependency and adult independence - and being in decent employment is one of the main markers of being on the path to or having made the transition. There is no agreed age bracket for 'youth'. with various international agencies and governments using 15- 24, 15-29 or even 15-35. In looking at education-employment transitions and unemployment the 15-29 age group seems the most relevant given the time spent in education and the time that young people take to make the transition (OECD 2016), and it is mostly what we have used here.

Extended periods of youth unemployment result in negative material, social and psychological consequences. Their unemployment prolongs the material dependency of young people on their parents and denies them the opportunity to become autonomous adults, get married and have their own families. It threatens social cohesion by marginalising jobless young people, sets up the potential for intergenerational conflict and has a negative impact on economic output.

Providing decent and productive employment for young people is on the global agenda. By signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals, governments have committed to promote sustained and inclusive growth and specifically:

- by 2030, to increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (Target 4.4);
- by 2030, to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (Target 8.5);
- by 2020, to effect a substantial reduction in the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (Target 8.6).

SDG 8.6 recognises the recent change of focus that has been made, from youth unemployment to all those who are without employment and not in education and training (NEETS). This includes those that have become demoralised and are not actively seeking work, although they are available to do so, and those that are not available for employment, including young people with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities. Some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people are in this latter group, generally referred to as 'withdrawn from the labour market' (Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs 2015). This group also includes those that are waiting in the hope of getting a formal, usually government, sector job and those that have become demoralised. Furthermore, the 'non-active' group has been disadvantaged because they have been 'hidden'. They have not been included as a category in official statistics until recently and policies have mainly been targeted at supporting the unemployed in moving into employment rather than all young people not in education, training or employment. One especially disadvantaged group have been young women where may never enter the labour market but remain 'inactive' and on marriage become full-time carers. Even those that seek employment, including educated young women, may never find it and eventually join the ranks of the 'inactive'. Cultural attitudes which see women as carers and the dependents of men are a major factor but the lack of suitable employment opportunities, of employment that is seen as appropriate for women, is also a reason.

In this working paper we look at the issue of youth employment in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, drawing on a range of sources including literature, macro data mainly from the World Development Indicators and public opinion survey data (Afro Barometer 2015 (AfB), Arab Transformations Survey 2014 (ATS) and Arab Barometer III, 2013 (AB)). We mainly focus on the 15-29 year olds¹ and on NEETs, young people not in employment, education or training. This gives a better insight into how well the education-employment transition is managed, as those in education are excluded and all those not in education or work are included. It is also necessary to recognise that young people are in transition and can and do move between categories. The prototypical transition is a smooth one from

¹ For survey data we look at 18-29 year olds, as the surveys on which we draw sampled only those who were 18+.

education to decent work² (productive, full-time, formal-sector work that pays a living wage), but young people can take time to make this transition through prolonged job search, having precarious employment for a time and/or repeated periods of unemployment before gaining a job with long-term security. Many will have a stalled transition, never getting employment or, if they do, not moving out of precarious employment into a decent job. Those who fail to get employment can become part of the long-term unemployed, cease to look actively for work (demoralised) or, especially in the case of young women, withdraw from the labour market. Some may never look for work and move from education to non-activity; young women are especially at risk of this but some young people with disabilities may also do so. Conservative gender norms and expectations, especially in rural areas, deter many young women from seeking employment, and when they do they are restricted to stereotypical female jobs, usually in the public sector. Thus the issue of youth employment is not limited to unemployment as conventionally defined but encompasses the type of employment that young people are able to secure as well as the situation of those that have been 'hidden' from the official gaze because they are not actively seeking employment.

Table 1 maps out where young people are located in relation to the labour market. Employment refers to all those that have carried out any productive work in the week prior to a survey. The market definition includes all those that were paid for the work they did while the extended definition includes dependent family and voluntary workers. The 'unemployed' are those who lack employment and are actively seeking it, the 'discouraged' (demoralised) are those that have stopped looking for work but are available to take it, while the 'inactive' are mainly full-time carers but the category also includes others that are not available for work. It is difficult to estimate what proportion of young people in North Africa are in decent employment but it is certainly a minority, with a significant proportion in informal work, self-employment or working part-time (African Development Bank 2012; Chauffour 2017; Kamal 2017; OECD 2015; World Bank 2014). Informal-sector work is unlikely to be by choice, as the pay and terms and conditions of employment are poor, with earnings on average only half of what is earned in the formal sector (OECD 2015). Some young people do not actively seek employment but wait in the hope of getting a job in the public sector; such 'queuing' varies from a low of 26% in Morocco to a high of 53% in Egypt (African Development Bank 2012; OECD 2015a).

² The ILO define decent work as: 'Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men' ([http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang-en/index.htm)).

Table 1: The Rosetta Stone for Youth Labour Markets

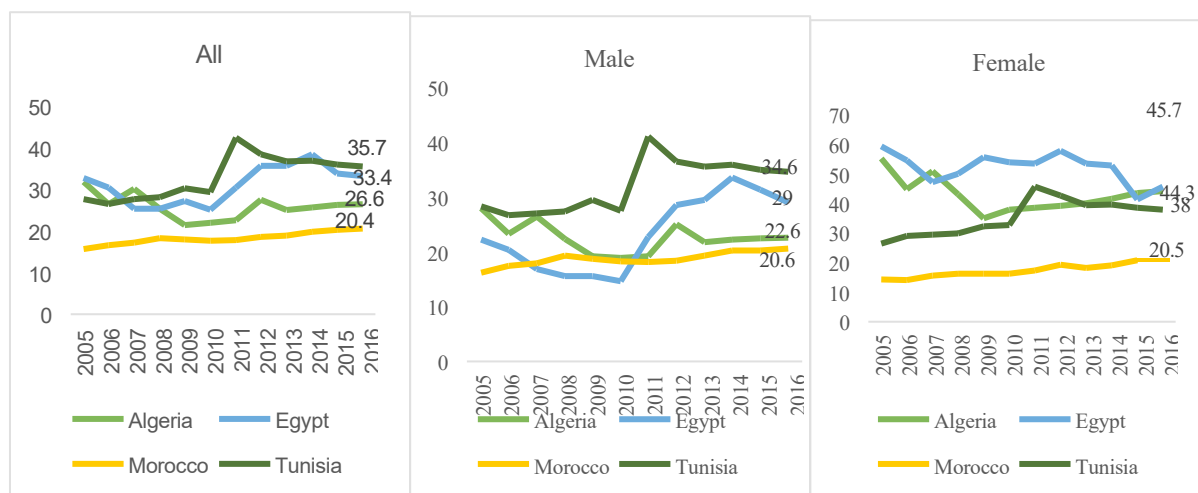
Labour Force Status	Time Use	Employment Status		Working	Job Quality	Formality	
In the Labour Force	Full-time	Wage Employment		Employed	Decent or precarious	Formal or <u>informal</u>	
		Self-employed			Precarious	Informal	
		Contributing family worker/voluntary					
	Part-time	Voluntary			Student		Formal or informal
		Underemployed					
Out of the Labour Force	Job seeker	Unemployed	Broad unemployment	NEET			
	Inactive	Discouraged/queuing					
		Inactive (carers, sick/disabled,)					
	Education	Student		Student			

3. Unemployment and NEETs

Until recently the main focus has been on youth unemployment and the 15- 24 age group with youth unemployment rates being amongst the highest in the world and noticeably higher than adult rates. Unemployment rates in general are high in the four countries varying from a low of 10% in Morocco in 2016 to a high of 14.8% in Tunisia - more than twice the average for the world (5.5%) and middle-income countries (5.6%) (World Development Indicators). Youth unemployment is two to three times higher than the adult rate varying from a low of 20% in Morocco to a high of 35.7% in Tunisia and with the exception of Morocco where it is just over 1.5 times higher, twice the world (13.6%) and middle-income country average (13.8%) Figure 1 shows their unemployment rates from 2005 to 2016. Two important things to note are that the youth unemployment rate differs noticeably between the countries and is much higher for young women than young men. Morocco and Algeria (since 2009) have noticeably lower rates than Egypt and Tunisia. Following the Uprisings in 2011 the rate increased in all four countries; it subsequently declined in Tunisia and to a lesser extent in Egypt but had not returned to the pre-Uprising levels by 2015. The male rate follows the same pattern as the total rate but is marginally lower than the total rate in all the countries except Morocco. The female rate is much higher in Algeria (22 percentage points) and Egypt (17 percentage points) than in Tunisia (7 percentage points) and there is no noticeable difference in Morocco. However, only a minority of those aged 15- 24 are economically active (in work or actively seeking it): Algeria 28.3%, Egypt 32.1%, Morocco 35.1% and Tunisia 34.7% in 2015. Others are in education, demoralised workers, full-time carers or others not actively looking for

employment. In Morocco the economic activity rate fell by seven percentage points between 2005 and 2015, mainly because more young people stayed in education, but remained much the same in the other countries. (Young women are much less likely to be employed or actively seeking work than young men, but the World Development Indicators do not offer data for this age group disaggregated by gender).

Figure 1: Youth unemployment % of Economically active young people 15-24 years



Source: World Development Indicators

Unemployment in Egypt and Tunisia is primarily a new entry phenomenon but with an even higher proportion making up the long-term unemployed (Assad and Kraft 2017). It is highest in the 20-24 year age group but remains relatively high in the 25-29 age group. Unemployment is highest among those that have secondary education or higher - for men university education, and for women secondary education mainly because they are searching for public-sector jobs and in competition for them with even more highly educated women. In Egypt the unemployment rate is low for men with less education because private-sector, informal employment is the only option open to them but higher in Tunisia where there are more formal-sector jobs open to them, and some men with low educational qualifications que for public sector employment. Mobility restrictions and the demands of domestic work deter women from entering the labour market, and if they do, then the chance of them getting employment is not high. Women with less education tend never to enter the labour market although they may work as unpaid family workers. On marriage women tend to withdraw from the labour market in Egypt if they have not secured public sector employment. In Tunisia the labour market is more hospitable to unmarried and married women who work in the private sector as well as the public one. The norm that young people live in the parental home until they marry is a mobility constraint on job searching for young men as well as young women and makes unemployment more affordable, especially for those from more affluent homes.

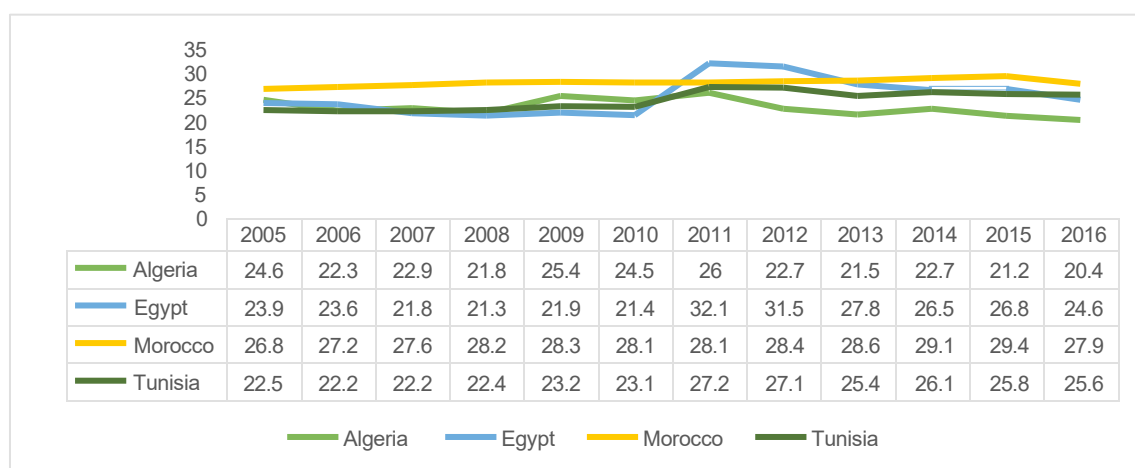
The NEETs rate, however, provides a better insight than does the unemployment rate into how governments are managing the transition between school and work, as it takes account of all those not in education including those not actively seeking employment. It is

a powerful tool for analysing youth exclusion by focusing on young people that are experiencing difficulties in transiting from education to employment. NEETs includes the unemployed and discouraged and those outside the labour force for other reasons. These form three distinct groups: (1) the 'unemployed' want and are available for employment; (2) those queuing for formal sector jobs and the demoralised who want employment but have given up hope of finding it; and (3) those that are 'voluntarily' without work including carers and the long term sick and disabled. It helps policy makers consider the needs of all young people who have finished their education and training and, not just those who meet the definition of 'unemployed'. Participation in employment, education and training is important for youth to become established in the labour market and achieve self-sufficiency (Elder 2015) and for social inclusion. However, NEET remains a problematic measurement and does not take account of poor-quality employment, with many young people being forced to work to survive. Data availability is poor and the World Development Indicators provide only limited data for North African countries, with these data in any case being for 15-24 year olds. Data are mainly taken from the Labour Force Survey and other surveys, these are often not available for researchers to use for secondary data analysis, and published reports often do not include NEET rates.

NEETS are mainly young people who are economically vulnerable and not able to participate fully in their communities. They are a heterogeneous group; the rates differ between men and women and vary between countries (Bardak et al 2015). Those at greatest risk of being a NEET in the 15-29 age group are those having no /low educational attainment, women, low employability skills, coming from a low socioeconomic family, having poor health status or a disability or from an ethnic minority, but the risk factors vary by country (Serban 2014). In OECD countries NEETs are more likely to be 25-29 than 15-24 and to be female rather than male (Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs 2015). In 2015 the OECD average rate for those aged 15- 29 was 14.5% but varied widely, from a high of 28.8% in Turkey to a low of 6.2% in Iceland (OECD data). The average gender gap was 4.9 percentage points but it varied from 27.8 in Turkey and 26.3 in Mexico to women being marginally less likely than men to be NEETs in Switzerland and Austria. Italy and Greece, which had relative high NEET rates - 27.4% and 26.1% - also had a narrow gender gap - 2.2 and 2.5 percentage points respectively.

Complete comparative time series data for NEETs for Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia are not available, but Drouchi and Harkat (2017) have estimated the rates for 15-24 year olds. (Figure 2). The NEET rate in 2016 varied from a low of 20% in Algeria to a high of 28% in Morocco and follows much the same pattern as the unemployment rate but is lower in all the countries except Morocco (Figure 1 above). While Morocco has the lowest unemployment rate, it has the highest NEET rate, indicating that it has a higher proportion of young people in not education or active on the labour market than do the other countries.

Figure 2: Estimated¹ NEET Rate 15-24 2005-201



Source: Driouchi and Harkat 2017. ¹Algeria 2009---16, Egypt 2011---13 & 2015, Morocco 2016 and Tunisia 2013 from survey data.

As with the unemployment rate, young women are at much greater risk of being a NEET than young men (Figure 3). In Algeria and Tunisia the male-female gap is larger than for unemployment (25.5 cf 18.3 for unemployment in Algeria, 8.7 cf 2.8 in Tunisia) but the two are much the same in Egypt (23.4 cf 23.7)

Figure 3: NEET Rates by Gender 15-24 Years 2013, %

	Male	Female	Total
Algeria	8.8	34.6	21.5
Egypt	17.3	40.7	27.9
Tunisia	21.2	29.9	25.4

Source:

http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?q=employment&d=SDGs&f=series%3ASL_TLF_NEET

The 15- 29 year NEET rate in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia is much higher than in the OECD average (14.5%) and even the rate for Turkey (28.8%) the OECD country with the highest rate (Figure 4). The rate varies between the three countries, with Egypt having the lowest rate and Morocco the highest, but the differences are not large. The NEET rate varies by age, with those at greatest risk of being NEETs in Egypt being 20-24 years, followed by those aged 25-29, but in Tunisia the risk of being a NEET increases with age, those aged 25-29 showing the greatest risk (disaggregated data is not available for Morocco). The NEET rate in both countries is much the same for 15-19 year olds. with a high proportion of young people still in education and training. Young women, not surprisingly, make up a higher proportion of NEETs than young men with the gap being wider in Egypt than Tunisia. Around three quarters of male NEETS in Tunisia are unemployed but only a half in Egypt while three quarters of female NEETs are inactive in Egypt and two thirds in Tunisia.

Figure 4: NEET Rates by Age and Gender and % of NEETS Unemployed 2012 Egypt and Tunisia, 2014 Morocco

	NEETs Rate by Age			NEETS Rate (15-29)			% of NEETS Unemployed	
	15-19	20-24	25-29	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Egypt ^{1,3}	17.8	41.2	37.9	31.6	13.3	50.2	51.0	23.5
Tunisia ¹	16.5	33.2	44.7	32.2	22.5	42.3	78.5	32.5
Morocco	na	na	na	35.4 ²	27	44		

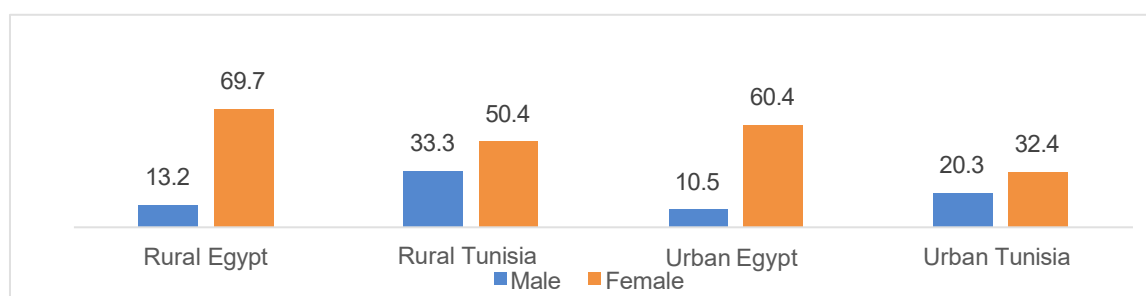
Sources: ¹Bardak et al 2015 (Eurostat); ²Kamal 2017 2014 data; ³the NEET rate differs in other surveys for Egypt, Egyptian Labour Market Panel Survey 2012 is 39.8% (14% for men and 64% for women) and ILO SWTS 2012 29.0 (9.3% male, 49.5% female). Note: data not available for Algeria.

Although the rates differ and the proportions in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia vary, the risk of being a NEET is higher for women than men and for those living in rural areas (relative to local youth population) (Table 5; World Bank 2012, 2014, 2016). There are also regional differences:

- in Tunisia the highest NEET rates are in the south and the lowest in the coastal region for women, while for men the highest is in the interior and the lowest on the coast (World Bank 2014).
- In Egypt the rates are lowest for young men in Upper Egypt Rural (7%), rising to a high of 14.6% in the urban Frontier Governorate and for young women the rate ranges from 56.5% in the Urban Governorates to 83.4% in the rural Frontier Governorates (Dietrich et al 2016). In terms of relative risk of being a NEET (relative to local youth population) is highest in Aswan, North Sinai, South Sanai and Luxor where roughly half of all young people are NEETs. The lowest risk is in Cairo where a third of young people are NEETs.

Young men are more likely to be NEETs in Tunisia than in Egypt and young women in Egypt than in Tunisia. While the risk of being a NEET is highest for those with higher education qualifications, numerically by far the largest group of NEETs are those that have not completed secondary school. Similarly, while the risk of being a NEET is higher in a rural area, numerically more NEETS live in urban areas.

Figure 5: % of NEETs 15-29 years in urban and rural areas for Egypt and Tunisia, %



Source: Bardak, et al 2015

Detailed analysis of the risk factors for being a NEET are available only for Egypt but it shows the heterogeneity of risk factors (Bardak et al 2015). For 15-30 year olds the main risk factor, in addition to being a young woman, is living in a rural area. For those aged 15-24 low education attainment is a risk factor for young women in rural areas and low and secondary education in urban area. For young men aged 15-24 education is a risk factor, especially for those living in urban areas, and the risk is also high for those in the bottom 40% of income earners and low among the wealthier. However, while higher education is a risk factor, NEETs with higher education are mainly waiting for a job, usually in the public sector, that matches their education (Ghafar 2016; OECD 2016). In Egypt and Tunisia young women who do not get government employment tend to drop out of the labour market while young men eventually take less favourable private-sector employment or become self-employed (Assad and Kraft 2017). Indeed, this is the pattern not just for graduates but for all those that are unemployed (broad definition); young women generally move from unemployed to nonactive status and young men from unemployed to employed.

Comparing the risk factors for NEETs and for unemployed young people makes it clear that it is important both to understand the risk factors for unemployment and inactivity and to look separately at-risk factors for young men and young women. Young women are at greater risk of unemployment and inactivity than young men; a relatively high proportion of less educated young women never enter the labour market and a high proportion of those that do leave on marriage. Educated young women are more likely to be active on the labour market but have a relatively high risk of being unemployed, especially those with secondary education, as they are in competition with those with higher education for the public-sector jobs which women generally seek. Young men are much more likely than young women to be active on the labour market or demoralised workers. Unemployed and demoralised workers tend to be better educated as they queue for jobs in the public sector or the formal private sector. When there are employment opportunities in the formal sector (public and/or private) for less educated men then there is also some queuing, as in Tunisia (Assaad and Kraft 2017), but generally young men have little option but eventually to take whatever employment is available or else become self-employed.

4. Causes of Youth Unemployment and Inactivity

Youth is at the epicentre of an employment crisis, a problem created by neo-liberal reforms in which young people lose out in the competition for jobs. They are at risk of unemployment, being driven into insecure, informal employment, becoming disillusioned or withdrawing from or never entering the labour market - especially young women (Chauffeur 2017; Murphy 2017; OECD 2015). On the supply side, there have been increasing numbers of young people coming onto the labour market, not just because of a combination of population growth, the youth bulge and more women seeking employment but also because they are also better educated. There is a shortage of jobs and a decent jobs deficit.

On the demand side, the capacity to create jobs and especially decent jobs has been weak and well below the expectations of young people. North African countries had reasonable economic growth in the 2000s but they modernized without development (Fukuyama 2014). The reorientation of economies in line with neo-liberal orthodoxy resulted in a decline in public-sector jobs that was not compensated for by private-sector job creation (Chauffeur 2017; Hanieh 2013; Malik and Awadallah 2013; Richards et al 2014). The state remained the most important economic actor, with its functioning resting on subsidies and rents being used to maintain order, economic controls, and a variety of uncompetitive practices that favoured and protected an insider group of capitalists but excluded firms at the margin that had the potential to grow and create employment. Sustained growth, then, exacerbated by the youth bulge, did not lead to the creation of sufficient jobs to absorb new entrants to the labour market (African Development Bank 2012; Calder et al 2017; Malik and Awadallah 2013). Morocco, for example, created 26,000 net jobs a year between 2012 and 2016, while at the same time the net growth of the labour market was 270,000 a year (Chauffeur 2017). Criticisms of youth employment policies/labour market activation policies by international financial institutions and others (e.g. ETF 2013, 2015; OECD 2015; World Bank 2014) misses the point that there is a shortage of jobs; young people need employment, not just to be employable (Goksel et al 2016). For young men the main barrier to labour market insertion is a shortage of decent jobs; while this shortage is also a barrier for young women, they face the additional barrier of patriarchal attitudes together with employment law and a social security system that promotes a 'male breadwinner' model which in combination restricts or prevents their participation in the labour market (OECD 2015; World Bank 2015).

This is not to deny that there is a skills mismatch between education and the needs of employers (Ghafar 2016; Karshenas et al 2014; Ordu et al 2011; OECD 2016) or that young people are often reluctant to take jobs in the informal private sector or become self-employed. However, providing young people with employability skills while doing nothing to address the structural causes of job shortage just intensifies competition in an already overcrowded job market. Entrepreneurship training sets young people up to fail when over-regulation, corruption and poor risk assessment by lenders often leads to business failure (Calder et al 2017). Encouraging young people to take jobs in the informal sector rather than addressing the issue of informality means they are pushed into precarious employment and are without social protection (Barsoum 2014).

5. Methods

To look comparatively and in greater detail at NEETs in North Africa we draw mainly on the 2015 Afro Barometer (AfB), which covers Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. We supplement this with information on young people's concerns about employment and corruption using the Arab Barometer carried out in 2013 and the Arab Transformations Survey, which was carried out in 2014 but only covers Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The survey data are publicly available to download for secondary data analysis. The surveys use nationally representative probability samples of the population aged 18 or over. Numbers in sub-samples are relatively small; they are adequate to provide a broad understanding of patterns, differences and similarities between countries and subgroups within countries but cannot be taken to be generalisable with any degree of accuracy. Bardak et al (2015) note that the Egyptian Labour Market Panel survey and ILO's SWTS, which have much larger sample sizes, have a 10 percentage-point difference in proportion of NEETs in the 15-29 age group for the 2012 data.

The subsample used in the analysis is all respondents aged 18-29 years of age. Occupational status is divided into:

1. students – all those that said that their main occupation was student;
2. employed – all those that said that they worked full- or part-time for a cash income and did not say that their main occupation was student;
3. NEETs - all those that were not defined as students or employed. The group was further divided into:
 - unemployed - actively looking for work;
 - carers (main occupation housewife/homemaker and not earning a cash income);
 - 'other' – in none of the other categories.

Education is divided into three broad groups: those whose highest qualification is a primary school leaving certificate or less, those whose highest qualification is a secondary school leaving certificate, and those whose highest qualification is a university degree or diploma.

6. Findings

6.1. Comparing NEETs and Non-NEETs

Across the three countries 39% of 18-29 year olds are in employment and the rest are split equally between those in education and NEETs (Table 1). However, this varies by gender and country. Young women are more likely to be NEETs and young men to be in employment, with the proportion in education much the same for each. Egypt and Tunisia have a higher than average NEET rate and Morocco and more noticeably Algeria a lower one. Egypt has a much higher employed rate and a lower education rate while Tunisia has an average employment rate and a below average education one. Algeria has a comparatively high education rate and a below average employment rate while Morocco

has an average employment rate and marginally above average education rate. With the notable exception of Tunisia the young men and women in education is much the same; in Tunisia young men are more likely to be education than young women. Out-of-school young men are more likely to be in employment and young women to be NEETS in all four countries but there are noticeable differences in the distribution, at one extreme the gender gap in employment is 51.4 percentage points, in Egypt, and at the other it is 14.3 percentage points, in Algeria, with a difference of around 22 percentage points in Morocco and Tunisia. The male -female NEET difference is much the same as the one for being employed in Egypt, but much higher in Tunisia accounted for by the lower proportion of girls in school.

Table 2: Occupation of 18-29 years by country and gender, %

	Algeria			Egypt			Morocco			Tunisia			Average		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
NEET	18.3	30.2	23.7	11.7	63.4	35.0	17.5	42.4	28.6	27.3	62.8	39.5	17.6	48.7	31.0
Employed	35.6	21.3	29.1	73.1	21.7	50.3	45.5	23.6	35.7	45.3	23.1	37.7	51.5	22.3	38.9
Education	46.0	48.5	47.2	15.2	14.4	14.8	37.3	34.0	35.8	27.3	14.1	22.8	30.9	29.0	30.1

Source: AfB

In the pooled data NEETs are marginally more likely to live in rural areas but this differs by country, with NEETs marginally more likely to live in urban areas in Algeria and Egypt, and noticeably more likely to live in rural areas in Morocco and Tunisia. The pattern is much the same for young men and young women (Table 3).

Table 3: Occupation of 18-29 years by urban and rural location, %

	Algeria		Egypt		Morocco		Tunisia		Average	
	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
All										
NEET	25.2	20.7	36.8	33.7	23.7	38.2	32.9	55.1	28.7	34.7
Employed	30.8	25.6	52.0	49.1	35.5	36.2	40.4	31.9	38.7	39.3
Education	44.0	53.7	11.3	17.2	40.8	25.7	26.7	13.0	32.6	26.1
Men										
NEET	20.7	12.9	13.6	9.8	14.2	25.0	23.1	39.5	17.6	17.5
Employed	35.7	35.5	78.2	69.9	42.6	50.0	44.4	46.5	48.7	56.0
Education	43.6	51.6	8.2	20.3	43.2	25.0	32.4	14.0	33.7	26.5
Women										
NEET	30.9	28.8	64.5	64.7	36.0	55.2	53.8	80.8	43.6	56.3
Employed	24.5	15.3	21.5	21.8	26.5	17.9	30.8	7.7	25.3	18.0
Education	44.5	55.9	14.0	13.4	37.5	26.9	15.4	11.5	31.1	25.7

Source: AfB

Young men who have left school are much more likely to be employed than a NEET while young women are much more likely to be a NEET than in Employment. Comparing the relative risks of being a NEET for young men, those with higher and secondary educational qualifications are at less risk than those with primary qualifications or lower (Table 4). Young women whose highest qualification is a completed primary school certificate are at greatest risk of being a NEET, with a fifth or less being in employment across the countries. Apart from in Egypt, where the risk is much the same, young women with secondary education are at a lower risk and in Morocco and Tunisia more than half are in employment. At least risk of being a NEET are young women with a higher educational qualification, apart from in Tunisia, where the risk is the same as for those whose highest qualification is completed primary school.

Table 4: Occupation of 18-29 year olds out of education, by qualification, %

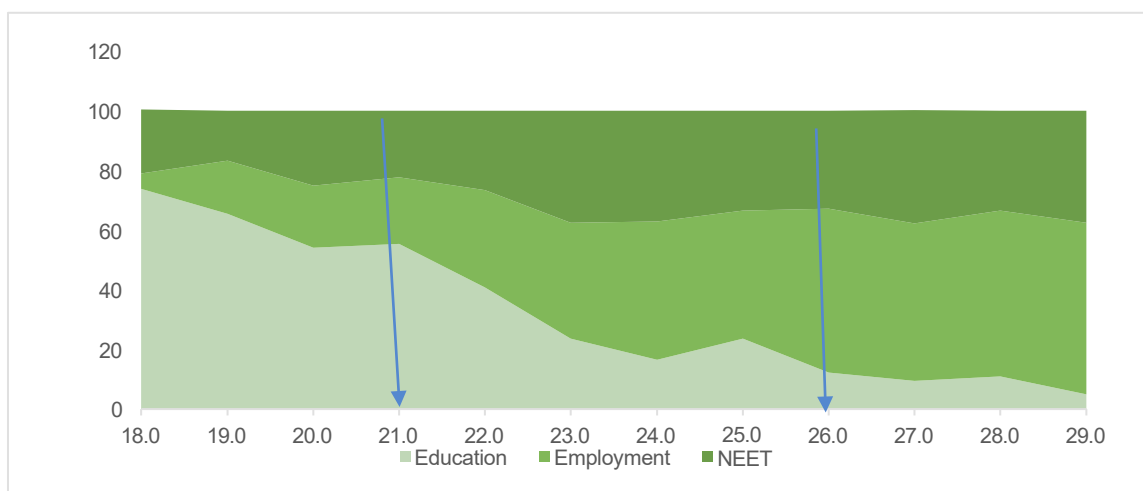
	Algeria			Egypt			Morocco			Tunisia			Average		
	P.	S	H	P.	S	H	P.	S	H	P.	S	H	P	S	H
Average															
NEET	55.3	45.2	20.0	48.4	43.6	25.2	57.2	41.4	30.2	64.4	13.3	22.2	52.5	39.1	30.9
Employed	44.7	54.8	80.0	51.6	56.4	74.8	42.8	68.6	69.8	49.1	63.6	33.3	47.5	60.9	69.1
Men															
NEET	39.3	25.8	31.6	14.9	12.1	12.5	34.6	22.6	16.7	36.5	33.3	50.0	29.4	21.3	21.1
Employed	60.7	74.2	68.4	85.1	87.9	87.5	65.4	77.4	83.3	63.5	66.7	50.0	70.6	78.7	78.9
Women															
NEET	84.8	64.5	9.5	85.7	78.8	46.2	83.6	45.0	40.0	77.5	44.4	77.8	83.6	62.9	42.3
Employed	15.2	35.5	90.5	14.3	21.2	53.8	16.4	55.0	60.0	22.5	55.6	22.2	16.4	37.1	57.7

Source: AfB

Age is clearly related to young people's occupation as they make the transition from education to (NEET or) employment. The age at which young people leave education is influenced by a number of factors, including employment opportunities; young people may leave school earlier if there are good prospects of getting employment or they may stay in education because of poor prospects. If they transition (eventually) into employment they may move back to NEET status either on a voluntary basis or an involuntary basis. Some may never make the transition into employment and a proportion of those that do will not get decent employment. Figure 5 shows the transition for the pooled data. At 18 years most young people are in education, and as age increases the proportion in education decreases and the proportion in employment or NEETs increases, with the proportions peaking at age 29 for employment at 57% and for NEET at 38%. Fluctuations in the rates occur across the years as young people move out of education and as young women increasingly become full-time carers. Given the small sample size, caution must be taken in interpreting differences by country and especially fluctuations across the years. The overall pattern, however, is much the same for the four countries (Appendix).

In the absence of longitudinal data the number of years taken to make the school-to-work transition is calculated by subtracting the age at which 50% are still in education and the age at which 50% are in work. This gives a transition in the pooled data set of 5 years (vertical lines on Figure 5) and it varies from four years in Egypt to eight years in Tunisia (Appendix) (on a large data set OECD 2015 calculated it as 6.3 years for Tunisia).

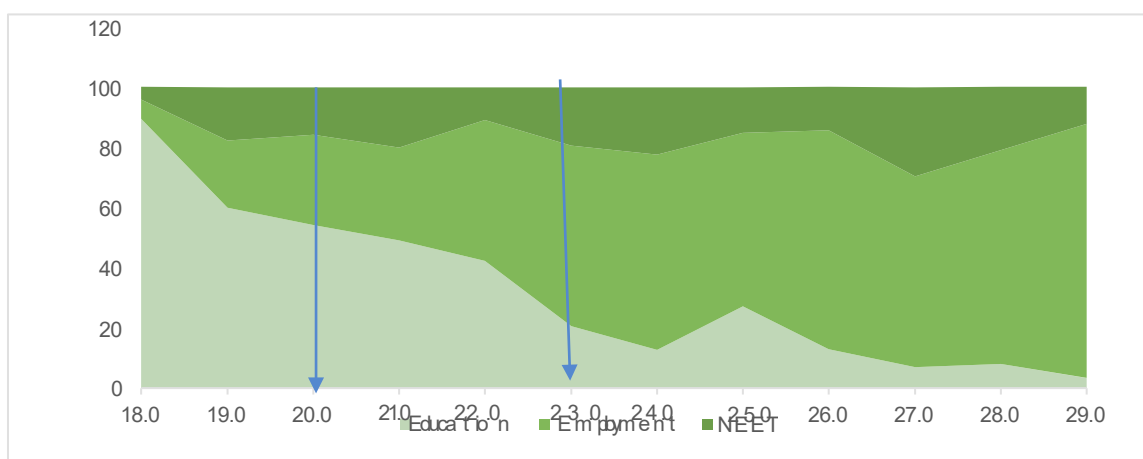
Figure 6: % 18-29 years in education or employment or NEET in 2015, pooled sample



Source: AfB

The education-to-(NEET)/employment follows much the same pattern if we look just at the men, but the proportion of NEETs is noticeably lower and the proportion of the employed correspondingly larger, and it suggests that by the end of the transition period less than 20% of young men are NEETs. The proportion of male NEETs seems to vary somewhat by country (Appendix 1), but given the small size of the sample and year-to-year fluctuations this should be seen as indicative at best. The time that young men take to make the education to employment transition is lower than for the sample, at three years. Given the year-on-year fluctuations in the data the calculations for individual countries are not reliable, although it is possible that it takes less time in Egypt than in the other countries, perhaps because young men without secondary or higher educational qualifications move directly into informal-sector employment on leaving education, while at least in Tunisia where there are formal employment opportunities for less qualified men some remain unemployed while they wait to see if they can get one.

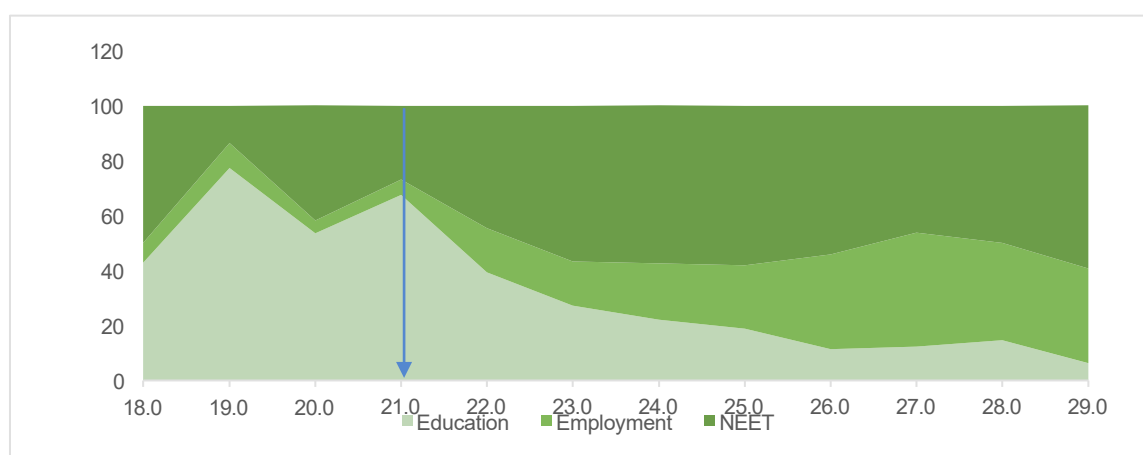
Figure 7: % 18-29 years young men in education or employment or NEETs in 2015, pooled sample



Source: AfB

The transition differs markedly for young women. The proportion of NEETs is larger than the proportion in employment and by age 29 just under 60% of young women are NEETs (Figure 7). The NEET rate for young women seems to be especially high in Egypt and, although a little lower, in Tunisia; it is lowest in Algeria, which seems to have an unexpectedly high proportion of young people still in education at 29 – probably an artefact due to the small sample size. Women as a group never complete the education-work transition: there is no point, up to 29, at which 50 per cent of them are in employment - too many either never enter the labour market or withdraw after they have failed to secure acceptable employment or on marriage.

Figure 8: % 18-29 years women in education or employment or not in employment, education or training in 2015, pooled sample

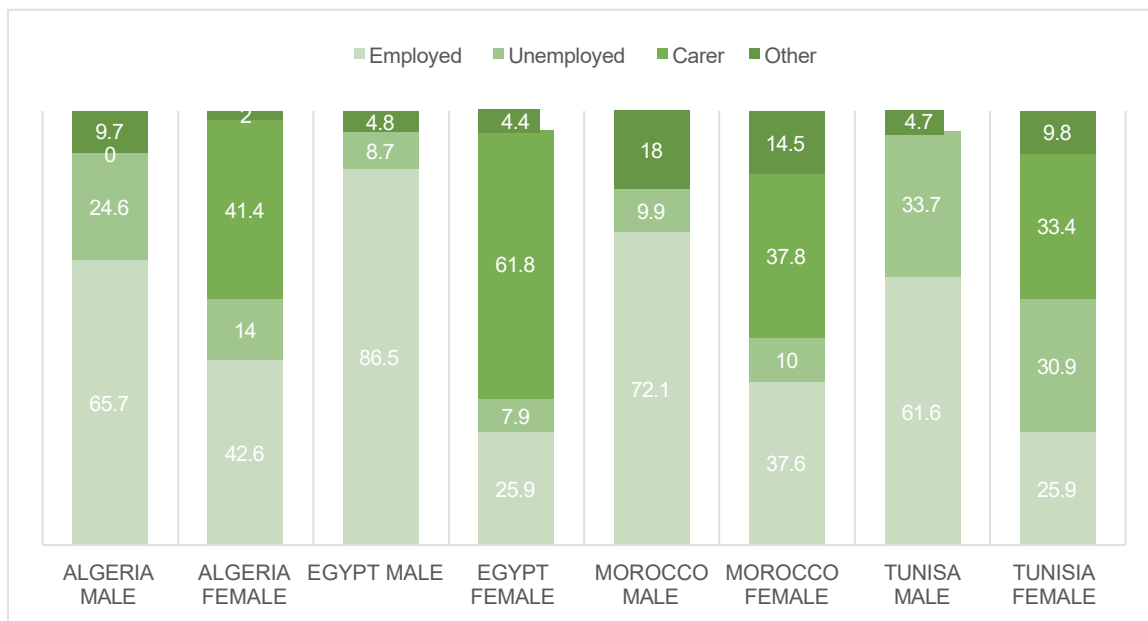


Source: AfB

6.2. The Characteristics of NEETs

NEETs are a heterogeneous group and we able to distinguish between three subgroups using our survey data: the unemployed, carers, and 'others' (variously made up of demoralised workers, those queuing for a job, dependent family workers and the long-term sick and disabled). Looking only at those that are not in education, there is a marked difference in the post-education destinations of young men and young women. Most young men are in employment, while young women are most frequently carers. There are differences between countries, with young men in Egypt most likely to be in employment and young women in Egypt carers. Tunisia has the lowest proportion of young men in employment and the highest proportion that are unemployed. Tunisia also has the lowest proportion of young women carers and the highest unemployed. The highest proportion of young women in Employment is in Algeria closely followed by Morocco but even then it is well below half and it falls to a quarter in Egypt and Tunisia.

Figure 9: Occupation status of out of school 18-29 years, by country and gender, %



In discussing NEET's we need to distinguish between *risk* relative to category - for example, the relative risk of a female NEET being unemployed, a carer or other - and *composition*, the relative size of each category. Both are important for policy, to ensure that initiatives are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of different groups. Women make up just over two-thirds of NEETs in the pooled sample but the proportion of women NEETs varies noticeably by country, from a low of 54.9% in Tunisia to a high of 82% in Egypt (Table 5). Nearly two thirds of male NEETs are unemployed and just over two thirds of female NEETs are carers. No male NEETs are carers and only a fifth (19%) of female NEETs are unemployed. However, young women make up nearly 40% of the unemployed, varying from just under half in Morocco to 40% in Algeria. Apart from in Tunisia, where they fall just short of half, most female NEETs are carers. Apart from in Morocco, male NEETs are more likely to be unemployed than in the other category.

Table 5: NEET Category by Gender and country

NEET Category	% within gender			% within category	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Algeria					
Unemployed	71.1	23.5	43.8	69.2	30.8
Carer	0.0	72.5	41.6	0.0	100.0
Other	28.9	3.9	14.6	84.6	14.4
Total	100%	100%	100%	42.7	57.3
Egypt					
Unemployed	63.3	10.9	20.4	55.9	44.1
Carer	0.0	83.2	68.3	0.0	100.0
Other	36.7	5.8	11.4	57.9	42.1
Total	100%	100%	100%	18.0	82.0
Morocco					
Unemployed	36.4	16.3	23.1	53.3	46.7
Carer	0.0	60.5	40.0	0.0	100.0
Other	63.6	23.3	36.9	58.3	41.7
Total	100%	100%	100%	33.8	66.2
Tunisia					
Unemployed	87.8	42.0	62.6	63.2	36.8
Carer	0.0	44.0	24.2	0.0	100.0
Other	12.2	14.0	13.2	41.7	58.3
Total	100%	100%	100%	45.1	54.9
Average					
Unemployed	64.1	19.1	33.5	61.3	38.8
Carer	0.0	69.8	47.4	0.0	100.0
Other	35.9	11.1	19.1	60.4	39.6
Total	100%	100%	100%	32.1	67.9

Source: AfB

Table 6 shows the risk in the pooled dataset of NEETs being in each of the three categories by gender age, education and location and Table 7 shows the composition. The sample is too small for data analysis disaggregated by country. Differences in the probability of a NEET being in any one of the categories by age group are marginal for both young men and young women and by location for young men (Table 6). However young women living in urban areas are less likely to be carers and correspondingly more likely to be unemployed. Better educated young men and women are more likely to be unemployed - higher education for men and secondary and higher education for women. However, in terms of composition nearly 60% of unemployed young male NEETs have primary education or less compared with just under a fifth with higher education and a quarter with secondary education Table 7). For young women roughly a third of NEETs have primary school qualifications, a third secondary school and a third higher educational qualification. More female NEETs are 25-29 years old than 18-24 years old probably because of young women with drawing from the labour market on marriage. Nearly two-thirds of female NEETs live in Urban areas.

Table 6: NEET category by age, education and location, pooled data set, %

NEET Category	Age			Education			Location	
	18-24	25-29	18.29	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Urban	Rural
Male								
Unemployed	66.3	61.2	64.1	62.0	64.9	75.0	62.4	66.7
Carer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	33.7	38.8	35.9	38.0	35.1	25.0	37.6	33.3
Female								
Unemployed	16.9	21.2	19.1	11.3	24.1	45.5	23.8	13.7
Carer	70.6	68.5	69.5	78.9	65.1	38.6	65.1	74.5
Other	12.5	10.3	11.4	9.8	10.8	15.9	51.4	48.6

Source: AfB

Table 7: Composition of NEETs by age, education and location, pooled data set, %

NEET Category	Age		Education			Location	
	18-24	25-29	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Urban	Rural
Male							
Unemployed	58.2	41.8	57.6	24.2	18.2	59.2	40.8
Carer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	52.7	47.3	64.8	24.1	11.1	63.6	36.4
Female							
Unemployed	43.5	56.5	35.5	32.3	32.3	66.1	33.9
Carer	50	50	68.3	24.1	7.6	49.6	50.4
Other	54.1	45.9	54.3	25.7	20.0	11.0	11.8

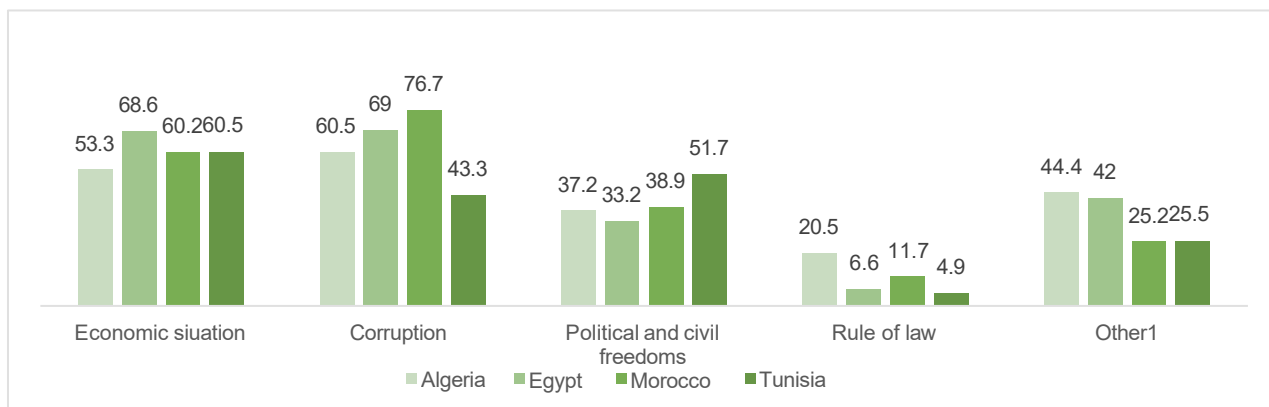
Source: AfB

7. Public Opinion on (Un)Employment and NEETs

In this section we consider young people's opinions on a number of issues relevant to unemployment and NEETs. There are few questions that directly relate to the issue of unemployment but there are questions on the economic situation of the country, corruption, the need for *wasta* to gain employment and people's attitudes to married women working. We mainly use data from the Arab Barometer III (AB) survey carried out in 2013 but we also draw on the Arab Transformations (AT) survey 2014 data for a couple of questions that are unique to it. The Arab Barometer III covers all four countries but Arab Transformations does not have data for Algeria. We analysed the data comparing those under 30 with those aged 30 or over but there were no statistically significant differences between the two age groups except for concerns about not getting/losing a job and perhaps not unsurprisingly thinking about migration. Those aged 30+ were significantly less worried about their employment situation and less likely to be considering migration than those under 30.

Young people are concerned about the economic situation in their country and the extent of corruption and more specifically about the employment situation and the need to use *wasta* to get a job. In Arab Barometer III, concerns about the economic situation and corruption were the two factors most often said to have been drivers of the 2011 Uprisings, with the only other driver that was nominated by more than a fifth of young people being the desire for political and civil freedoms and resistance to oppression (Figure 10). In the Arab Transformations survey, they thought the economic situation was by far the most important challenge facing their country when asked to nominate two main challenges; 91.6% in Egypt, 79% in Morocco and 79.8% in Tunisia named it as first or second choice.

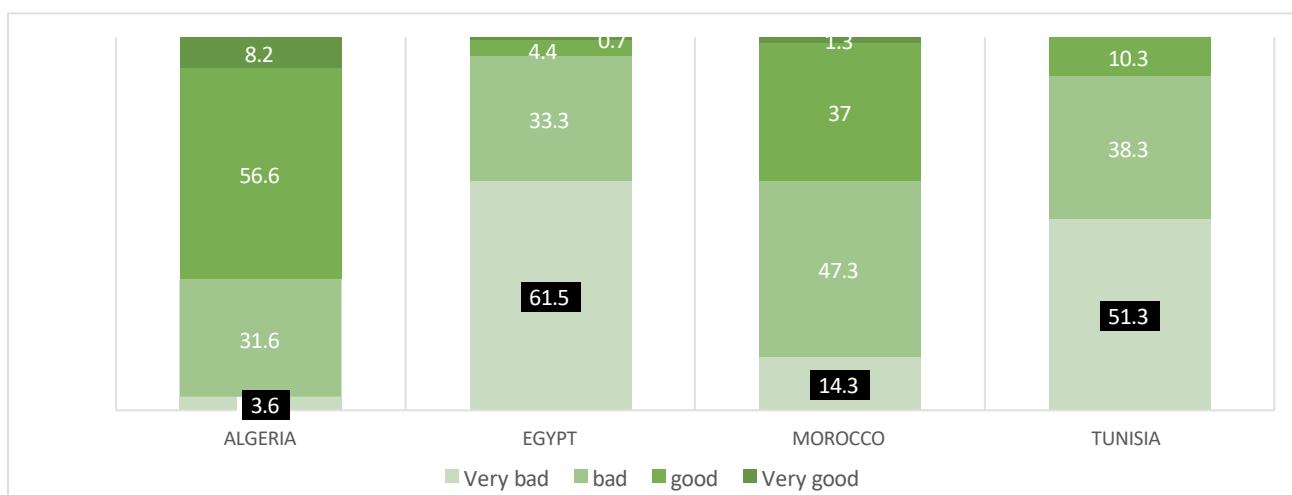
Figure 10: Nominated by 18-29 year olds as one of the 3 main causes of the 2011 Uprisings



Source: ABIII. ¹ includes increased social justice, dignity, social and economic justice, other.

They do not think that the economy is in very good shape. In Egypt and Morocco around one per cent rated the current economy as 'very good', in Tunisia nobody at all in the sample said this and even in Algeria not much more than 8%, which is one person in 12. If we relax the criterion and include people who said it was only 'good' as well as those who said 'very good', Algeria reaches 65%, but in Morocco the figure is only just over 38%, in Tunisia it is just over 10% and in Egypt it is around 5% (Figure 11). Only in Algeria do a majority of people think the economy is doing at least reasonably well, and it should be noted that the survey was carried out before the sharp decline in oil prices. Furthermore, the vast majority of young people think that there is corruption in state institutions, ranging from 97% in Egypt through 89% in Algeria and Morocco to 84% in Tunisia.

Figure 11: Evaluation of national economy in 2013

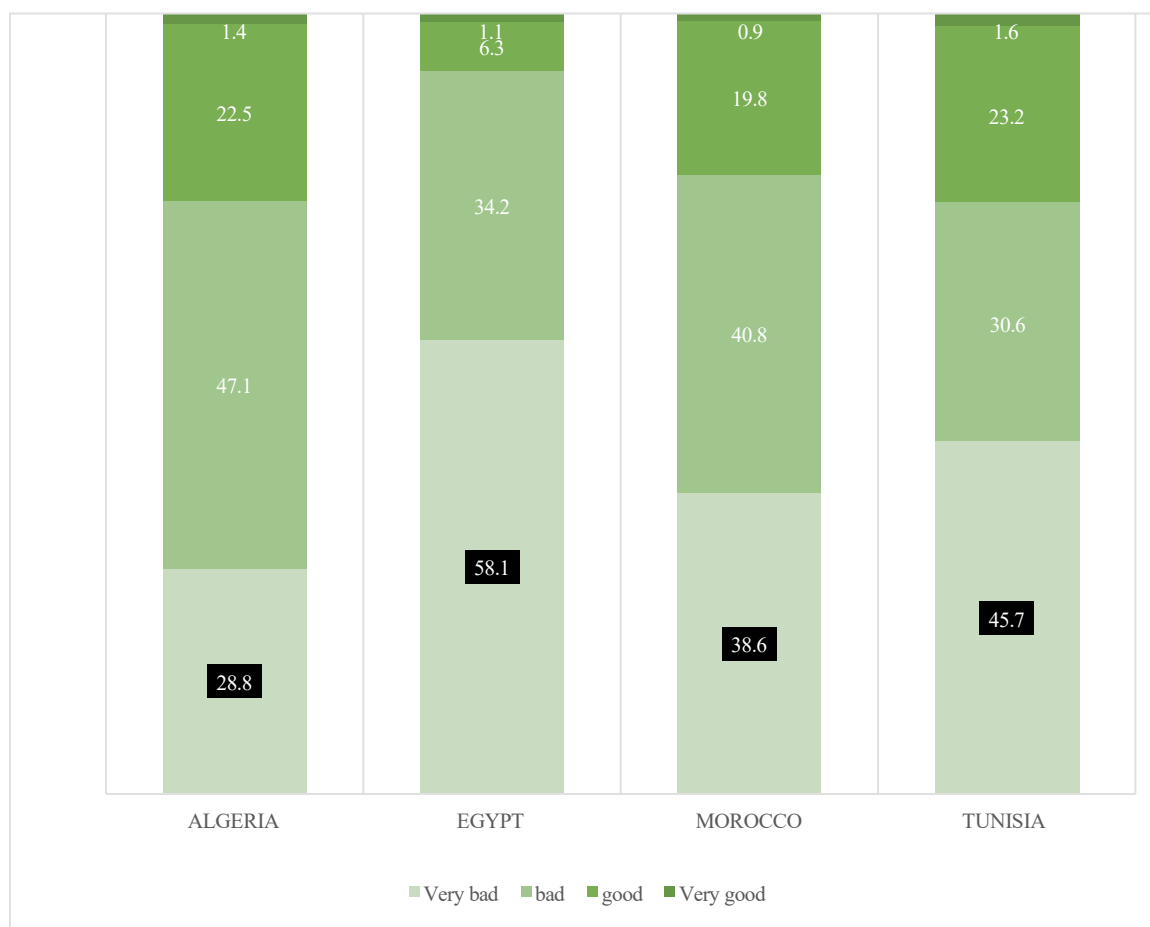


Source: ABIII

Few young people think their government is doing a very good job of creating employment opportunities. In Egypt less than 10% think the Government is doing at least a good job

and at best this rises to only around a quarter in Algeria and Tunisia (Figure 12). Furthermore, a majority think that employment is rarely obtained without wasta (connections) and few think it can be obtained without it – only 5.3% in Algeria, 1.9% in Egypt, 4.6% in Morocco and 19% in Tunisia, according to the Arab Barometer. Young people are also worried about losing their job or their spouse losing theirs or, for those still in education or unemployed, getting a job at all, according to Arab Transformation data - 77% in Egypt and 60% in in both Tunisia and Morocco. They are also noticeably more worried than those aged 30 +. The economic situation is making a lot of young people consider migration; nearly half of young men are considering migration for economic reasons (45% in Morocco, 46%, in Algeria and Egypt and 49% in Tunisia).

Figure 12: Young people’s evaluation of government performance on job promotion, %

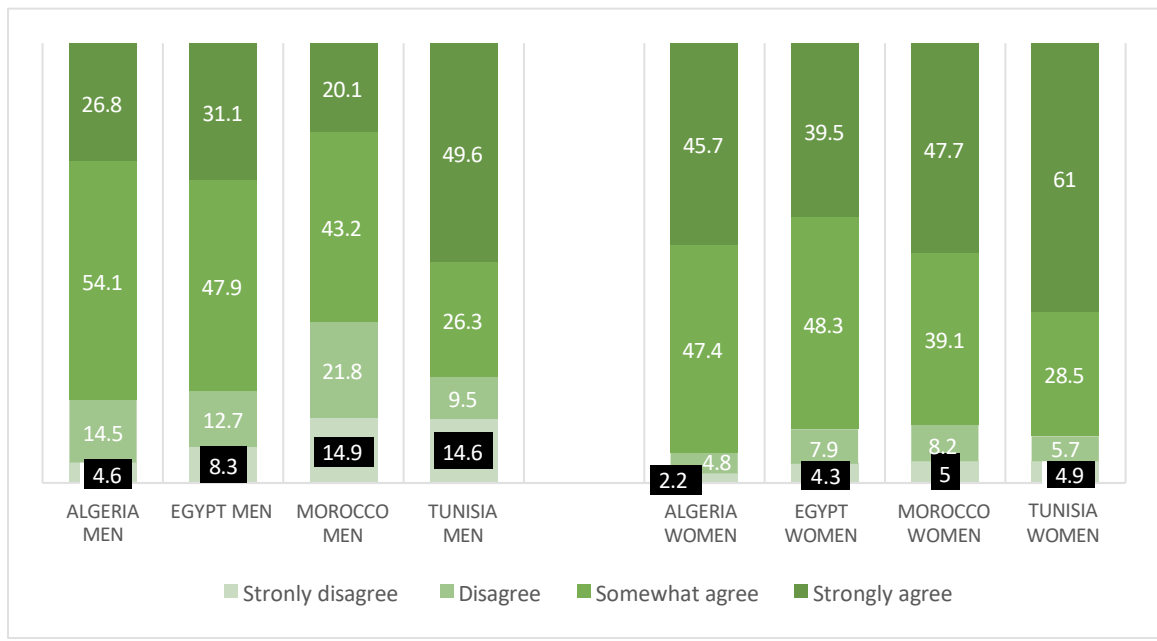


Source: ABIII

Women are much less active in the labour market than young men and this is generally said to be due to conservative gender norms. However, according to the public opinion poll data the overwhelming majority of people in the four countries agree that married women should be able to work outside the home if they wish. There are no differences by age but women tend to be less conservative than men and to be noticeably more likely to

agree strongly with married women’s right to work outside the home. Tunisian men and women are also more likely to agree strongly than those in the other countries.

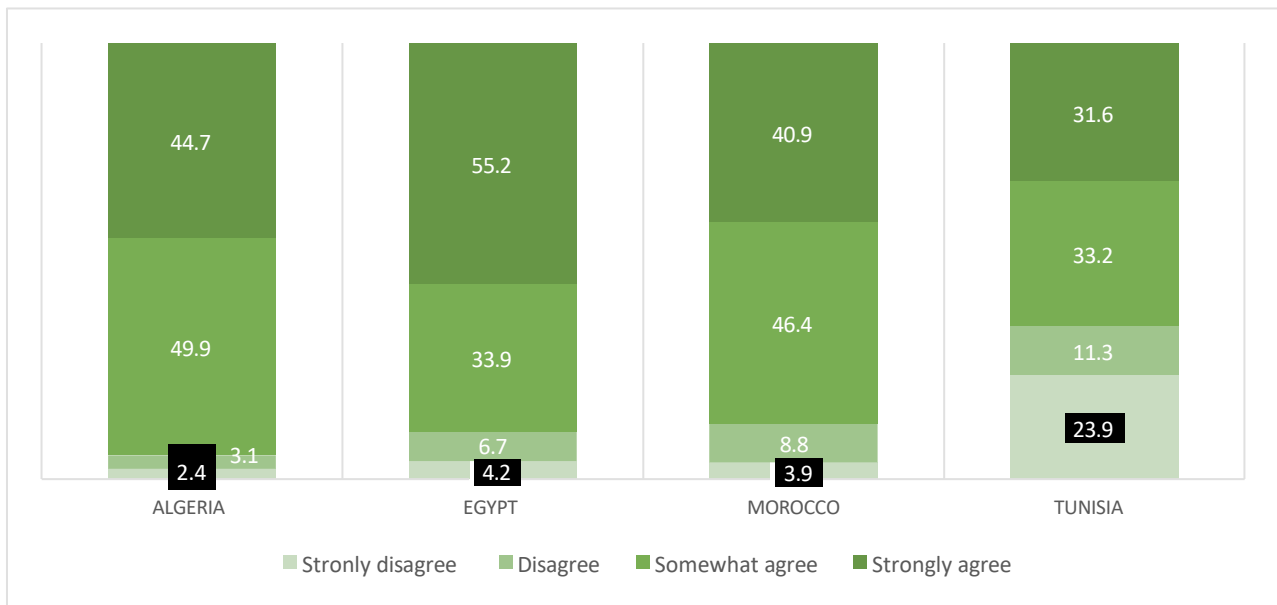
Figure 13: 18-29 year olds attitudes to married women working outside the home if they wish, by gender , %



Source: ABIII

However, there is equally strong support for status (family) law being in accordance with shari’a, with no statistically significant differences by age or gender. This suggests that there is relatively strong support across the countries for a traditional gendered division of labour whereby men are the breadwinners and women the carers, leaving women economically dependent on men. Although support is noticeably lower in Tunisia, still only a third of young people disagree with status law being based on shari’a despite Tunisia having civil law.

Figure 14: 18-29 year olds attitudes to status law being enacted in accordance with shari'a %



Source: ABIII

8. Discussion and Conclusions

The main cause of unemployment for young people and withdrawal from the labour market is a lack of decent employment opportunities, combined with, in the case of young women, deeply conservative gender attitudes which severely restrict the type of work they can take, if they are permitted to work at all. There is also a mismatch between the qualifications and skills that young people have and those that employers are seeking, mainly due to poor-quality education and, in the case of graduates, too many gaining the skills and qualifications for public sector jobs that no longer exist (Rose 2014). A majority of NEETs are young women, most of whom are not active in the labour market, with a relatively high proportion never making the school-work transition. Most young men do eventually make the transition but many young women do not, either never being active on the labour market or withdrawing after they have failed to gain suitable employment. There is a mismatch between employment opportunities and young people's educational qualifications and between job opportunities and where they live (World Bank 2014). While university graduates are at greater risk of unemployment, numerically those without a high-school leaving certificate make up the majority of unemployed young men and of young women carers. The risk of unemployment is higher in rural areas but numerically more live in urban areas and there is a lack of acceptable employment for women, including women graduates. There are also regional inequalities in employment, with the lowest unemployment rates generally found in core urban areas. However, numerically unemployment is more of a problem in urban areas than rural ones.

It is important to understand the difference between youth unemployment and the NEETs rates. While the former measures the proportion of young people that are on the labour market and do not have a job, the latter includes all young people that are not in employment, education or school. The NEET rate is important for policy because it measures all marginalised and excluded young people, many of whom may never get employment. At the same time it is important to recognise that the issue of employment for young people is more than one of just those that are not in education or employment: it also includes precarious employment, young people forced into informal-sector employment with low pay and poor terms and conditions and low productivity self-employment - what we might call 'hidden unemployment'. They are forced into this type of work because of lack of decent employment opportunities - the same thing that forces many young women to withdraw from the labour market and become full-time carers.

NEETs are a heterogeneous group and the proportion of young people that are NEETs and the composition of NEETs varies between countries. Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have among the highest NEETs rates for those countries for which data are available, including Turkey. Young women are at greater risk of being a NEET than young men. While a majority of young men eventually make the transition to employment, a majority of young women do not. Young men are at greatest risk of being unemployed and young women of being carers, although the unemployment rate for young women aged 15-24 is higher than that of young men, except in Morocco. Young men who are not unemployed are mainly educated young men waiting for formal-sector employment mainly in the public sector, although where formal sector employment is available for less educated young men a

proportion of them will also queue. Some educated young women queue for formal, usually public-sector jobs, the only ones that it is culturally acceptable for them to take.

Young people do not think that their government is doing a very good job of creating employment opportunities and they think that the economic situation is the main challenge facing their country. They think that their government is corrupt and that it is virtually impossible to get employment without connections. A relatively high proportion of young men are considering migration for economic reasons, as are a smaller but still noticeable number of young women. They share the conservative gender attitudes of older generations; while the vast majority think that married women should be able to work outside the home if they wish, they also think that family law should be based on shari'a. Young women are equally as likely as young men to agree that family law should be based on shari'a, which in effect means accepting that women should be dependent on men and that there should be a gendered division of labour whereby women stay at home and look after the family and men have employment.

9. Recommendations

There are no silver bullets for solving the problem of youth unemployment and inactivity, and the problem should not be seen just as one of NEETs but of creating decent jobs for young people more generally (Gatti et al 2014) - it is important to avoid a 'deficit' model of youth. The main cause of unemployment and inactivity for young men is a lack of decent jobs, supply exceeds demand. For young women this is compounded by conservative gender norms which constrain women making it difficult if not impossible to take paid employment. Nor is there any shortage of advice as to what policies North African governments should pursue to develop their economies and specifically to create more job opportunities for young people (e.g. Aly et al 2017; Chauffour 2017; Gatti et al 2014; OECD 2015, 2016; Ordu et al 2011; Schiffbauer et al 2015; World Bank 2012, 2014). In developing policy it is important to ensure that it is inclusive and that implementation strategies are devised that target job creation for different groups of young people: those with few educational qualifications as well as graduates; those living rural areas as well as urban ones; those in depressed regions as well as those in more economically developed ones; and strategies enabling more young women to gain employment as well as young men. Young people also need to be empowered; the quality of education needs to be improved and opportunities of re-entry to education for those without high school qualifications put in place; the school curricula needs to be reformed and teaching methods changed so that young people gain the employability skills that employers are looking for; and there should be advice for young people on specialisation in line with employment opportunities. Measures are needed to break down structural and cultural barriers to women's employment, including putting in place family-friendly employment law. It is possible to shift conservative gender attitudes with concerted effort (Inglehart and Norris 2009). However, there is no point in making young people more employable if the right jobs are not available in the right place.

Specific policy recommendations:

- policy reform to stimulate job creation by reducing the barriers to growth and job creation faced by firms and entrepreneurs, including access to credit and paying especial attention to supporting new and young medium-sized firms;
- tackling government corruption and ending 'crony' capitalism;
- debt-financed public investment in infrastructure;
- investing in research and development that encourages new job creation;
- policy reforms to reduce informality and provide better protection for workers, including young workers;
- preventing early school dropout and bridging the gap between education and the requirements of employers;
- providing opportunities for reintegration through active labour market measures, including education and training for early school leavers;
- providing better information to young people so they have realistic job expectations;
- creating a level playing field for first-time job seekers;
- enforcing merit-based systems of recruitment and promotion;

- making government programmes which promote youth employment more effective – focusing on what works (impact evaluation);
- providing training, a regulatory framework and access to affordable credit for young entrepreneurs;
- mainstreaming youth employment in the government development strategy and ensuring that the commitment to youth employment is reflected in government budgets;
- introducing gender equality policies/family-friendly employment policies and providing child care;
- avoiding policies that could create conflict between younger and older people;
- targeting policies at particular groups, and specifically having policies to promote the employment of disadvantaged young people.

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